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ARTICLES

Editorial: Transforming the Educational Paradigm by Jeffrey Kane 2

Introducing the Editorial Board 4

The Spiritual in the Classroom by Paul Byers 6

Spirituality in Education by David Elkind 12

Bridges across Muddy Waters: A Heuristic Approach to Consensus by David E. Purpel 17

Starting Over by Jack Petrash 27

The Interdisciplinary Island: Whole Language, Holistic Learning, and Teacher Education by Stephen Tchudi 30

Grouping for Reading Instruction: The "Sights" of the Round Table by Carole F. Stice and Nancy P. Bertrand 37

Toward a Spiritual Curriculum by John P. Miller 43

The Educational Theory of the Bhagavad-Gita by Dale T. Snauwaert 51

Educating the Whole Person for the Whole of Life by Gerald F. Karnow 59

DEPARTMENTS

Book Reviews

Reflections from the Heart of Educational Inquiry: Understanding Curriculum and Teaching through the Arts edited by George Willis and William H. Schubert 65

To Know as We Are Known: A Spirituality of Education by Parker J. Palmer 66

Secular and Spiritual Values: Grounds for Hope in Education by Dudley Plunkett 67

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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.

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EDITORIAL

Transforming the Educational Paradigm

This edition of *Holistic Education Review* marks a new phase in its history. Specifically, it is the first issue where I, rather than Ron Miller, have assumed responsibility for editorship. Ron, to this point, has provided the *Review* with identity and direction. I now, happily, have been given the opportunity to continue the development of the journal and, with it, holistic education. In this context, I offer the following assessment of the educational problems we face and the promise of holistic perspective.

In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education reported, in an open letter to the American people, that the foundations of American society were "being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threaten[ed] our very future as a Nation and a people."[1] The Commission expressed the need for educational reform in terms of the competition of world markets and the exigencies of global politics. In so doing, it delivered education from back-page obscurity and galvanized the reform efforts already begun in many states.

However, the report also created a language of reform filled with political and cultural assumptions far more troubling than the problems cited. When the Commission expressed the economic and political "imperative" for reform, it also defined education in economic and political terms. More specifically, we the American people were told that "knowledge, learning, information and skilled intelligence are the new raw materials of international commerce.... If only to keep and improve on the same competitive edge we still retain in the world market, we must dedicate ourselves to the reform of our educational system.... Learning is the indispensable investment required for a success in the 'Information Age' we are entering."[2]

Ironically, it is this concept of education, it is this ecopolitical language that creates the greatest obstacle to an educational renaissance. This paradigm assumes that knowledge, learning, information, and skilled intelligence are state-owned raw materials; that these raw materials are somehow dissociated from children who are intelligent knowers and learners; that the multifaceted and varied aspects of human intelligence and human being can be removed from the educational processes; that education can focus on the production of "refined products" without regard for the person who is at the very center of the educational process — the child.

Given these deficiencies in context and language, we have failed to define education relative to the needs, interests, capacities, experiences, identities, and complex dynamics (cognitive and otherwise) of growing children. The failure of education is no more surprising than the futility of the efforts of the medieval alchemist who, lacking understanding of either his raw material or desired product, leaves the process of transformation to "magic."

This modern form of alchemy is not found in incantations, but in political exhortations; it is not found in occult formulas, but in misused statistics and superficial aims. Let us be clear: Meaningful educational reform requires that we couple a recognition of its cultural, social, and spiritual dimensions with a deepened understanding of children, knowledge, learning, and education itself.

Herein lies the purpose of this journal: to explore, in theory and practice, an unapologetic holistic education paradigm. It is our position that the meaningful transformation of education is possible only when we recognize the depth and complexity of human being. As human beings, we not only *have* intelligence, but also embody and live through it: We attempt to make sense of ourselves; to learn how to live in peace with others; to understand how the world is put

together; to find our place in it; to chart a course for our own destiny; to develop a sense of identity and purpose. These things we do in addition to working effectively with nature, organizing communities, building economies, creating nations, or weaving the globe with advanced technology. A holistic perspective recognizes that we are physical, psychological, familial, social, economic, political, and spiritual beings — beings whose nature, origin, and purpose transcend our current theory and imagination.

Given these complexities, it is understandable that we would attempt to fragment or otherwise restrict the scope of the educational task. However, such a strategy amounts to reducing our concept of reality to meet the limitations of our thinking and research. It is essential that we realize the partial quality of our current paradigms to develop a more profound understanding of the task before us.

Such an effort is not romantic, for the possibility of error and confusion is great; it requires both intellectual openness and integrity; it requires theoretical discourse, empirical research, and clinical articulation. As C.S. Lewis once wrote, "A warm heart does not mean a soft head."

How can we begin to address, in light of a holistic paradigm, the formulation of educational policy, the development of curriculum, the design of instructional strategies, the creation of assessment mechanisms, the preparation of teachers, the organization of schools, or the motivation and engagement of students? How can we educate so that knowledge is not only power but also insight; so that children not only learn to read but also make reading a meaningful part of their lives; so that we guide the development not only of intelligence but also of character; so that children not only acquire facts but also enhance the capacity to experience wonder; so that graduates not only possess marketable skills but also recognize the responsibility of freedom?

> How can we educate so that knowledge is not only power but also insight;... so that we guide the development not only of intelligence but also of character;... so that graduates not only possess marketable skills but also recognize the responsibility of freedom?

Together these questions constitute a challenge to our educational assumptions, attitudes, and objectives. They suggest that we, in our very definitions of knowledge, learning, intelligence, and education itself, must reflect the whole of the human condition. To attempt any less is to guarantee an incomplete education and assure the long-term failure of our efforts.

In keeping with these considerations, this issue of *Holistic Education Review* focuses on the most profound and problematic of its central themes: the "spiritual foundations of education." The articles include theistic and nontheistic, theoretical and practical explorations of the issue. The authors come from diverse disciplines and professions, from Paul Byers in anthropology, to David Elkind in psychology, to Jack Petrash in Waldorf education, to David Purpel in curriculum theory. The insights that the authors provide do not constitute an articulation of a single perspective or a cohesive set of perspectives. Rather, they are bound by a common and individual desire to press beyond the boundaries of present discourse — to move beyond the comfortable but limited language of reform that is at once seemingly practical and hopelessly inadequate.

— *Jeffrey Kane*

Notes

1. National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform* (April 1983), p. 5.
2. Ibid., p. 7.

Introducing the Editorial Board

Besides marking the new editorship of Dr. Jeffrey Kane, dean of the School of Education of Adelphi University, this issue marks the inauguration of a distinguished editorial board. The board represents a community of scholars, teachers, school administrators, and physicians actively engaged in shaping the educational debate. The board will work closely with Dr. Kane and Dr. Diana M. Feige, the associate editor, to guide the vision of *Holistic Education Review*; they will assist in defining the *Review's* substance as well as help in maintaining the quality of its contribution to the educational debate. We welcome the editorial board members and thank them for sharing their expertise with the *Review*.

Edward T. Clark Jr., Ph.D., is president of Ed Clark Associates, a holistic education consulting service. In addition to a varied background as clergyman, therapist, academic administrator, and environmental educator, Dr. Clark has been actively involved in teacher education for 25 years. He currently teaches in the graduate Design Management Studies Program of Northern Illinois University and is on the associate faculty of Goddard College. He has written extensively in the area of educational change and is active in the holistic education movement as a founder and member of the steering committee of the Global Alliance for Transforming Education (GATE).

Francine Cuccia, C.A.S., is principal of Link Elementary School in New City, New York, and clinical professor and co-director of the Whole Language Summer Institute at Adelphi University. Ms. Cuccia is also consultant and staff developer to the New York State Education Department on whole language/performance-based assessment. She was an elementary classroom teacher for many years and is presently completing a doctoral program at Hofstra University; her dissertation is on the topic of whole language as a catalyst for changing school culture.

David Elkind, Ph.D., is currently professor of child study at Tufts University in Medord, Massachusetts. He was formerly professor of psychology, psychiatry and education at the University of Rochester. Professor Elkind's bibliography now numbers well over four hundred items and includes research, theoretical articles, book chapters and thirteen books. Perhaps Professor Elkind is best known for his three most recent books, *The Hurried Child, All Grown Up and No Place to Go*, and *Miseducation*. A revised edition of *The Hurried Child* came out in 1988 and a new book entitled *Grandparenting: Understanding Today's Children* was published in November 1989. In preparation is a new book entitled *The Post-Modern Family: Breaking Patterns – Making Connections*.

Philip S. Gang, Ph.D., is executive director of the Global Alliance for Transforming Education and associate director of the US — Global Thinking Project. He has extensive experience as an international lecturer, workshop leader, consultant, school head, and teacher. The focus of his work is empowering people to take responsibility for the welfare of our planet. His published works include *Rethinking Education* and *Our Planet, Our Home*.

Maxine Greene, Ph.D., holds the William F. Russell Chair in the Foundations of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her most recent works include a book, *The Dialectic of Freedom*, and numerous articles on the arts and aesthetic education. She also has been active in the Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education since its conception.

Gerald Karnow, M.D., did his training in internal medicine at Harlem Hospital in New York City. Since 1978 he has been the school doctor for the Rufolf Steiner School in New York City and a consultant for other Waldorf schools. With two colleagues he shares a general medical practice in Spring Valley, New York, at the Fellowship Community, a multi-generational community centered around care of the aged. He is editor of the *Journal of Anthroposophic Medicine* and president of the Homeopathic Medical Society of the State of New York.

Carol Levine, M.Ed., is an advocate of whole language and interdisciplinary teaching. Ms. Levine has taught for fourteen years, at both elementary school and college levels. She is currently teaching first grade in the Plainview — Old Bethpage School District on Long Island.

Jack Miller, Ph.D., has worked in the area of humanistic/holistic education for approximately twenty years. He is author and co-author of several books, including *The Compassionate Teacher; Curriculum: Perspectives and Practice*; and *The Holistic Curriculum*. He is co-author of a new book entitled *Holistic Learning: A Teacher's Guide to Integrated Studies*, published by OISE Press. Dr. Miller is currently head of the Niagara Center and a professor in curriculum at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. At OISE Dr. Miller is coordinator of a program in holistic education at the graduate level.

Ron Miller, Ph.D., founded *Holistic Education Review* in 1988 and served as editor for its first four years. His background is in humanistic psychology, Montessori education, and American educational history. He is the author of *What Are Schools For?, Holistic Education in American Culture* and is currently writing a book on the philosophy of holistic education.

Jack Petrash, M.S.D., has been an elementary school teacher for twenty years in both the New York City public schools and at the Washington Waldorf School. He has been a spokesperson for the Association of Waldorf Schools, serving as an adviser to developing schools. Mr. Petrash has published a number of articles on Waldorf Education and on storytelling and its application in the classroom.

David Purpel, Ph.D., is a professor of education at the University of North Carolina in the Department of Curriculum and Educational Foundations. He is the author of *The Moral and Spiritual Crises in Education* and books on curriculum and moral education. He is interested in educational discourse, the moral dimensions of education, and the use of religious metaphors in education.

Douglas Sloan, Ph.D., is a professor of history and education at Teachers College, Columbia University. He was formerly editor of *Teachers College Record*. He is the author of numerous books and articles on the history of American education and is the author of *Insight — Imagination: The Emancipation of Thought and the Modern World*. Dr. Sloan is also aajunct professor of religion and education at Union Theological Seminary and Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City.

Huston Smith, Ph.D., is currently a visiting professor of religious studies at the University of California, Berkeley; his chief previous appointments were at Washington University in St. Louis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Syracuse University. His *Religions of Man*, which has sold over 1.5 million copies, was reissued this year in a completely revised, updated, and inclusive gender edition under its new title, *The World's Religions* (Harper San Francisco). His books on the philosophy of religion are *Forgotten Truth* (Harper & Row), and *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind* (Quest Books); those on education are *The Purposes of Higher Education* (Harper Brothers), and *Condemned to Meaning* (Harper & Row). The last is an expansion of his 1964 lecture to the John Dewey Society.

David Sobel, M.Ed., is co-chairperson of the education department at Antioch New England Graduate School. He teaches courses in conceptual development, problem-solving service for the elementary school, curriculum and learning theory and environmental education. He also has served as a staff development consultant in service curriculum design and investigative science education for the past ten years in schools throughout New England. He was co-founder, director, and teacher of the Harrisville School, Harrisville, New Hampshire.

Sheldon Stoff, Ph.D., is a professor emeritus and former chairperson of the Department of Education of Adelphi University. He is currently director of the International Center for Studies in Dialogue, and the adult learning center which seeks to help restore a balanced approach to cognition. Dr. Stoff is also the author of four books and numerous articles and is an elected member of the International Center for Integrated Studies.

Arthur Zajonc, Ph.D., is a professor of physics at Amherest College. His research area is the foundations of quantitative physics. He is also one of the founders of the Waldorf School now in Hadley, Massachusetts, and served as its president of the board for ten years. Dr. Zajonc has a special interest in the place of science and technology in the upper elementary school years and college years. He has authored a book about to be published by Bantam Books entitled *First Light: A Scientific and Sacred History of Light*.

The Spiritual in the Classroom

by Paul Byers

Paul Byers, an anthropologist, is adjunct associate professor of education at Teachers College, Columbia University. He has been particularly concerned with the problem of bringing newly recognized scholarly insights into inflexible and resistant social institutions. His research in human communication examines the unrecognized forms of information that are a significant part of all relationships.

It is my conviction that any genuinely holistic education recognizes and includes the "spiritual" aspect of human life.[1] Spiritual, to many people, implies religion, and this obscures its larger meaning. Religions are particular *answers* to the universal human questions about the creation and meaning of life. Spiritual refers to the universal personal concern for the *questions*. When we removed religion from public education to avoid conflict and allow "freedom of religion," we removed the *answers* religions offered. But, unfortunately, we also threw out, ignored, or denied the perennial *questions*, and education nourished mainly the material aspects of life.

It is my task in this essay to describe a perspective from which the words *holistic, spiritual, religion, education, classroom,* and *teacher* can be redefined and reassembled without confusion or contradiction — to describe an aspect of education that lies outside of the explicit curriculum but is important to the inner life of everyone. We often say that a sense of "values" is missing from education, but if we were to attempt to teach "values" in public schools, we would have the same conflicts that teaching religion would engender. Holistic education implies a perspective from which the child's perennial inner questions about life can be acknowledged and nourished without the presumption of a "correct answer."

Human and social change is a process that obliges us continuously to find new perspectives, new definitions, and revisions in the way we perceive and think. This is an observable fact of life that applies equally to the evolution of life on the planet, to social change, to growth, and to learning.

In this essay I will suggest a perspective that has the value of ordering holistic, spiritual, religion, education, classroom, and teacher in a single, coherent package. My personal concern, however, is not for the "package." I am concerned for children and for their teachers. I believe it is possible to increase the opportunity for both students and teachers to find their ongoing classroom encounters meaningfully human and enriching. Our education, public and private, has developed in response to the perceived needs and to the overwhelming success orientation of today's competitive, industrialized society. Holistic education begins with a concern for children and the human future. There is no contradiction here, only a widened perspective.

Holistic

When we say, "He can't see the forest for the trees," or, "We have to look at the larger picture," or, "You can't take things out of context," we are implying a holistic perspective. Perhaps we lose this perspective when we become specialized and focus on parts of things (or humans). Science tends to look at smaller and smaller

things (subatomic particles, genes, viruses, neurotransmitters); doctors tend to look at the ailing *parts* of patients; the media tend to report on news *items*. In education we also tend to focus on items such as lessons, grades, test scores, discipline, or assorted technologies. When we read about the "larger picture," it is likely to be about the state of the manpower pool, the needs of industry, national averages, and costs. Only rarely do we find it possible to think in terms of our human social future or the relation of the school experience to the whole of students' lives.

It was, I believe, this sense that we were losing sight of the larger long-term implications of focused specialization that led to a movement calling for an awareness of a larger perspective — a *holistic* awareness. Thus, when we consider the *whole* of the lives of children in classrooms, we must look beyond grades, intelligence, today's behavior. Education, to be holistic, must have an awareness of life-meaning beyond the subject matter of the curriculum and beyond the immediate circumstances of poverty, ethnicity, or even disability. It is in the larger holistic perspective that we will always find the spiritual in humans, even those who have rejected religion.

Spiritual

The word *spiritual* has had many meanings in our history, so many that the word has almost no useful meaning and is little used in everyday talk except in relation to religion. About a century ago the word (with *-ist* or *-ism* attached) acquired some unsavory associations that included telling fortunes and talking to spirits of the dead. At best the word *spiritual* suggested religious devotion. Now the word is reappearing, and, like the word *holistic*, it cannot and need not be defined, although we can look for its meaning in the talk of children.

Robert Coles has probably listened to more children, and a greater diversity of children, than any other serious scholar. His most recent book, *The Spiritual Life of Children*, is filled with the recorded talk of children.[2] Most Americans, including children and psychoanalysts, do not distinguish between the universal curiosity about the relation of Man to Nature (a larger whole) and the various religious interpretations, most of which focus on the belief in or descriptions of God. Thus, although Coles was exploring the "spiritual life of children," almost all the talk in his book focused on religion in general and God in particular. Only a few of the children quoted in the book talked *beyond* religion. One example:

> You take the kids whose folks aren't into any religion; we have lots of them in our school, and they're no different than anyone, and some of them — I talk with them about what they believe — are really great, because they ask a lot of questions about life, and they want to stop and talk about things, about what's right and wrong, and what you should believe, and after I'll talk with them, I'll say to myself, hey, maybe if you have no religion, you end up being more religious. You know what I mean?[3]

Education, to be holistic, must have an awareness of life-meaning beyond the subject matter of the curriculum and beyond the immediate circumstances of poverty, ethnicity, or even disability.

While this boy gives religion/religious two different meanings in his next-to-last sentence, I would add a word to his vocabulary and rephrase his sentence: "... maybe if you have no religion, you end up being more *spiritual*."

There are two other interesting observations to make in this brief quote:

- that it is the "folks" who are (or aren't) "into any religion," and
- that "... the kids ... are really great, because they ask a lot of questions about life, and they want to stop and talk about things...."

Although this boy (and the others he speaks of) do not use the word *spiritual*, they are clearly talking about matters of concern that are behind or beyond religion. Here are two more examples of children's (spiritual) concerns:

> You look at the sky, and you wonder what's up there, except what we see, the sun and the moon and the stars. Anything else? Who knows? Not me! Most of the time, I'm just going from minute to minute; I'm trying to get from here to there — all the chores my folks give me and my own hassles I've got to get through. It's when something unexpected happens that I stop and ask myself what's going on: what's it all about?[4]

> You know what? I was sitting and reading [at home] and it was windy, real windy out, and the wind was probably going for an hour, but I didn't notice it; but then I did, and I got up and I looked out. The wind was whistling, and you could see the trees bending. I watched the trees, and I couldn't stop, and I thought they're dancing, that's what, they're excited. The leaves — the wind went

through them. You could hear it, and the grass was bending, and some branches went in one direction, and others in the other. It made me stop and think about the world. I was looking out there and I felt different — I mean someday I'll be gone, but the trees will be there, and the wind, and the grass. I have a friend who thinks the wind is God talking. That's what he says. I sure don't believe that. I don't know if there's a God. I don't think there is any real evidence [that He exists]. But you listen to the wind and the trees, and you stop yourself, and you realize you're part of it all. You know what I mean?[5]

A child is born into an ongoing world of light, color, sound, smells, shapes, movement, and touch. That world is both a world of Nature and, within that, a world of human social constructions (e.g., families, schools). The child may have few or many options or choices with which to compose his or her life, depending on "circumstances" in the human-constructed world of competition and inequality. But nature does not discriminate. In this awesome world there is beauty and delight for those who are open to it, and there is surely loneliness for those who ignore it. But most of all, as the child above said, "... you stop yourself, and you realize you're part of it all." This is surely the kind of experience that some teachers would like to be able to offer students — an important realization beyond schoolwork or personal circumstance, a spiritual insight. But this aspect of education is neither recognized nor supported by public education.

It is not possible to give instruction here. You cannot instruct a child to see beauty. Experiencing beauty, the aesthetic, requires the awareness, participation, awe, and wonder of the person who sees/hears/feels it.

This experience of "you're part of it all" is surely as valuable in creating and experiencing one's life as the knowledge acquired in school. School teaches one how to do things. The (spiritual) world of nature teaches one to *be*.

Religion

Man has been called the only symbol-using creature. His most obvious symbol system is language. We give names to things that we see ("tree"); we give names to abstractions that we construct ("six"); and we give names to unseen realities that we know only by inference ("gravity"). Religions have given anthropomorphic meaning to the ineffable through the symbolic story.

Every human group or religion recognizes that a few among us experience and know something of an unseen Nature that is hidden to the rest of us. These are the seers, shamans, avatars, mystics. But in today's human-constructed world there are also phonies who, like con men, influence peddlers, or the indulgence sellers against whom Martin Luther railed, have muddied the holy waters by proposing a materialist aspect to religion and, by extension, to the spiritual. This is the ever-present danger for our symbol-using species: the possibility of mistaking the symbol — the name in language — for that which is symbolized or named. In my own life it was only at about the halfway mark that I understood that there is no essential contradiction between religion and spirituality — that religions propose to simplify and explain the spiritual through symbols and stories.

My personal experience in a small-town, midwestern Calvinist, Protestant church did not connect me with anything recognizably spiritual. I was, instead, asked to memorize the names of the books of the Bible and was rewarded with colored ribbons, and I was promised a place in heaven if I qualified by leading an impossibly dull Christian life and if I maintained an unwavering faith. No one was able to tell me how to do or have faith. So instead of going to church I did my own favorite things: climbing to the top of the tallest tree to feel it sway in the wind, watching the circling cloud of swifts unwind into chimneys at dusk, walking in the woods and fields alone, and playing the piano.

Only at mid-life did I recognize that the aesthetic in Nature and music had given me a spiritual basis for life. In Sunday school I had dutifully memorized the books of the Bible to be religious, and in public school I memorized the presidents and the state capitals to be educated. Now, when I find myself in a church, when I read the stories in the scriptures of any religion, or when I see or hear the works of artists in museums and concert halls, I am reminded of my place in the ongoing stream of life.

Education

I want, first, to describe education as it might appear to children, not as it is described in our social mythology.

Public education is not designed to fit children — only our accumulated, test-derived sense of children. Its more important social function is to produce people with the job skills that society requires. When a child enters school he is expected to fit himself to a new way of experiencing the world and to a new way of learning. Instead of exploring and discovering the world, he now has a prepackaged adult version of

the world brought to him by books and teachers. Instead of finding out the meaning of his discoveries by talking about them to others, he is *told* by adults. Instead of comparing his perceptions and thoughts with those of his friends, he is told the "correct" way to perceive and think and given standardized tests that quantify this "correctness." While Nature responds to difference in creating new forms, the child in school is rarely rewarded for being different, only "better." School, even more than home, represents expectations that must be met. The child's own expectations are acknowledged only when they coincide with those of the adult world as it reaches him at home and at school.

The schoolchild (and this includes those in higher education) is given only trivial choices, such as a book to read or an occasional elective course. He is given no significant choice of what he learns or how he is expected to learn it. He is expected to learn that he lives in a "free" country and to believe that, when he grows up, he will have "free choice," but he is not taught the meaning of "free."

I have described this education as more coercive or oppressive than most children probably feel it. Most children, like most adults, cannot easily distinguish between Nature and the human constructions we live in.

Most teachers feel a genuine warmth for and interest in most children and would like to be their advocates. But I have drawn this somewhat harsh picture as a contrast to the inner, spiritual world of the child — that world in which the child is free to create whatever he chooses and, through that, to discover his own sense of beauty, joy, and himself. This is the world of story, of imagination — a world of color, shape, and sound. This is a personal, *natural* world that always proposes the aesthetic and the *observation* (in contrast to evaluation) of phenomena.

In our materialist world we have often commercialized the aesthetic by calling it "Art." Art is expected to be immediately pleasing and beautiful — and, ideally, salable. But if we look for the origin or source of the aesthetic, it is always one or another form of Nature. Nature is not always immediately pleasing or beautiful, but there is a most important human lesson here: While Nature may be occasionally and unpredictably ugly and unkind, the larger and longer process has always worked rhythmically toward harmony and beauty. Every observant child recognizes that the flower that dies in the fall will reappear in the spring. Nature is reliable and has an essential stability, even if, like the tightrope walker, it must make continuous, unpredictable corrections or adjustments to maintain that stable harmony.

The aesthetic of Nature is a more reliable model for life than the lessons prepared by well-meaning humans. This would not be overlooked by a genuinely holistic education.

Classroom and teacher

Classrooms can be (and are) anything from prison cages or blackboard jungles at one end of the spectrum to caring safe havens at the other. Teachers can be anything from mean-spirited civil servants to the child's most reliable and loving friends. One thing, however, is certain: Almost everyone who becomes a teacher hopes to be constructively meaningful to the children he or she teaches. Almost every teacher is saddened by the multiple obstacles that today's world and its institutions put between teacher and pupil. The typical teacher today is expected to do what, in today's world, cannot be done. This typical teacher comes to realize that she can be genuinely meaningful only to an occasional child, or a few children. When a teacher has the sense that she has "touched" a child, it is the inner spiritual part of the child that was touched.

I believe (and perhaps only because it would be morally reprehensible for me *not* to believe) that our human world — and for my present purposes the institutional educational world — will heal itself in the long run. Even though budgets are getting leaner, dropping out is increasing, test scores are unsatisfactory, and teachers are burning out, there are many evidences that our much-described crisis is producing a profound reexamination of what we are doing in the name of education. The move toward a child-based development of a truly holistic education (acknowledging that we have been educating less than the whole child) is one such evidence. I see this as part of a still larger hope or demand that we organize our institutions to fit humans instead of requiring humans to fit less-than-human institutions.

How can we think about fitting education to the inner spiritual life of a child? I say "how can we think about ..." since the inner spiritual life of a child cannot be directly addressed by lessons or language. This part of a child (or anyone) is private and personal. It is the only place where the entire range of one's individual difference can be fully accepted. The rest of this essay will be devoted to suggesting the

indirect ways that a teacher (or anyone else) can "touch" this inner spiritual world.

Aesthetic

At the beginning of this essay I moved the word *spiritual* away from its common association with religion and toward the word *Nature*. There are many religions but only one Nature. I suggested that spiritual implied a recognition of the child's oneness with a larger whole called Nature and two of the quotes from Coles' book described how the observation or experience of nature led to personal insights that I called spiritual.

To talking, thinking humans, *Nature* is a noun, a something. But think of it, now, as an ongoing *process* — as a verb or predicate — that has worked over time and that we might well try to understand and live within. From this perspective Nature is the never-ending story within which all the individual lives of its many forms are shorter stories. Nature is continuously changing, growing or evolving, and continuously healing or repairing small dissonances *in order to maintain its ongoing stability.* (Like the tightrope walker whose overall balance requires the continual correction of small imbalances.)

The aesthetic of Nature is a more reliable model for life than the lessons prepared by well-meaning humans. This would not be overlooked by a genuinely holistic education.

Nature recognizes no names. Every piece of Nature recognizes the other pieces by recognizing pattern of difference — between atoms, animals, plants, seasons, climates, or time. On one hand or level differences can lead to conflict, but in a larger or longer frame, unpredictable differences are *required* for change (as unpredictable differences are also required for learning or growth in humans). Difference is sacred in nature.

Our human metaphor for the processes of Nature is the *aesthetic*, which, like the story, puts a variety of differences into a frame (a time frame, a canvas, a symphony) where the elements mingle and flow in a weaving of predictability and unpredictability, certainty and uncertainty, the pleasant and unpleasant, and always with an implicit or explicit resolution. While humans may tell stories with unpleasant or ambiguous endings or resolutions, Nature's story is one of continuous change, the acceptance of difference, adaptation, healing, and growth. Our experience of the *natural* planet is our evidence that the processes of Nature work somewhat more reliably than the intentional, "cognitive" processes of humans.

As religions are multiple versions of the larger spiritual, so our popular "arts" are multiple versions of the aesthetic, but there is far more to be considered than the usually recognized "arts." Life itself can be an aesthetic "composition"; human relations can be seen as a form of aesthetic, but the aesthetic cannot be intentionally constructed from a recipe. It can only be experienced, and it is only experienced by *participation*. The aesthetic experience is an interaction in which the participant experiences himself *in the story*. It is this relationship that one's inner spiritual self comes to recognize, to feel, to *know*, through the enlivening experience of participating in Nature.

I believe that the surest key to anyone's inner life is the aesthetic, the sacred (symbolic) representation of Nature itself. A holistic view of the aesthetic embraces such variant forms as daydreaming, courtship and marriage, singing in the shower, disco dancing, rap. One way to distinguish what I mean by aesthetic is to recognize the difference between those deliberate, intentional performances (or products) that we *do* and those which flow from us without our conscious awareness and often surprise us. The aesthetic, like play, is not calculated in advance, although the frame ("let's play house") may be.

Cooperation is an aesthetic form of human relations, but negotiation and competition are not unless they are set in larger frames such as a basketball game in which *players* cooperate and *teams* compete. All of us value cooperation but it is rare in today's society. We are likely to think of negotiation as cooperation when it is not. Holistic education would value cooperation, but a teacher can no more *instruct* children to cooperate than be spontaneous. It is possible, of course, to teach the *concept* of cooperation, and it is not uncommon to mistake the *concept* for

cooperation itself — as a child can be taught that "the sun rises in the east" without knowing where "east" is. Perhaps the most a teacher can do is create contexts or situations in which cooperation or other forms of aesthetic experience can happen and then allow it to happen. Children can be taught to compete but they can only discover cooperation. The good feeling that a child (or anyone) experiences as a necessary part of a team — whole — is an *aesthetic* (spiritual) experience — one that is both larger than self, and of which self is a part. This can be an experience of *intimacy* with the larger world of others.

A classroom may be drab, badly furnished, or unpainted. But imagination can transform anything, and with the cooperative imagination of children, any room can become a Garden of Eden for a while. And if classrooms are ugly, the children can be taken away almost instantly by an absorbing story, preferably *told* by a teacher who is then, along with the listener, a living participant in the story.

Around the world storytelling has been the most common form of "education." Some have said that the human is the story-telling animal. The story is now coming to be seen as Man's most effective teaching tool. At a meeting of the American Psychological Association, Renée Fuller reported:

> Making stories may, indeed, be fundamental to human thinking .... The ability to comprehend a story — that is, to grasp meaning within a given context — may be more basic to human intelligence than anything measured by IQ tests.
>
> The need to make our life coherent, to make a story out of it, is probably so basic that we are unaware of its importance .... Story cohesion, as the basic form of intellectual cohesion, is earlier in development and cognition than we had thought possible on the basis of IQ tests.[6]

Fuller points out that the story provides the structure in which information can be understood, so that tests which ask for information out of context — such as IQ tests and those which test "reading" by asking for single-word recognition — are misleading. Darwin, Churchill, and Einstein all did poorly in school, but each produced brilliant and important "stories" in his lifetime. Darwin's "story" was evolution, Churchill's was World War II, Einstein's was his theory of relativity. These life involvement "stories" are not engendered by a pedagogy that asks children to learn lists of words, names, dates, books of the Bible, or state capitals.

Jerome Bruner, one of the fathers of cognitive psychology, points out that the story teaches *metaphor* and that metaphor fuels problem solving.[7] Bruner insists that knowing, feeling, and thinking cannot be separated — and that we might better say we *"perfink."* As the live telling of a story is a frame for and more important (to the child) than the story, so Bruner implies that the story itself is the frame for and more compelling than the information in the story. Children say, "Read [or tell] me a story." They do not say, "Read about dragons to me."

Following the significance of the story further, it is said by many that the stories we tell ourselves become prophecies for our lives — and even our social future. The stories that a child hears (e.g., Aesop's fables, the Grimm brothers' fairy tales) provide one (metaphoric) model of life, and the story that a child tells himself about himself becomes his intention. But such stories, like the aesthetic metaphors of Nature, music, or dance are significant not only as items in a curriculum, but they are also nourishment for the spiritual life.

Perhaps we will discover that much of the troubling deviance that plagues our young people and world is traceable to an undernourished spiritual life.[8]

Perhaps we will recognize that our intolerance of difference — differences of culture, color, religion, or individual talent or preference — reflects our alienation from Nature, in which difference is required for the creation of all life, growth, and learning.

Perhaps we will discover, as did the boy quoted above by Coles, that:

> ... you listen to the wind and the trees, and you stop yourself, and you realize you're part of it all.

Notes

1. I must acknowledge two people whose thinking and experience have been crucial to my understanding of both spiritual and classroom education. The work and writing of Gregory Bateson clarified my understanding of the aesthetic in relation to evolution, growth, and learning. My wife, Lucy Schneider, a classroom teacher, has been deeply concerned with a pedagogy that involves the inner spiritual aspect of children and adults. Her daily reports of classroom experiences have illuminated the relationship of the spiritual and education for me. I am, of course, responsible for the way ideas are assembled and expressed here.

2. Robert Coles, *The Spiritual Life of Children* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990).

3. Ibid., p. 279.

4. Ibid., p. 283.

5. Ibid., p. 296.

6. Renée Fuller, quoted in Marilyn Ferguson, *PragMagic* (New York: Pocket Books), p. 2.

7. Jerome Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

8. For a beautiful story of one child's spiritual nourishment, I suggest *The Education of Little Tree* (University of New Mexico Press) by Forrest Carter, a Cherokee who was reared by grandparents in harsh material poverty but whose "Education" was the Cherokee understanding of his place in Nature—"The Way." Fifteen years after it was first published, it has reached the top of the best-seller list and is easily available.)

Spirituality in Education

by David Elkind

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Spirituality can be used in either a narrow sense or a broad one. In the narrow sense spirituality is often used to a particular set of religious beliefs. A person who is devout in those beliefs might be said to be a spiritual person. Spirituality, however, can also be used in a much broader sense. Individuals who, in their everyday lives, exemplify the highest of human qualities such as love, forgiveness, and generosity might also be said to be spiritual. It is spirituality in the broad, nondenominational, sense that I believe can be fostered by educational practice.

By the term, *educational practice*, however, I do not mean the curriculum, or teaching strategies, or classroom management. Rather, I believe that spirituality in the broad sense is best, and perhaps exclusively, taught by example. Teachers who in their interactions with children demonstrate thoughtfulness, sensitivity, and caring as well as well as competence and mastery of their profession are most likely to provide a model of spirituality in the broad sense. From this perspective, educational practice is, first and foremost, a reflection of the teacher's humanness.

Spirituality in the broad sense has to do with the possession and utilization of the basic human values of caring, goodness, generosity, sympathy, and forgiveness. Education is spiritual to the extent that teachers exemplify, in their interactions with their students, some or all of these human values. Of the two competing philosophies of education (*filling-the-pail* or *lighting-the-flame*) the latter is much more conducive to spiritual education than the former.

Educational practice, however, is always founded on an implicit or explicit educational philosophy. Almost from the beginning of recorded history, two opposed educational philosophies have vied for preeminence. Perhaps Heraclius described these two philosophies best when he wrote that education has "not to do with filling a pail, but rather with lighting a flame." Heraclius was clearly in favor of the *lighting-a-flame* conception of education but at the same time recognized the competing, *filling-a-pail* orientation.

Both of these philosophies, like any philosophy of education, entail a conception of the learner, a conception of learning, a conception of knowledge, and a conception of the aims of education. Nonetheless, in my opinion, and this is the central thesis of this article, one of these educational philosophies is more conducive to encouraging humane teaching than is the other. In some respects this discrepancy is a result of the difference in what Focault calls the *discourse* used by the two philosophies.[1] The *filling-a-pail* philosophy

uses a discourse or language that, in effect, is less humane than the philosophy of *lighting a flame.* For purposes of comparison and contrast, I will overstate the case for the differences between these two philosophies.

It is also important to emphasize that, in practice, humane teachers operate in much the same way regardless of the particular philosophy of education to which they subscribe. This is because humane teachers base their practice on their observations and understanding of children, rather than on theoretical principles. However, when child-centered teachers, of whatever philosophical persuasion, talk about what they do, they tend to use the discourse of *lighting a flame* rather than the discourse of *filling a pail.*

This is true because, and this is my second thesis, the *lighting-a-flame* discourse is the one most often used by practicing teachers and principals, while the *filling-a-pail* discourse is most often used by policy makers, administrators, and educational psychologists.

The *filling-the-pail* philosophy of education

The conception of the learner. Consider the conception of the *learner* and the discourse used by Mr. Gradgrind in the Charles Dickens classic *Hard Times*:

> Now what I want is facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon facts: Nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to the facts, Sir![2]

Clearly in the conception of the child held by Mr. Gradgrind, a child is merely an empty vessel to be filled. From this perspective, the human virtues are simply more facts that have to be learned. Without instruction in these virtues the child would be little more than a wild beast. It is education, not our human potential, that gives us any hope of realizing the best in human nature.

In the modern era, this conception of the child as a passive receptacle of environmental input was proclaimed by John Watson, generally recognized as the founder of *behaviorism* in American psychology. He wrote:

> Give me a dozen infants, well formed, and my own special world to bring them up in, and I'll guarantee you to take any one at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select — doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant chief and yes, even beggar and thief, regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, vocations, and race of his ancestors.[3]

This Watsonian conception of the child is very much alive and well today. Consider this passage from the 1981 book by Engelmann and Engelmann entitled, *Give Your Child a Superior Mind:*

> Children respond to the environment. Their capacity to learn and the content of what they learn depends upon what the environment teaches.... These facts about the environment suggest that the environment is flexible and that we can mold it to be more effective in maximizing the capacity of our children. Instead of relying on the traditional environment that is rich in learning opportunities for the child, we can take the environment a step further and mold it into a purposeful instrument that guarantees your child will have a superior mind.[4]

This view of the child as learner presents the child as passive and the environment as all important. If the child attains any knowledge, skills, or human virtues it is because the environment has instilled these within the child, not because the child has the potential for, or any natural inclination toward, these acquisitions. The commonality in discourse is striking. All three place great emphasis on the "environment" and both Gradgrind and the Engelmanns talk about the environment as "facts."

The conception of learning. If we conceive of the child as an empty vessel, then learning has to be seen as a process of taking in or absorbing information. The early learning theorists, such as Thorndike, saw learning as a process of "stamping in" the facts that needed to be learned.[5] Contemporary learning theorists are more enlightened.[6, 7] They recognize that learners have different "styles" that affect the ease with which young people learn certain materials. They also recognize that children use different "strategies" when approaching different tasks. And cognitive learning theorists now talk about "metacognition," the mental techniques children use to aid them in learning.

Among contemporary educators of the *filling-a-pail* persuasion, the process of filling the vessel depends to a certain extent on the nature of the vessel itself. Nonetheless, although there is a new recognition of the influence of the receptacle's characteristics on its ability to absorb information, the absorption of information remains the primary concern. Styles, strategies, and metacognitions are all means of getting the information into the receptacle more expeditiously. Although learning theorists now recognize that human learning differs in essential respects from animal learning, they still see it as a rather one-sided process, namely, a means of getting information into the essentially empty vessel.

The conception of knowledge. From the standpoint of the *filling-a-pail* philosophy of education, knowledge is external to, and independent of, the learner. Facts exist, they are immutable. The child

must learn them as well as the skills and values of the society. And, because knowledge exists independently of the learner, her grasp of this knowledge can be objectively measured by means of tests. That is to say, existing knowledge provides a standard against which the child's grasp of facts can be evaluated. The extensive use (and misuse) of tests in our schools today gives witness to the conception of knowledge and skills as objective entities whose incorporation by the child can be quantitatively assessed.

It is from this standpoint of knowledge as an objective set of facts that various programs to teach values have been introduced into the public schools. If values are objective, then they can be taught much as any other subject matter. We must fill children up with the right values much as we must fill them up with the right facts. From this perspective, human goodness is learned much as one learns algebra or geography. This follows because the principles of learning are independent of the content to be learned, so that values are acquired in the same manner as any other type of knowledge or skills.

The aims of education. Not surprisingly, if one views the child as an empty vessel, learning as the process of filling a pail, and knowledge as the material that goes into the pail, then the aims of education are easy to deduce. Clearly, from this educational philosophy, the aims of instruction must be to fill the vessel as completely and as rapidly as possible. Former Secretary of Education William Bennett put this aim very clearly when he argued:

> We should want every student to know how mountains are made, and that for most reactions there is an equal and opposite reaction. They should know who said, "I am the state" and who said, "I have a dream." They should know about subjects and predicates, about isosceles triangles and ellipses. They should know where the Amazon flows and what the First Amendment means. They should know about the Donner party and about slavery, and Shylock, Hercules, and Abigail Adams, where Ethiopia is, and why there is a Berlin Wall."[8]

(Shades of Mr. Gradgrind!) Looked at in this way, the aims of education are comparable to those of a company producing a product. To be profitable, and competitive, companies have to produce better products at lower cost. And that too, should be the aim of education. Contemporary educational efforts to push the curriculum downward and to extend the school day and school year reflect the pervasiveness of the factory mode of discourse in education.

From a narrow spiritual standpoint, the same would have to hold true. The aim would be to get young people to be as good as possible as soon as possible. This means that schools should start instilling values and morals from the very start, preferably in preschool and kindergarten. Yet there is an inherent contradiction here inasmuch as *filling a pail* entails the notion of competition and teaching competition from an early age would seem to contradict other values of human goodness, such as "love thy neighbor." Current educational efforts to get "cooperative learning" into the schools are meeting resistance from parents and educators who want children to be competitive.[9]

The *lighting-a-flame* philosophy

The conception of the learner. When one views education as *lighting a flame*, there is the implicit assumption that there is something in the child ready to be set on fire. This fire is usually understood as curiosity, as a need to explore and experiment, and as an eagerness to learn. The teacher does not put tinder boxes into the child, but rather finds ways of igniting them.

Since the time of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the *lighting-a-flame* philosophy has come to be associated with an educational program dictated by the developmental level of the child. It was Rousseau who framed the modern *lighting-a-flame* philosophy. He wrote:

> Your first duty is to be humane. Love childhood, look with friendly eyes on its games, its pleasures, it amiable dispositions. Which of you does not sometimes look back regretfully on the age when laughter was ever on the lips and the heart free of care? Why steal from the little innocents the enjoyment of time that passes all too quickly.... Nature wants children to be children before they are men. If we deliberately depart from this order we shall get premature fruits which are neither ripe nor well flavoured and which soon decay. We shall have youthful sages and grown up children. Childhood has ways of seeing, thinking and feeling peculiar to itself: Nothing can be more foolish than to seek our ways for them. I should as soon expect a child of ten to be five feet in height as to be possessed of judgment.[10]

The difference in discourse between Dickens's Gradgrind and Rousseau is that one speaks the language of the environment and its powers while the other speaks the language of human development and its potentials. Not surprisingly, the Rousseauian discourse is much more supportive of a broad spiritual discourse than is the language of Gradgrind or of the Engelmanns.

The conception of learning. The most complete modern spokesperson for the *lighting-a-flame* philosophy of education is Jean Piaget.[11] In his work Piaget not only detailed the developmental stages of intelligence (adaptive thinking and action) but also described the spontaneous conceptions of the world that children constructed on their own. For Piaget

learning was a creative activity and involved not only creating new ideas, but also giving up early ones that were found to be less functional.

To be sure, Piaget did not deny that children learn from the environment or experience as the *filling-a-pail* philosophies maintain. He proposed however, that such a view of learning is incomplete and ignores the other side of learning. Put a little differently, learning theorists define learning as the "modification of behavior as a result of experience." Piaget accepted this definition but argued that learning is also the "modification of experience as a result of behavior." We create our own experiences, even those that modify our behavior!

Learning is thus never a simple matter of filling up an empty vessel even when this vessel is endowed with styles and strategies for learning. How the child learns about the world is determined in part by his level of mental development, by personality and intellectual ability. Learning is thus always a highly individual matter. The individuality of learning is the starting point for the advocacy of what is now called "developmentally appropriate practice."[12] Here again the discourses are different. Theorists focus on learning processes, strategies, and styles, whereas the "flame" theorists focus on the developing child.

The conception of knowledge. Given the conception of learning as a creative activity, it follows that knowledge must itself be a construction rather than a preexisting reality. In many ways this distinction between the pail and the flame approaches to knowledge is the difference between the conception of knowledge as right or wrong and knowledge as different. From the position of learning as a creative activity, the child who asks "If I eat spaghetti, will I become Italian?" is not expressing a "wrong" idea but rather a different one that reflects her level of development and reasoning. In the same way, a child who says that six pennies spread out are more than six pennies together is not "wrong" but rather expressing an idea of number as density that is characteristic of his age group.

The acceptance of the ideas of children as different, rather than right or wrong, is critical to humane teaching. If we recognize that children actively construct their own views of the world as best they can, given their level of development, we can respect these constructions as important attempts to understand their world. We need to encourage and support these efforts. In accepting the ideas that children offer as reasonable efforts, we do not "reinforce wrong answers" but rather support the child's active efforts to make sense out of a very complex and problematic world.

More generally, by accepting the child's ideas as valid for her, we also teach her to accept differences of all kinds. Put differently, if we can accept different ideas, then we can also accept various nationalities and religions not as right or wrong or bad or good, but simply as different from our own. To be sure there are things that are right and wrong and those which are bad and good. The real problem in education, as in life, is to be discriminating — to be able to judge between those differences that are merely different, and those which are wrong or bad. But this sort of discrimination is best learned by accepting differences before discriminating between them.

"Let us be silent that we may hear the whisper of the gods."
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

The aims of education. If we regard children as growing persons, learning as a creative activity and knowledge as a human construction, then the aims of education follow naturally. Piaget has put these very well:

> The principal goal of education is to create men who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done — men who are creative, inventive and discoverers. The second goal of education is to form minds which can be critical, can verify, and not accept everything that is offered. The greater danger today is of slogans, collective opinions, ready made trends of thought. We have to be able to resist them individually, to criticize, to distinguish between what is proven and what is not. So we need pupils who are active, who learn early to find out for themselves, partly by their own spontaneous activity and partly through the material we set up for them; who learn early to tell what is verifiable and what is simply the first idea that came to them.[13]

Spirituality and educational discourse

In this article I have argued that the philosophy of education which involves *lighting a flame* is more conducive to spiritual (in the broad sense) education than is the philosophy of education that involves *filling a pail.* I have also argued that this difference is mediated by the discourse used by the two philosophies. Basically, the discourse of the *filling-a-pail* philosophy tends to refer to the environment and to facts, whereas the *lighting-a-flame* philosophy refers to the child and to human development.

Here we encounter a paradox. I have said that effective, caring teachers are alike in their practice regardless of the philosophical orientation, and discourse, they espouse. Yet if the discourse determines practice, how can this be? The answer is that the *filling-a-pail* discourse is often used by a different group and at a different level of power than the *lighting-a-flame* discourse. That is to say, the *filling-a-pail* discourse is more often used by legislators, high-level school administrators, and educational psychologists and researchers, than it is by teachers and principals who work with children on a day-to-day basis.

Indeed, many of the difficulties in contemporary education and contemporary educational reform derive from the conflict between these two discourses. Please understand, I am not saying that legislators, high-level educational administrators, and educational psychologists are personally less spiritual or moral than are teachers and principals. Rather, they tend to discuss and understand education at a power and influence level where the spiritual qualities provided by teachers' language and behavior are less important than the academic outcomes attained by students. How do we reconcile these two discourses and make it easier for teachers and principals to provide the kind of teaching that in its kindness, sensitivity to individual differences, fairness, and generosity sets a model for children to emulate? There are no easy answers to this question. But if we begin to realize how much of our differences are inherent in the language we use, rather than in some preexisting reality, than we will be more open to change.

We have seen how changing the language we use to describe women and minorities has moved us away from some of our prior prejudices. Hopefully, if we modify some of our *filling-a-pail* discourse, we will make it easier for administrators and policy makers to communicate with practicing teachers and principals.

It is my belief that true educational reform will only come about if those with power and influence in education modify their discourse so that it speaks to the humanness of teachers, principals, and children. This can only enrich the spiritual richness that is already present in so many of our schools and classrooms thanks to dedicated educational practitioners who are committed to the discourse of education as the *lighting of a flame.*

And, if this change of discourse were to take place, then legislators, high-level administrators, and educational psychologists would find that their aims would still be achieved. Children would learn the facts, but because they were interesting or served some purpose, not because they were the beginning, and the end all, of education.

Notes

1. M. Focault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage, 1973).
2. C. Dickens, *Hard Times* (New York: Signet, 1980 edition), p. 11.
3. J. Watson, *Behaviorism* (New York: Norton, 1925/1970), p. 105.
4. S. Engelmann and T. Engelmann, *Give Your Child a Superior Mind* (New York: Cornerstone, 1981), p. 31.
5. E.L. Thorndike, *The Fundamentals of Learning* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1932).
6. J.B. Baron, and R.J. Sternberg, *Teaching Thinking Skills: Theory and Practice* (New York: Freeman, 1977).
7. E. Weinstein, and R.E. Mayer, "The Teaching of Learning Strategies," *Handbook of Research on Teaching, 3rd ed.*, edited by M.C. Wittrock (New York: Macmillan, 1986).
8. W.J. Bennett, *First Lessons: A Report on Elementary Education in America* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1986), p. 3.
9. See for example, D.W. Johnson, G. Maruyama, R. Johnson, D. Nelson, and L. Skon, "Effects of Cooperative, Competitive, and Individualistic Goal Structures on Achievement: A Meta-analysis," *Psychological Bulletin 89*, no. 1: 47–62.
10. J.J. Rousseau, *The Emile of Jean Jacques Rousseau* (New York: Columbia University Press), pp. 33, 38.
11. J. Piaget, *The Psychology of Intelligence* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950).
12. S. Bredenkamp, *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1986).
13. J. Piaget, quoted in R.E. Ripple and V.E. Rockcastle, eds, *Piaget Rediscovered: A Report on Elementary Education* (Ithaca, NY: School of Education, Cornell University, 1964), p. 5.

Bridges across Muddy Waters:

A Heuristic Approach to Consensus

by David E. Purpel

David Purpel, Ph.D., is a professor of education at the University of North Carolina in the Department of Curriculum and Educational Foundations. He is the author of* The Moral and Spiritual Crises in Education *and books on curriculum and moral education. He is interested in educational discourse, the moral dimensions of education, and the use of religious metaphors in education.

I believe that the dialogue that has been going on in these pages (*Holistic Education Review*, Summer, 1991) on the possibility of building bridges between various educational reform groups has been provocative, insightful, and helpful. These bridges are meant to allow for dialogue and conversation to travel a common road with a common destination but still allow for different lanes and varying traffic patterns. An important responsibility in true dialogue is to avoid needless disagreement, disagreeable debates, and the dissipation of valuable energy while at the same time being extremely careful not to avoid and deny genuine differences and conflicts. This paper represents an attempt both to clarify some important differences among educators critical of conventional school practices and policies and to suggest ways in which these differences can be reduced without distortion. My suggestion for furthering this process is in the nature of three broad heuristics, that is, concepts designed not to settle arguments or solve problems but that have the possibility of clarifying and edifying the nature of the problems and arguments. Heuristic devices are intended to facilitate the process of discovery by providing useful perspectives and liberating intellectual tools. The three heuristic that I wish to offer are the concepts of the dialectic, of circles of responsibility, and of interrelationship represented by the question "Under what conditions?"

The process of educational reform is threatened by unnecessary and unproductive divisiveness. Holistic educators have a special role to play in reducing these divisions because of their commitment to wholeness and integrated thought. All educators need to confront the enormity of the task of transformation and to validate varying modes of educational reform.

In this analysis, I will be relying to a great extent on what I believe to be the central and most profound aspect of the holistic metaphor, namely, the centrality of the interrelationship between part and whole. It is invaluable that many holistic educators remind us that human beings are extraordinarily complex and that an education which does not fully respond to all the dimensions of human experience is necessarily flawed. What individual holistic educators tend to do in response is focus on one or two neglected dimensions (e.g., the creative impulse, self-understanding, the significance of dreams), which is an altogether proper, useful, and responsible activity. What seems to be lacking, however, in the holistic literature

are efforts to develop, of all things, a holistic theory — one in which all of the important human dimensions are examined in relationship to one another.

Often, educational researchers deal with these relationships with the technique of "yes, but" as in, "Yes, the development of intellectual skills is important *but*... " What follows the "but" often represents the particular emphasis/orientation/focus that the researcher is particularly interested in promoting. Again, this is a reasonable and useful mode of educational criticism particularly when it stimulates dialogue with other neglected points of view. However, such analysis tends more often to produce debate and polarization rather than dialogue and synthesis. As researchers, we have a responsibility to be alert to the necessity and possibility for going beyond competitive debate to cooperative dialogue, moving from partisanship to collegiality. The processes of seeking synthesis and consensus are, of course, nothing new and have always been part of our research tradition, but in an era of social and cultural crisis they take on a special urgency.

Indeed, one of the most important opportunities for such convergence is the apparent consensus among educational critics that educational policies must be viewed in the context of severe and highly dangerous social and cultural problems — threats of ecological and military disaster, physical and spiritual poverty, cultural disintegration, hunger, disease, and so on. I say *apparent* because in fact I'm not really sure if there is a consensus, or how far it extends. I do, however, want to make the case that the possibility of such a consensus is very real, possible, and desirable, and further that it ought to be a basic and vital point for departure of those interested in generating ideas on significantly improving educational policies and practices. Obviously, if such a consensus is not real, then the issues merit further discussion and debate if for no other reason than to clarify very basic issues of context. Let us in any case find those areas of agreement so we can move on to those areas requiring further dialogue.

What seems to be lacking, however, in the holistic literature are efforts to develop, of all things, a holistic theory — one in which all of the important human dimensions are examined in relationship to one another.

When we suggest, for example, that teachers need to attend more to the goal of nourishing compassion and caring by developing greater trust and connection among the students and teachers, ought we not to consider the relationship of these goals and activities to a number of contextual concerns such as community values and school politics? Are we talking of problems limited to particular realms, and/or are they indicative of much larger social, cultural, and spiritual crises? Does the context involve responding to the interpersonal difficulties of classroom, family, peer relationships, and/or are we dealing with the legitimation of social and cultural greed, callousness, and hyperindividuality? It is possible, even likely, that these social phenomena have manifested themselves in schools and classrooms hence prompting educators to respond to increased selfishness, hostility, competition, and jealousy among students.

The origins of such phenomena as selfishness, caring, callousness, and altruism are rooted in highly complicated and perplexing historical, psychological, philosophical, economic, and biological matters. Even the basic definitional questions are enormously complicated apart from such mind-boggling questions as: Are people basically caring or uncaring beings? Under what conditions can people be compassionate? Do these concepts have different meanings in different cultures and in different times? Is there a difference between compassion and pity? Between caring and charity? Are there problemmatics in being compassionate? For example, could it erode a sense of self and personal responsibility?

In addition, there are myriad issues related to strategies and tactics such as the following: Can we and how do we in fact encourage compassion? What is to be done with/for those who stubbornly refuse to show care or compassion? Should teachers work on their own and their colleagues' capacity for caring? Just with the students in their own classes?

With parents? Is it possible to have a compassionate class in an uncaring school/community/society? Do we create false expectations for those students who are very likely to face and deal with an uncaring or less caring environment when they leave the classroom?

The example of examining the many dimensions involved in the teaching of caring reveals complexity and invites controversy and danger. Controversy emerges from the tendency to claim that particular dimensions and strategies are far more important than others, and danger lies in the temptation to deny or simplify the complexities. Holistic educators can provide educational theories and models that avoid these twin dangers.

As overwhelming as this barrage of concerns, questions, dilemmas, and problems may seem, they surely do not begin to exhaust the complexities and issues involved. Indeed, yet another issue is the very one we have just touched on: the problem of theorizing itself. It is of course possible to over-intellectualize and overly complicate matters such that they exasperate, distract, and even paralyze us. Academics are notorious for this kind of activity, which has been dubbed by one wit as "the leisure of the theory class." However, I believe that a hallmark of good theory is that it can simplify our tasks by ordering, sorting, and clarifying the clutter and confusion of events and phenomena. In fact, it would be impossible to conduct our lives without some form of theoretical thinking, however simple. Humans inevitably seek and provide order and form to their behavior and experiences. The false dualism between theory and practice serves to obscure the inevitability and necessity for some process of developing conceptual and experiential understanding of our lives. It is also clear, however, that many so-called theorists move away from praxis — the process of interrelating theory and practice — and attend instead to theorizing about other theories, thus grounding their work not in human experience but in thought about human experiences.

The dual dialectic

I believe that the concept of dialectic analysis can help to facilitate the process of sorting out the complexities and excesses of educational theorizing. In this part of the analysis, I will be relying heavily on a conceptual scheme developed by the late curriculum theorist, James B. Macdonald. In his famous article, "A Transcendental Development Approach to Curriculum," Macdonald presented a model that attempts to integrate and validate a cluster of modes of and influences on knowing. He gave this model the name "dual-dialectic" to reflect its emphasis on two overlapping relationships — one between the inner and outer person and the other between the outer person and the external world. Such a model allows us to avoid dualistic thinking and makes it difficult to ignore important dimensions of the educational process. In a more positive sense, it enables us to accept the significance of personal, social, and cultural dimensions in their own sake and in their relationships to one another. The model shows the importance of:

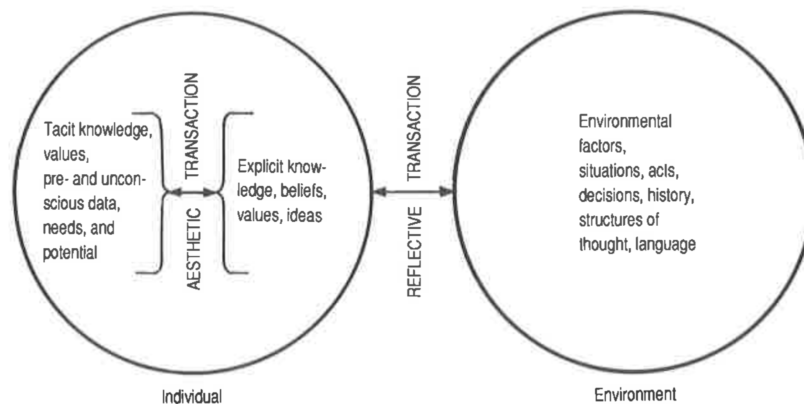

Figure 1. The Dual Dialectic Model. Adapted from Macdonald[1]

1. the insight, intuition, tacit knowledge that constitutes the inner life of each person,

2. the self that each person creates in reaction to the environment in order to function in and cope with it, and

3. the physical, social, and cultural realities that exist more or less independently of each person's life — history, traditions, environment, geography, economic structure, climate, and so on.

In this model, Macdonald has provided for the realities of both the inner life and the social, cultural, historical, situational contexts and, moreover, a dynamic relationship among these elements. The multidimensional and dynamic quality of this model allows us to conceptualize human thought and practice as having separate but related aspects. Macdonald says, "I would agree that human activity is in

part created by our reflective transaction of human consciousness in situational contexts. It is clear, however ... there can be no access to values or ethical principles that do not arise out of a utilitarian reflection upon the objective historical or personal consequences of human activity."[1] Macdonald goes on to point out the serious limitations of a utilitarian perspective, which precludes and denies the presence of a deeper consciousness that is concerned with issues above and beyond concern for the moment and for survival and coping.

Individuals in this conceptual model cogitate on their active involvement in and with the world and also deal aesthetically with their inner feelings, instincts, and impulses. The "self" or "person" that is created thus reflects a continuous, vital, and complex interaction of the overlapping and intertwined dimensions of human existence. Our interior consciousness informs and is informed by our self, and our self is informed by the externals of life (e.g., language, events, history, structures, traditions), which are themselves manifestations of human creativity as that creativity has been informed by inner impulses and so on and so on in an ever-widening, ever-complicating, continuous spiral of connection, relationship, and inter-penetration. Only when we conceptualize and abstract can we pretend to separate these phenomena, for our experiences reflect and perpetuate them inevitably, invisibly, and contինously with incredible facility and speed. Every conversation we have, every essay we write, every policy we make reflects a constellation of individuals *and* communities; intuition *and* logic; the historical *and* the momentary; art *and* science. The potential genius of holistic theory is that it has the capacity to recognize these basic relationships and at the same time to dare to go beyond by implying that there is profound meaning in the utter totality of all of these innumerable dialectic transactions. It is that ultimate totality, that mysterious oneness that constitutes the cosmic dimensions of holistic theories which can be seen as the supreme dialectic connection in that it connects to all other connections.

Let us return to the particular case of teaching for caring and compassion to illuminate the model. The impulse for caring can be seen to come from the interior of the person and indeed can be seen as an aesthetic event. It is something that is felt and that seeks to be expressed. The origins of these impulses can also be described in spiritual terms, for example, that they originate with an inner spirit or with divine grace or divine inspiration. However, the model also allows for the impulse to be nourished and informed by explicit knowledge, values, and beliefs. Our cultural beliefs and traditions include a veneration for compassion, and indeed our culture has developed a language and grammar for such concepts that allows the implicit, tacit, and internal to become explainable and public. This is not a linear process that would generate questions of causation and sequence as in which comes first, the human impulse or the cultural imperative? Dialectically, this is circular or helical in that the dimensions are intertwined and their movement simultaneous. When human suffering occurs it stimulates compassion, and when human compassion stirs up it allows us to "see" and conceptualize the human suffering. Human suffering would not be a concept without the existence of human compassion; we would not have the concept without the aesthetic experience, and the aesthetic experience becomes more accessible and available when it is conceptualized.

The question is not nature versus nurture; it is not which is more significant, the psychological or the social.... The answer is yes to all of the above and in all kinds of combinations and interrelationships.

When we think dialectically we do not have to choose one explanation, since dialectical thinking allows us to accept a number of explanations simultaneously. The question is not nature versus nurture; it is not which is more significant, the psychological or the social. Nor must we choose between the significance of language and the significance of the inner tacit life. The answer is yes to all of the above and in all kinds of combinations and interrelationships.

Another important aspect of this model is that it requires us to be aware of what appears to be in very

broad terms the whole spectrum of human experiences. The model names various human dimensions and indicates that they act in concert with one another. In this way, it can serve as a test of how restrictive or inclusive our thinking has been; which elements of the human experiences have been elicited and which ignored! When we talk about the importance of teaching for compassion, have we mentioned the mystery of the origin of its impulse? Or have we mentioned the economic system that produces pain? The cultural traditions that define compassion? Is there recognition of the aesthetics of concerns, caring, and anguish? Has there been attention to the realities of varying and multiple individual and social interpretations of compassion?

Caring has its physical dimensions — the feelings of shared pain and the warmth of comfort. It has economic dimensions — can we afford to contribute to the homeless shelter? And its cultural concerns — do we perpetuate the poverty cycle by providing such shelters? It has its intellectual and analytical dimensions — how do we distinguish caring from pitying?

It is surely vital for educational critics to point out when some of the dimensions have been neglected without at the same time ignoring or discounting the significance of other dimensions. For example, some educators surely put so much emphasis on rational analysis and empirical investigation that concern for the emotive, tacit, and aesthetic seems minimal at best. It is imperative, however, that criticism of such a distortion needs eventually to lead back, not to a token and grudging recognition of the value of analysis and empirical research, but to a reaffirmation of a vital and dynamic dialectic process involving the analytic and the aesthetic. The concept of the dual-dialectic is one technique for avoiding these undue emphases and for facilitating a greater degree of consensus, one that also allows us to examine individual dimensions without losing sight of the relationships among dimensions.

Circles of responsibility

I wish now to move to another related but quite different concern, namely the controversy of what should be the locus of educational transformation — a controversy which though complex, can be made more manageable. The argument here is over the placement of emphasis for educational transformation. One end of the opinion spectrum is constituted by those who tend to put more emphasis on what might be called *implosion* — the powerful ripple effect that emerges from intense changes in a relatively small area. For example, there are people who would say that increasing one's own self-caring and the caring of one's students and colleagues is by itself extremely important and also is how best to begin the process of deepening a consciousness of caring.

On the other end of the spectrum are those who favor more *explosive* changes — those that emerge from significant changes in very wide areas. For people of this orientation, caring is likely to occur only when there is widespread cultural and social action. The implosive orientation speaks to the power of internal changes in the consciousness of individuals, parents, teachers, students, citizens. It also supports significant changes on a gradual basis, with faith in an ever-widening arc of influence (e.g., from an individual teacher to his classroom and then to other classrooms and perhaps to the whole school).

The opposing view is that educational transformation can only happen if and when there are more systemic changes, preferably in the society and community but at least in the school system. In this orientation, significant change tends to mean change on a large scale and in a large area, and since gradual change is subject to institutional co-optation, rapid change is necessary. Sometimes, this controversy might also involve the question of just what constitutes a significant change; that is, some may argue that it is significant when one person or one class has developed a richer and deeper consciousness of caring. A related controversy is over whether a change in personal consciousness is significant if the political and social realities remain unchanged (e.g., does it matter if a few people feel closer to God if widespread poverty and war persist?).

I want to suggest two ways not of "solving" such problems since these issues are inherently complex, conflictory, and paradoxical but of reducing as much unnecessary controversy as possible. One is the value, once again, of looking at these cases dialectically — the vital interrelationships between and among changes in a variety of spaces (e.g., internal, community, classroom, cultural). The other suggestion is contained in a metaphor of separate but overlapping circles or spaces each important in themselves but none sufficiently so as to negate the importance of any.

Let me illustrate the notion of various circles and realms with an image from Thornton Wilder's *Our*

Town in which a character receives a letter addressed to

Jane Crofut
The Crofut Farms
Grover's Corners
Sutton County
New Hampshire
United States of America
Continent of North America
Western Hemisphere
The Earth
and Solar System
the Universe
the Mind of God[2]

This schematic rendering of the multiple communities and relationship that each of us has serves as an image of the reality of a multidimensional, multilevel, multirole world. We interact with ourselves, one on one; with our lovers, friends, families, colleagues, clients, students; we are citizens of our neighborhood, community, city, county, state, nation, hemisphere, planet, universe; we live and work in our living rooms, phone booths, offices, classrooms, voting booths, work places; and we communicate with others in conversation, lectures, arguments, by touching, embracing, fighting, through poetry, essays, films, and sculptures.

For purposes of this discussion I will continue the example of teaching for compassion to illustrate the point that each of these settings and roles is important and necessary but none are sufficient for the task of cultural, social, personal, and educational transformation. In this model, there are a great number of realms, spaces, locations, circles where we do our work — each is important by itself, and it is possible that in some circumstances one or some of these realms may be more significant for some reason than another or others. However, the point for critical and transformative educators is not so much to figure out which are more or less important but rather to celebrate the importance of each without neglecting individual limitations and insufficiencies.

Let us use as an example the case of a child who, devastated by the effects of receiving a zero on a spelling test, bursts into tears when Mom and Dad ask how her day at school has gone. This particular situation constitutes one very small circle, involving three persons in the modest scale of a living room, and focuses on the phenomenon of a child in tears and the parental reaction to the tears. What is the compassionate thing to do? What is the most important thing to do? What are the most important issues here, and what are the responsibilities of these three persons?

In one sense, an enormous number of problems and issues are immediately present and apparent in that particular moment of pain, anguish, compassion, and frustration for the three characters in our modest but intense drama. A whole constellation of difficult, perplexing, and profound issues are ready at the slightest prodding to come gushing out in a profusion of energy and excitement. Issues of child rearing (Where have we gone right/wrong?), issues of child welfare (Does this mean that my child is not very bright?), issues of school policy (Is the teaching putting on too much pressure?), issues of sociocultural policies and values (Here is yet another victim of a cruel and competitive capitalistic/militaristic system). I want to emphasize that all of these and other general issues are indeed involved in the incident as well as the particular and specific difficulties of the three persons, especially the pain of the child.

Among the possible responses to such crises are two in particular that I wish to mention — one is to inquire and the other is to comfort. The inquirers of the world are likely to ask this child a number of important questions: When did you take the test? Did you study for it? Who is the teacher? How did the other students do? Can you make it up? Comforters are likely to move directly to provide immediate support and succor perhaps by hugging and reassuring the child. Inquirers, of course, are also capable of providing support — later — and comforters can also follow up their hugs with further inquiry. My concern here is not with the sequence of these activities, as important as that might be, but rather with the importance of the relationship between them. My effort is not directed at developing a hierarchy or taxonomy of responses but rather to make the case for celebrating the importance and noting the limitations of each.

To comfort the child at that moment is an act of affirmation and compassion and represents an instance of unconditional love — surely therefore an act of enormous profundity and meaning. Such a moment can easily be described as a sacred event in that it represents the nexus between a spiritual impulse and a particular human event. It is of course important not to sentimentalize such moments; at the same time, it is vital not to trivialize them, for in such brief moments we experience the possibilities of realizing our most cherished visions. That impulse to comfort likely emerges from that meeting of inner spirit and moral commitment and hence must be celebrated, cherished, and nourished. Yet it is not sufficient.

Inquiry is also required, since we have a responsibility not only to ease the immediate pain but to prevent its reccurrence and deal with its wider implications. It is vital to examine the sources of the pain — the psychological, historical, cultural, and social dimensions that have conspired to cause injury and dismay. This child's pain is immediate and concrete yet simultaneously also symbolic and abstract in that it represents broader and wider events and phenomena.

Immediately, the circle of concern, compassion, and responsibility widens when the parents confront the question of how to respond in addition to providing comfort and love. Perhaps the inquiry leads to the issue of parental pressure and expectation. If it does, then the parents clearly need to reflect on their participation and involvement in their child's distress and respond appropriately. In so doing, they will inevitably be engaged in a dialectical analysis of how their own individual experiences and beliefs interrelate with cultural expectations and social demands. Perhaps this issue is magnified by the values of the particular neighborhood or community. In any event, the practices and policies of the individual teachers, school, and school system are clearly involved; and when the inquiry is deepened and broadened, it will not take very long to encounter more general questions about American values such as the spread of materialism and competition, the nature of our socioeconomic system, and the meaning of life and of human destiny.

I firmly believe that all of these issues as well as others are implicit in such specific incidents as the child being overwhelmed by failing a test. Further, I believe that all of these realms are each enormously important and that each requires careful attention and vital energy. This does not mean, however, that every individual must or can deal effectively with all of these realms. My own experience is that any one of us is lucky to be able to deal well with more than one or two of these realms. When I say deal with, I have in mind conceptualizing and acting, for our responsibilities include having both an understanding of the problem and the capacity to respond. Each of us will necessarily be limited in what we are able to understand by dint of our abilities, capacities, interests, situations, and circumstances. However, there are responsibilities that every one of us is capable of meeting. The first is to understand and act in the realm where we can operate best and most appropriately and to engage in that process as competently, and in as principled manner as we can. The second responsibility is to affirm the significance of working in that circle while also recognizing that other efforts in different circles and realms are also valid, important, and necessary. Let us avoid the silly, unnecessary competition for being holier than thou and find a way to do that without sacrificing the sense of gratification that comes from being engaged in important and meaningful work.

It is indeed important to comfort that crying child — for in this way we can be compassionate — and it is also important to accept that only to comfort this person does not exhaust the possibilities for further response. Perhaps the parents will feel competent or energized enough to discuss the incident with the child's teacher and principal, which would be another important realm or circle of activity. At the same time we should not think that these parents have failed in their responsibility if they do not pur-

"The invariable mark of wisdom is to see the miraculous in the common."
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

sue the issues beyond this point. What is required is that we accept that there are *other* important realms, arenas, and circles (e.g., teachers and neighbors need to address the questions of grades, pressures, and competition in the classroom so that there may be adjustments and changes). It is possible that teachers can demonstrate their compassion by easing these pressures or by being less severe and more generous in their grading practices. Here again are other important and insufficient realms where there are significant opportunities to provide more compassion and caring. The point is not whether the parents should or should not go beyond comforting but only that there are a number of important realms of responsibility.

In the name of compassion one could debate the stress on grades, and efforts in this direction certainly are important for the people involved. However, it would not resolve a number of larger issues: Will this short-term compassion have any negative consequence in a strongly competitive society? Why is there so much stress on grades and competition? How much of this is related to college admissions concerns? How much of this is rooted in our traditions? How much of competition is rooted in human nature, and how much in the environment? Should we try to change such activities? Which ones? How? Where? At what level? School boards? The public? The middle class? There is a great deal of work to be done, and the work needs to be done by a great many different people in a variety of ways and sites. Each of these circles is an important locus to reflect and act with our deepest commitments. We can do this by comforting the child as we have said, but it is not enough. Nor is it enough to think about the meaning of compassion without comforting the child. In like manner, it is important to deal with how to be a compassionate teacher in a cruel school or heartless community. But neither is this enough. It is also important to consider the social and cultural structure that facilitates pain as well as what nourishes the compassion in the face of the pain. Working for compassion requires major efforts in modest settings as well as in grand ones, in intimate settings and on a vast scale, and at many places in between.

The point is not that we all have to work in all of the realms but only that we have the courage, humility, and modesty to accept that whatever realm we work in they are simultaneously important and insufficient. Each of us can make the most of our opportunity and hope and trust that others are also doing that in the other realms. Better to put our energy into working at our optimum in our circle than in trying to demonstrate the irrelevance of someone else's work.

There is a major caveat here, and it has to do with the dangers and limitations of relativism — the point at which we may say anything goes or one activity is as good as another. A critical perspective is essential, and discussion and reflection on the validity of ideas and policies are always in order. Debates on strategies and tactics are both necessary and desirable, and above all there must be continuous and rigorous dialogues on what constitutes our vision, goals, and directions. My own view is that important and honest differences will always be with us, and indeed their persistence is often testimony to the power of human criticality and creativity. There surely would be serious concern for alarm if the inherent tensions and paradoxes of human existence were somehow papered over in the name of harmony and good feelings. This article, however, is about reducing unnecessary differences and divisiveness and seeking to build bridges between educators of good faith committed to participating in creating a more loving and just world.

Debates on strategies and tactics are both necessary and desirable, and above all there must be continuous and rigorous dialogues on what constitutes our vision, goals, and directions.

Under what conditions?

Those who willingly engage in the struggle for a better world do not alas constitute a majority,albeit they are a forceful and influential group. This group is highly diverse, critical, imaginative, skeptical, and creative — not the characteristics of homogeneity. Their vitality and idiosyncrasies are essential elements in the struggle for a world of freedom and

justice for all people, so we need to be wary of that which unnecessarily vitiates the extraordinary energy of these impulses.

I wish to propose one additional heuristic as a further way to help reduce the barriers to more understanding, cooperation, and solidarity. In this case, the heuristic is in the form of a question, or more accurately, part of a question: "Under what conditions... ? The value of heuristic questions is that they promote personal reflection and dialogue as well as provide opportunities for deeper insight and understanding. Such questions do not necessarily require answers, but they do impel responses. If the question is a proper one, then the response takes on the notion of responsibility. By this I mean that a proper question is one that we ought not to ignore, evade, or deflect but rather requires thought, reflection, consideration — a response. The requirement to respond is different from the requirement to answer because it calls not for "rightness" but for authenticity. This does not mean that all responses are equally appropriate and valid, but the requirement to respond provides for engagement and dialogue.

This capacity for understanding is a mystery and is perhaps understood to have as its most profound purpose that of creating a transcendent consciousness that puts meaning above survival.

Heuristic questions encourage the process of discovery and creativity because they require us to connect familiar phenomena to fresh inquiry. When we try to respond to the question *Under what conditions* can there be justice? or *Under what conditions* can individuals find spiritual meaning? we find ourselves confronting a host of the factors that influence our lives. I believe this question can help facilitate the positive effects of the two other heuristics I have been discussing — the dual dialectic and the concept of circles of responsibility. To return to our example, it seems to me that it would be useful to ask the question, *Under what conditions* can people be more compassionate and caring.

The responses to such a question would be continuous and open, but let me suggest a few to indicate the possibilities of such reflection. I believe that in order for individuals to be compassionate they must be open to the inner impulse to feel connected to all people and to the universe, and that in order to feel open, people need to have a sense of freedom, agency, and hope. I further believe that those capacities are very much connected to living in a secure, nourishing, and joyful community. It is extremely difficult to be compassionate when one is angry, lonely, hungry, and unloved. Also needed are images and language that can give expression to that inner impulse and allow people to convey their compassion to others. There are conditions that I believe can increase the possibilities of feeling less angry, less lonely, less hungry, and more loved; namely, conditions of peace, justice, equality, and harmony. The voice of the spirit that urges us to care for one another is more likely to be heard when we have enough to eat and drink, a decent place to live, and when we are in good health. We are more likely to have enough to eat, have good health care, have peace, justice, and equality when we are in touch with those powerful and mysterious impulses to dedicate ourselves to the creation of a world that is true, good, and beautiful.

The struggle for wholeness

I believe that we can reduce unnecessary divisiveness first of all by agreeing that this is both desirable and possible. Further, the concepts of the dialectic and of circles of responsibility provide possible links between educators oriented toward issues of consciousness, integrity, and the personal with those who tend to focus on social/political/cultural contexts. Presumably, most educators agree, at least in principle, that education is inevitably connected to an enormous variety of issues — psychological, historical, metaphysical, cultural, political. If we accept the notion that these various influences can be seen dialectically, then we affirm their importance in relational terms and still leave open their particular impact and significance in particular situations. Compassion has both psychological and philosophical meaning, and the two are related. Compassion emerges from

within and outside the individual, and these sources are related. Compassion has both traditional and contemporary significance, and these connect to each other. The forces that create the necessity and impulse for compassion operate within and outside the school, and these influence each other.

The other model of reducing needless conflict among educational critics and reformers lies in the possibility of celebrating the importance, albeit inevitably limited, of a whole spectrum of strategies and tactics. When we are compassionate for one person, we are acting profoundly in a small setting. This is a commendable activity, and there is other potentially commendable work to be done in other settings. Seeking to find out the origins and explanations for the pain and injury is also important and necessary. Working to be more compassionate within a cruel school or society may or may not work inadvertently to perpetuate the system by making it less painful and more bearable. What can be celebrated is the work that reduces the pain and what must be acknowledged is the insufficiency of this work. To develop more compassionate teaching is both wonderful and not enough. This does not mean, therefore, that we should not try to be more compassionate teachers, but rather that we should accept that other work also needs to be done. To theorize about the nature of compassion also can contribute to a more caring society, but it is also by itself not enough — and it is imperative that theorists celebrate their own efforts as well as the efforts of those who work on being more compassionate teachers and also to realize the insufficiencies of each.

The roots of the anguish and pain that evoke human compassion are diverse as they are deep but easier to explain than the impulse for compassion. To the extent that humans are animals, it is not particularly surprising that there would be conflict, rage, competition, harshness, and brutality. What is quite remarkable if not miraculous is that the human species has the capacity to understand the condition and the impulse to go beyond a life of instinct and biological destiny. This capacity for understanding is a mystery and is perhaps understood to have as its most profound purpose that of creating a transcendent consciousness that puts meaning above survival. We need to be in awe of these capacities: humble before the complexities and magnificence of the task; celebrative of our achievements; and reminded of the vastness of our unfinished task. The task is extraordinary in its scope and difficulty, and we should not be daunted that in the few thousand years of human history we should have so much to do. To engage in work of such immense significance makes it sacred, for it provides the opportunity for the day-to-day to touch the eternal. Let us celebrate this holy vocation and be reminded that work of such magnitude is inevitably complex, arduous, perplexing, and anguishing. To accomplish a small part of a large task is surely more gratifying and meaningful than to be very successful in accomplishing a task of vulgarity and triviality.

We can only hope that these heuristics can help ease rather than complicate the fundamental task of educators. It seems that the holistic education movement has the potential for raising our consciousness to a concern for an education that reflects the incredible radiance of our awesome universe. Such an education will help us to see how we as humans can find our place in all of those microcosms of the universe: in our inner thoughts and dreams; in our daily encounters with our colleagues, students, and friends; in all kinds of places — classrooms, mountaintops, living rooms, kitchens, subways, hospitals, jails; and in confronting the whole spectrum of life's challenges — birth, death, sickness, madness, joy, despair. As educators and humans we celebrate the awesome task of looking for the light and for one another. Abraham Joshua Heschel spoke eloquently to this struggle:

> As a tree torn from the soil, as a river separated from its source, the human soul wanes when detached from what is greater than itself. Without the holy, the good turns chaotic; without the good, beauty becomes accidental. It is the pattern of the impeccable which makes the average possible. It is the attachment to what is spiritually superior; loyalty to a sacred person or idea, devotion to a noble friend or teacher, love for a people or for mankind, which holds our inner life together. But any ideal, human, social, or artistic, if it forms a roof over all of life, shuts us off from the light. Even the palm of one hand may bar the light of the entire sun. Indeed, we must be open to the remote in order to perceive the near. Unless we aspire to the utmost, we shrink to inferiority.[3]

Notes

1. James, Macdonald, "A Transcendental Developmental Ideology of Education," in *Curriculum: An Introduction to the Field*, edited by James Gress and David Purpel (Berkeley, CA: McCutchan, 1988) p. 177.

2. Thornton Wilder, *Our Town* (New York: Coward McCann, 1938), p. 54.

3. Abraham Heschel, *Man's Quest for God* (New York: Scribner, 1954), pp. 6–7.

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Starting Over

by Jack Petrash

Jack Petrash has been an elementary school teacher for twenty years. He has taught in the New York City public schools and at the Washington Waldorf School. Mr. Petrash has written a number of articles on Waldorf education and storytelling. He also teaches calligraphy and coaches baseball at the high school level. Mr. Petrash lives with his wife and three children in Kensington, Maryland.

A spiritual perspective is important in teaching. A Waldorf teacher details his intentions and resolutions as he prepares to return to the classroom to work with children.

Last year I took a leave of absence from teaching. I had taught elementary school for nearly twenty years, and I felt that I needed a change. I longed to do something new, something different, something "important." I spent the year considering a variety of possibilities far more glamorous than teaching first grade. In the end I came to realize that I was faced with one of those fundamental decisions that arise at the crossroads of our lives. My decision would depend on what I viewed as "important" work.

Essentially, there are two ways in which I use the word *important* in my life. In one instance it means prestigious — work that is commonly accepted as having an impact; work that is set apart. The other use of *important* implies meaningful and real. It is work that affects real people's lives and meets real needs in the way that raising children is important work.

Years ago, I had chosen to become a teacher because education gave direction and focus to my spiritual beliefs. I was enthralled with Martin Buber's, "I and Thou." I was convinced that "all real living is meeting" and that "education worthy of its name is education of character."[1] Teaching provided me with an opportunity to apply my spiritual beliefs.

However, after years in the classroom my idealism had paled, in part, because I no longer viewed my work with the freshness of youth. Working for a year in business helped me to see how much I valued and needed the human contact of the classroom. More than that, it became clear that teaching provided an opportunity to really make a difference in another individual's life, and that enthused me and captured my imagination in a way no ordinary job could. Teaching really made a difference in my life as well. Being able to see things again from this perspective, it was clear that I needed to return to the classroom.

I was fortunate to have already found a school that viewed its educational task from a spiritual perspective. Waldorf schools or Rudolf Steiner schools, as they are sometimes called, were founded on the assumption that human beings have spiritual needs as well as emotional and physical needs. An elementary grade teacher in a Waldorf school will begin with a class in grade one and teach the very same children for eight years. This arrangement is extremely satisfying because the interconnection of human lives is a singular ingredient in our growth as human beings. Teaching children in this way over such an extended period of time means that you will share your lives. During the years that you are together you will meet joy

and sorrow, birth and death, broken bones and illnesses, divorces and remarriages. In essence you will meet life together.

Preparing to meet 32 new children under these circumstances is like preparing to marry. It is a time for the best intention and the highest resolve. Starting such an undertaking is daunting. It is easier to say yes to sharing a life than it is to know exactly what that is going to mean. September is always filled with hope and promise.

More than simply sharing life, teachers are called on to guide and direct lives with a firm but gentle hand. To be worthy of such a role requires the very best we have to offer. It must bring forth a commitment to work hard on oneself, to eliminate all prejudice and narrow mindedness, to temper anger and overcome lethargy.

In all teaching, a key ingredient is *discipline.* The root of the word implies that a teacher should be worthy of disciples. Certainly, this worthiness comes neither from our larger size nor from the power we wield. It is rather a discipline based on clarity, caring, consistency, and above all on the power that comes from being able to discipline ourselves. Children are quick to recognize our weaknesses. They will test us again and again, giving us continuing opportunities to make progress in school just as they do. Getting ready for first grade means more than just formulating expectations and consistently upholding them. It means recognizing that as teachers we too must discipline ourselves and that we, like our students, will fail. Our most important work occurs after we fail.

I was enthralled with Martin Buber's, "I and Thou." I was convinced that "all real living is meeting" and that "education worthy of its name is education of character."

When we speak of discipline and guidance we often consider the management of children's behavior. But the impulses which lie behind children's behavior are far more important than the behavior itself. When a child acts out, if the behavior is caused by childish overexuberance, then it is rarely a serious matter. Yet, if such behavior is aggressive or mean spirited, and caused by a lack of consideration or respect, then the matter is far harder to remedy. Education of character is difficult but important work. Its difficulties were clear to me when I first read Buber's essay on this subject:

> "But if I am concerned with the education of character, everything becomes problematic. I try to explain to my pupils that envy is despicable, and at once I feel the secret resistance of those who are poorer than their comrades. I try to explain that it is wicked to bully the weak, and at once I see a suppressed smile on the lips of the strong. I try to explain that lying destroys life, and something frightful happens: the worst habitual liar of the class produces a brilliant essay on the destructive power of lying. I have made the fatal mistake of giving instructions in ethics."[2]

Trying to help children with moral questions is exciting. It is essential work for educators concerned with the spiritual well-being of their students. When we take up this work, we share in the work that is done in the family. The greatest teaching tools we have for this work are the stories that have been handed down through the years. Fables, folk tales, myths, and fairy tales deal with just these issues. These stories bring important moral lessons to children without lecturing or preaching. All summer I have read fairy tales and folk tales so that I can incorporate them into my teaching. I know that when the children hear a story like "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" they are repelled by the jealousy of the queen. They don't need a lecture on how destructive jealousy is; they experience it. When they hear of the lonely vigil that the dwarfs keep for the dead Snow White, they are touched by their loyalty and devotion. They feel how wonderful and sustaining friendship is. Looking toward all the issues I will need to encounter with the students, I am comforted to know that there are so many enjoyable stories that have guided children for hundreds of years in other cultures and will be of tremendous help in educating the children of today at a deeper level.

Although first grade does not place tremendous curricular demands on the teacher, I know that the attitudes conveyed to children about the subjects they study will color their perception of the world. I am always perplexed when I hear adults say something like, "The sun is merely a star, a mass of exploding gasses." This type of statement always strikes me as false. It conveys a number of emotions that do not accurately correspond to the sun. The word *merely* is out of place when describing our natural world and universe. It is far more accurate to imply that the sun is everything, for that is closer to our actual experience. The sunlight's prolonged absence leaves us dispirited, if not depressed. The slightest change in the path of the sun's rays can change our harvests, our environment, and our own view of what the day holds in store. The return of the sun's warmth after a long winter brings rebirth. Children's experience of nature should never be diminished by words like *merely.*

At a school such as a Waldorf school, it is possible to hold a much broader view of education. Not being part of

the public schools system leaves me free to address issues that touch on spiritual or religious matters. Gratitude is an important part of what children should experience from a young age, and at meal times it is appropriate for the children to stop and give thanks for the food they eat. This simple routine helps to turn children's hearts not only toward that which is greater than humanity but also to an appreciation of all that is given to us from the bounty and beauty of our Earth and even from the efforts of our parents. Just such a simple habit will begin to reverse the self-centeredness so common in our times and at the root of so many environmental problems.

The impulses which lie behind children's behavior are far more important than the behavior itself... It is essential to foster a child's natural inclination for the wonder and mystery of life.

Fostering children's natural religious sense is another aspect of education that is hard to approach but important nonetheless. It is essential to foster a child's natural inclination for the wonder and mystery of life. Because young children are so intimately connected with everything they encounter, life is full of meaning for them. Part of our task as educators is to see that as they grow older they maintain that intimacy with life, that the subjects they study still touch their hearts as well as their minds. Whether we teach history or science, students should not find our work meaningless.

The parents of the children I have taught have always had a desire to see the school foster an awareness of that which is greater than humanity. I have always appreciated the fact that this fostering must be discreet as well as sincere. Because this is such a delicate and potentially perplexing matter, especially in a classroom with children from all number of religious backgrounds, I have always put my faith in a single idea. Rudolf Steiner, the founder of the first Waldorf school in the early part of the twentieth century, stated that if you teach children in a manner that involves their whole being — their capacities to think, to feel, and to do — you will nurture the healthy religious sense that is present in nearly all children. For this reason I have always made the attempt to find this balance through teaching and then have waited for those rare moments when the door to a child's heart opens for something deeper.

These ideas provide the foundation for the work I will begin with the children in my new class. I will return to these ideas again and again and assess my work in their light. I can only hope that these ideals will retain their vitality. Yet, I also know that although these ideas will affect my work with the children, they will be very different from the work itself. In the classroom and in the moment, who I am will have as great an impact as what I think.

I know that the most important gift I can give the children is the gift of love. I have often wondered exactly what it means to love children. There are always children in whom we delight. We meet these children as if they were kindred spirits. But love must have a broader base. What of the others? In listening to parents, and especially to mothers, in meetings and conversations I have noticed something that loving parents will invariably do. They will always hold on to the vision of that which is best in their child. This persistent ability to return repeatedly to the higher in the child is fundamental. It may not be love itself, but it is a crucial characteristic of true love and not just the love of children. As a teacher, I too must try, like a parent, never to relinquish my picture of what is best in the child regardless of what they do.

My task as school begins is to seek the best in each child and to commit myself to preserving it and nourishing it over the years.

Finally, I must be willing to seek out the truth no matter how unpleasant. If parents come with concerns about my work and my interaction with their children, I must be willing to hear these concerns with an open mind and heart, for these are the opportunities for real growth. What matters most is the well being of the children and the continued development of my work with them. One of the nicest parts of returning to the classroom is the feeling that I, too, am becoming a student again. In deciding to teach 32 new children I am certain to be presented with a range of opportunities to learn much more about education, about children in general and these children in particular, and about myself.

Notes

1. Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p. 104.

2. Idem.

The Interdisciplinary Island

Whole Language, Holistic Learning, and Teacher Education

by Stephen Tchudi

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A whole language interdisciplinary summer program for 23 school and college teachers sponsored by Northeastern University was held on Martha's Vineyard. From hands-on exploration and inquiry, plus reading and writing on self-selected topics, the participants came to understand theory and practice of whole language instruction and to explore implications for their own teaching.

"What have I done?" wrote Christine Guerrant, a teacher from Hingham, Massachusetts. "It seems I have breathed the magic of the island since I have arrived. And I have taken some risks with my writing that I have not had the opportunity to do, nor the courage."

"The island" is Martha's Vineyard, six miles off the coast of Cape Cod — home of such celebrities as Art Buchwald, Carly Simon, William Styron, and Mike Wallace; less well known as site of the Martha's Vineyard Summer Workshops sponsored by Northeastern University. Christine was one of 23 school and college teachers who took a course in "Teaching Whole Language" that my wife, Susan, and I taught for Northeastern in the summer of 1991.

Susan is director of core writing at the University of Nevada, where I teach in the advanced writing and teacher education programs. We are both committed to holistic, interdisciplinary, language-centered instruction across the curriculum, and we both have strong interests in metacognition and the processes by which people come to learn and know. We had been faculty members in the Northeastern workshops several times over the past decade, drawn back by the magic of the island and its odd and wonderful mix of ferry boats, tourists, automobile exhausts, bicycles, mopeds, sea gulls, black dogs, junk shops, posh boutiques, cheap clamburgers, overpriced dinners, caloric baked goods, pseudo-clever T-shirts, great bookstores, and, above all, its miles and miles of relatively unspoiled seacoast and inland forests and meadows.

When the director of the Northeastern program, Tim Donovan, invited us to team teach a course on "whole language," we accepted even before thinking about what we would teach. After reflecting on the possibilities, we decided to take an approach that, for us, would involve some major risk taking. In the past, our Vineyard courses had focused on pedagogy, the typical theory and how-to for classroom teachers. This year we decided to put our

theory and pedagogy to a stiffer test: We would conduct our two-week workshop as an authentic whole language experience, the best we could offer, the "purest" example of holistic learning we could design. We wouldn't just talk about teaching methodology, we would plunge our students directly into a thematic, integrated, reading and writing, across-the-curriculum project. One of our students, Doug Capra, a high school and community college teacher from Seward, Alaska, expressed our theory when he wrote, "I can't see how teachers can even begin to use all aspects of the whole language philosophy — response journals, reading aloud, empowering students — until they have experienced it first as students themselves." Or as another, anonymous student phrased it, "Whole language through whole language. Why not? Why bore us with lectures, panel discussions, and homework directed at somebody else's philosophy?"

As a focus for study, we selected a topic we felt would appeal to any student coming to the Vineyard: the sea.[1] In May, two months prior to the class, we sent enrollees an introductory newsletter called *Sea Scope*, in which we outlined the aims and general direction of the course. We emphasized that our first commitment would be to help participants learn about the sea through hands-on (or "feet wet") experiences. However, we also reassured them that we planned to get at pedagogical matters in due course, that they could expect to return home with practical ideas for teaching.

We also outlined some general course requirements: We wanted our students to read extensively in self-selected books about or related to the sea; we wanted them to keep a daily journal; we wanted them to develop a scrapbook or portfolio of artifacts from the sea, souvenirs of their learning quest; and we wanted them to work individually and in groups exploring the sea from multidisciplinary perspectives: looking at art, music, literature, science, mathematics, ecology, myth, and folklore. We asked them to prepare for this experience by reading Rachel Carson's *The Sea Around Us*, a classic piece of nonfiction first published in 1951. Some of Carson's oceanography is now dated, but the book has lost none of its power: Its holistic vision of the sea continues to arouse concern about the future of the oceans. We also asked the students to search their home, school, and community libraries for young adult and adult books about the sea — nonfiction, poetry, prose, drama — and to bring as many books as they could carry to the island.

When our group first convened in mid-July, having managed to get their books, word processors, and other baggage on and off of the ferry from Woods Hole and into the guest houses arranged by Northeastern, we began getting to know more about our participants. We were delighted to learn that along with nineteen English/language arts teachers, elementary through college levels, our students included two science teachers, a piano teacher, and a math teacher, which gave our group a bit of disciplinary diversity.

Susan and I explained an acronym and a paradigm for the whole language approach we would be using: SCOPE.[2] It represents the following five stages of inquiry and research:

*1. **Survey***: Initially we would discover what people knew about the sea from prior experience and reading. Then we would move on to their questions: what they wanted to learn. We would also survey the resources of the island, scouting out libraries and bookstores, community sea salts and field trips that might aid us in finding answers.

*2. **Collect***: Next we would dig into the resources: We would read, visit island sites, go on field trips, interview Vineyarders, spend time in libraries and bookstores. We would hike and bike; we would dive; we would visit art galleries and attend local history lectures; we would collect shells and seaweed along the shore.

In the science group, for example, one of the participants honed her drawing skills and wrote a wonderfully interactive book for young readers, a guide to "knocking about" on the seashore.

*3. **Organize***: After a period of collecting and studying, we would sift through our ideas, finding structure, making a whole of our experience. Our particular concern was using writing as a way of

integrating ideas, James Britton's "learning through language."[3]

4. *Present*: Here we would share our knowledge creatively. People could wrestle their ideas, feelings, and knowledge into poems, plays, stories, nonfiction prose, slide shows, photo displays, demonstrations, or any other form that seemed appropriate.

5. *Evaluate*: Lastly we would assess what we had learned, how we had learned it, how we could extend our learning and explore still-unanswered questions on our own.

As we surveyed our students, we learned that people's knowledge of the sea differed considerably. We had students whose experience with oceanography was limited to the Jacques Cousteau specials on television; others whose romance with the sea had emerged from classic imaginative literature — William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* or Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. One of our students was living on a 38-foot sailboat and was an experienced ocean sailor; another had just learned to swim within the past year. As teachers from landlocked Nevada (where the prehistoric Lahontan Sea has dried to a few salty puddles), Susan and I talked about our own background as largely uninformed but devoted fans of the sea. We hastened to add that we were not oceanographers, that we came to this whole learning experience with no special insights into the topic. We were to be genuine fellow learners with our students — reading, wading, and writing like everybody else.

This panel argued that teachers must be skilled at detecting the "big system" in educational institutions — that attempts to introduce whole language teaching are doomed if teachers simply try to plug the approach into existing, conservative educational settings.

Our students confessed later that they were not altogether certain that "whole language" immersion would prove successful. "I had a lot of doubts at the beginning," said Anita Agar, a community college teacher from Sheridan, Ontario. "Was the whole thing going to come together? Would I learn something?"

To organize this SCOPE, Susan and I next led a brainstorming session to help the students to identify the kinds of questions they wanted to investigate. We also helped them to locate kindred spirits within the class who would work together in study groups. After the predictable juggling and shuffling of topics and members, we helped each class member find a home in one of five groups:

1. "Science of the Sea," with particular emphasis on the Vineyard's marine life;
2. "History and Lore," including the history of the Island as well as the general history of seagoing people;
3. "Sea Arts and Skills," from scrimshaw to knot tying;
4. "Literature of the Sea," both young adult and adult, classic and contemporary; or
5. "Women and the Sea," with emphasis on stories that have never received adequate attention in traditional literature programs.

At first glance, several of these categories may appear mono-disciplinary — science, history, literature. However, within each group our students could not help but pursue interdisciplinary activities. In the science group, for example, one of the participants honed her drawing skills and wrote a wonderfully interactive book for young readers, a guide to "knocking about" on the seashore. The literature group delved into nonfiction as well as fiction, science books as well as imaginative literature.

The study groups met for about two of our four class hours each day. They planned readings, developed activities and research agendas, and discussed their reading and field trips. In the remaining class time, Susan and I conducted activities to give us a common set of experiences and understandings of the sea. Sketchily, these activities included:

- A group dramatic reading of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.
- Daily readings from Joan Aiken's young adult novel, *Nightbirds on Nantucket*.
- "The Navigator," a game simulating ocean discovery, where students grope their way to un-

known, new worlds (actually the corners of an open field), with paper bags over their heads.[4]

- A "Creature Feature" with the video of that 1950s' classic, *Creature from the Black Lagoon*.
- A showing of *Moby Dick*, the film version, with Gregory Peck as Ahab.
- A "Create-a-Critter" project, where students used recycled junk to design and model imaginary sea animals ideally suited to our modern oceans, for example, the Exxon Valdez Crude Cruncher.[5]
- A visit from Bill Schustick, a dazzling and entertaining professional sea chantey singer from the sailing ship *Shenandoah*.
- A 'Pyramids of Poison" game showing how pesticides accumulate in the bodies of large fish and mammals as they are passed up the food chain.[6]

Whole language holds great promise for reforming school classrooms across the disciplines, but it has equal promise as a way of helping teachers extend and expand their own views of themselves.

We also helped to organize group excursions to island scenic spots — South Beach, Sengekontacket Pond, Felix Neck, and Gay Head — for nature walks sponsored by various island ecology groups. And we asked our students to get in tune with the tides, knowing the precise times of high and low tides while they were on the island.

Our students kept journals and diaries, and at the end of the first week we asked each person to contribute a short piece for a new edition of our *Sea Scope* newsletter — a report of work in progress. During the second week, after much work and discussion, the study groups came together for several days of presentations. Each student prepared a display of his or her collections: books, photographs, shells, monographs, maps, leaflets, notebooks, sketches, and memorabilia. In addition, each of the five study groups presented its work. During those closing days we made seaweed pressings as we learned of the nature and adaptation of sea plants. We made simulated scrimshaw carvings as we learned of life aboard whaling vessels. We listened to powerful, original dramatic monologues bringing nineteenth-century sea captains and their wives to life. We tapped our feet to sea chanties and wrote some verses of our own; we debated the ecology of the sea and resolved to get ourselves more involved in saving the oceans we had come to know. Our only complaint from the students during those presentations was "cognitive overload" brought on by the need to schedule so many exciting presentations in limited time periods.

A survey of the science lurking behind these presentations revealed that we had covered a curriculum whose oceanographic concepts included food webs, adaptation, buoyancy, propulsion, navigation, ecosystems, sea colonies, skeletons and shells, filtration, coloration, predation, photosynthesis, temperatures, wave mechanics, phototropism, luminescence, and much, much more. Not bad for a group of mostly English teachers, whose previous experience with the sea had been principally from a literary perspective.

I have mentioned that we did not make pedagogy central to the course, but neither did we ignore it. Early in the course we distributed a packet of readings on "whole language" (appended as the bibliography for this article) and asked participants to read, take notes, and write down their questions about whole language. We agreed with Kathleen Strickland that *whole language* is an umbrella term for a number of concepts, including the process approach to writing, interdisciplinarity, holistic learning, student centeredness and choice, the use of multi-age and multicultural literature, and the natural integration of the disciplines.[7] As we described these characteristics, we saw many heads nodding. "I had read about and practiced many of the elements within this philosophy," wrote Doug Capra. "Most of those characteristics are just part of what I am." We were encouraged that many members of our group felt they had been whole language teachers at heart, but now needed opportunities to synthesize their theory and practice.

Several teachers observed that "whole language" had become a buzzword in their schools and needed clarification. Kathy Shulke from the Hong Kong International School explained:

> Whole language is a term I first heard about a year ago. Our elementary division adopted this philosophy and "went" whole

language. However, most of the elementary teachers had no clue. At the most, two or three teachers really knew what they were doing.

At the end of the first week, Susan and I led a session discussing central teaching issues in whole language, and we helped the class divide into four inquiry panels:

1. "Colleagues Across the Curriculum," with a particular focus on how teachers interested in whole language and integrated learning can engage others in the quest;
2. "Management," dealing with the difficulties of organizing and administering whole language classes;
3. "Assessment," covering everything from teacher research to satisfying administrative demands for accountability through standardized tests; and
4. "Theory Pushing," a group that wanted to test the limits of current whole language theory and suggest directions for future study.

Susan and I asked that the panels *not* do additional pedagogical reading in preparing presentations for the class. Rather, we urged them to focus on their own sea projects and to draw on their considerable experience as teachers.

The panel presentations — done in the busy last four days of the course — provided practical ideas for developing new curricula with colleagues, keeping whole language instruction under control in the classroom, and creating assessment tools that would be useful to teachers, students, parents, and administrators.

Our theory pushing group (which eventually was nicknamed the "Theory Busters") helped us to look beyond the nuts and bolts of classroom management to examine some larger issues. This panel argued that teachers must be skilled at detecting the "big system" in educational institutions — that attempts to introduce whole language teaching are doomed if teachers simply try to plug the approach into existing, conservative educational settings. They also warned about the danger of using whole language, without modification, in cross-cultural settings, noting that at best, whole language must begin by taking in the language, culture, and cognitive styles of the students. And they challenged us to develop better and better assessment tools, arguing that despite the "warm, fuzzy" feeling that whole language often develops, future programs will have to produce solid evidence that they not only develop good attitudes toward learning, but also produce hard knowledge.

It was during the panel discussions that one of our teachers voiced concern that in our zeal to give people a "whole language" experience, Susan and I had neglected to provide a sufficient theoretical background. Charmaine Stilinovich of Lyons Township High School, Illinois, wrote in her evaluation, "I think I made my feelings clear about theory in class. I would have preferred an earlier and more systematized look at it, and the kind of talking/hassling we did in class the final three days, but earlier in the course." On the other hand, Alice Tillet from New Hope, Pennsylvania, wrote, "The pedagogical issues — and I believe none went untouched — were tossed, turned, debated, and *not* put to rest!" Reflecting on the course, Susan and I concluded that we should have put the issue of theory squarely before the group early on, letting them make decisions about how much or how little they wanted or needed.

In the spirit of whole language teaching, we used a variety of evaluation strategies throughout the course. The sea presentations and pedagogical panels presented tangible and intangible evidence of learning. (These also led to publication of a class anthology of student writings and a comprehensive bibliography, entitled *Books-by-the-Sea*.)

By way of formal assessment, we redistributed the students' original aims-and-goals statements and asked them to assess whether their aims had been met, modified, or ignored. We also asked them to comment on the organization and structure of the course and to write about how they would use their summer learning in their own teaching. In addition, the Northeastern University staff administered its own course evaluation, asking students to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the course as well as their general level of satisfaction with it.

By any combination of these measures, the course was highly successful. Kalo Clark, a graduate student in Northeastern's writing program, reflected that it was "pretty overwhelming to think of finding a focus on a subject as broad as the Vineyard and the sea. But it *seemed* to happen quite naturally for everyone. And then the sharing gave us all a broader picture. In other words, the theory worked as it should."

The class didn't work equally well for all students, of course. Helen Gilmore, our piano teacher from Northampton, Massachusetts, was frustrated by the

nondirectiveness. "I thought the idea of using the sea as a way of exploring whole language was terrific, and for the majority of people in the course, it was apparently wholly successful. I needed a lot more direction than was offered." Susan and I agreed that we need to develop strategies to provide a stronger sense of direction for people like Helen, without necessarily pushing the class into a teacher-directed mode of instruction.

We were pleased to discover that, for several students, the most important learnings centered on their understanding of themselves. "This course has brought me a self-revelation," wrote Laura Pitts, from Westchester County, New York. "One never knows where these lurk, and I, for one, am surprised and pleased, though a bit scared about this one.... This class has provided me with the opportunity to see for myself where my mind and heart find strength. If *that* is whole language, I'm all for it."

To our delight, teachers could see clear connections between the whole language experience on the island and their own teaching. Susan Hohman, from Trenton, New Jersey, wrote, "The course modeled for me very powerfully the kinds of things I can do in my own classroom. It went well beyond the 'muffin tin' or 'cookbook' approach. It also gave me a better idea of how to collaborate with my students in designing a class."

Yet, as Susan and I were quick to acknowledge, great gaps yawned between our idyllic Vineyard setting and the real-world conditions teachers would face back home. Alonso Jasso from Houston wrote, "I now go back to middle school in less than a month, where bells ring at least every fifty minutes, where public address announcements cloud and distract fragile attention, where the teachers' lounge is a place I scrupulously avoid, not needing to hear one more grizzled veteran talk about how things ain't the same."

But Alonso, like the students and professors in the class, had clarified his understanding of whole language and could talk about adaptations to the conditions back home. Alonso continued:

> If I cannot change intractable schedules and defeated colleagues, I can, at least reorient my own immediate environment. I see that whole language doled out in forty-five minute servings is better than no whole language at all.... I will plow on, trying to implement those ideas I can use, and not engage in self-flagellation over that which gets left out. Maybe my concept will be Approximately Whole Language, but what the hell, it's better than what I do now.

"Only if adults see life through the eyes of a child, can they become the friends and leaders of their changes."
—Franz Winkler

What the hell, indeed. We wish teachers everywhere would adopt Alonso's spirit of experimentation in the face of difficulties.

Whole language does not promise to be a cure-all for the problems of education and teaching. It won't provide the instant solutions most of us crave but know to be unrealistic. The Vineyard experience helped us all push our theory and practice into new areas. Equally important, it showed that despite traditional backgrounds and training, most teachers hunger for the sort of learning that whole language can offer. I believe that whole language holds great promise for reforming school classrooms across the disciplines, but it has equal promise as a way of helping teachers extend and expand their own views of themselves as learners, instructors, scholars, and perhaps most important, as lively and curious human beings.

Notes

1. Maggie Parrish of the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, influenced our choice of topics by telling us of a successful Carolina seacoast exploration conducted at UNCW for faculty members in a writing-across-the-curriculum program.

2. Nadia Dubois of East Grand Rapids, Michigan, developed this acronym in one of my courses in interdisciplinary studies and writing across the curriculum. She wanted something that would be both catchy and an accurate representation of the inquiry process to use with fellow teachers in an in-service program. There are many ways in which the process can be described, including "the scientific method," but SCOPE seems to work well with both teachers and students.

3. James Britton, *Language, the Learner, and the School* (London: Penguin, 1971).

4. Several of our games and activities were freely adapted from *Project Ocean*, an interdisciplinary curriculum guide published by the San Francisco Branch of the Oceanic Society, with support from the Gulf of Farralones Society (1987).

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Kathleen Strickland, "Toward a New Philosophy of Language Teaching," *English Leadership Quarterly* (Feb. 1991): 2–4.

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Grouping for Reading Instruction

The "Sights" of the Round Table

by Carole F. Stice and Nancy P. Bertrand

Be ye a good knight ... be of prowess and of worthiness and ye shall be a knight of the Table Round.[1]

For nearly three-quarters of a century, reading instruction has tended to occur in round robin format, if not at a round table per se. Every day teachers have waged the classroom war for literacy with a group of children gathered around them and a set of materials telling them what to do. They have fought the good fight and won many battles, but as Shanker has so graphically pointed out, they have lost the war.[2]

Although most children learn to read at minimal levels, that is all they do. Even though they can read and write, they don't.[3] Too many children come to dislike reading and school before they even reach the middle grades. Both educational theorists and business leaders suggest that minimal literacy will not stand young people in good stead in the 21st century. Empowering children with the tools and experiences they will need for success in the rapidly changing, technological, information age in which they will live out their lives is the current mandate for public schooling in this country.[4]

Whole language is a philosophy of instruction currently under examination as the next best hope for improving literacy learning. Our research has yielded no statistically significant differences in achievement test scores for reading after one year of a whole language alternative.[5] However, we have found statistically significant differences in other measures of reading (e.g., percentage of corrected miscues and mean scores on the Clay *Concepts About Print* survey favoring the whole language classrooms).[6] The "Concepts About Print" survey measures behaviors that support reading acquisition. Several qualitative measures gathered from interview data also yielded interesting differences. In an attempt to account for these findings, an ethnographic style study employing videotaped back-up as corroboration of field note data and producing some 90 hours of tape between the two classrooms was devised.

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Instances of teacher-directed, reading and writing instruction in two inner-city, second grade classrooms — one traditional and one whole language — were examined and described. Using Spradley's domain analysis, the researchers coded the interactions that occurred between the teachers and their students during instruction at the "round table."

A view into these two classrooms

The school in which these studies took place is an inner-city, K–4, neighborhood school serving a large, federally subsidized housing project in an area of the city known for its high crime and unemployment. From the playground in back of the school, many of the children have witnessed drug deals, car thefts, and occasional shootings. Some of the children in this school have themselves been victims of crimes including child abuse, sexual molestation, neglect, abandonment, and murder.

The school's racial mix is 60 percent black, 35 percent white and 5 percent Asian children recently immigrated to this country. More than 80 percent of the children benefit from the school's free lunch program. Portable classrooms, both in front and in back of the school, testify to the rapid growth of this neighborhood as more and more families find themselves in need of low income housing. The children live in poverty, most live in single parent households, and a substantial number do not finish high school. When we first became involved with this school, the mean achievement on the yearly standardized achievement test was below the 30th percentile. By nearly every definition, most of these children would be considered at risk for failure in school and later life.

Because we worked in this school for several years, we identified good examples of traditional teaching and good examples of developing whole language classrooms. Two second grade teachers and the children in their classrooms participated in the video ethnography. One teacher was an experienced and highly recommended traditional teacher.[7] She employed ability grouping, instruction based on a skills list, and taught each subject separately. The other was an enthusiastic, emerging whole language teacher.[8] She employed flexible grouping, individual conferences, and planned instruction using her children as informants. She was in the process of moving from a transmission model to a transaction model of instruction. Both teachers had taught at least ten years and both were well liked by their peers and by the children. Discipline problems were minimal in both classrooms, and attendance rates were among the highest in the school.

The traditional classroom was a well organized and cheerfully decorated place. Desks were lined in rows, and the twenty children were assigned seats according to reading group. Children worked alone at their seats or with the teacher at the round table. Materials visible in the classroom consisted of textbooks, workbooks, dictionaries, one computer, and a chartstand and tablet. Bulletin boards were attractive displays of commercially produced materials. This classroom was clean, quiet, comfortable, and consistent.

The whole language classroom was not quite as neat, but it was well organized and cheerful. Desks were arranged in circular groups as the 28 children in this classroom requested. Children worked in small groups, in pairs, or alone, and several different types of events appeared to be going on simultaneously. Most teacher-directed instruction was in the form of guided reading and reading conference time, which took place at a small, round table in one corner of the room. Text and reference books were visible on the shelves, and nearly 1,000 children's books, various magazines, newspapers, and other printed materials were also available. The walls and bulletin boards were decorated with children's writing and artwork.

Taking a closer look

During the initial interviews the teachers told us about their beliefs and goals for their students. The traditional teacher's main goals were to ensure that her children did as well as possible on the basic skills and standardized achievement tests, and that they

were ready for the third grade. The whole language teacher's main goals were to help the children like school, love books and reading and writing, and feel good about themselves as learners. Whole language teachers seek to empower children to become independent learners. Reminded of those two perspectives, we observed and analyzed instances of direct reading and writing instruction.

Following the initial data analysis, we determined that the wealth of videotapes contained interesting and probably important additional data, but that 90 hours were a bit overwhelming. Consequently, we edited the tapes so that we could accomplish several smaller comparisons. One set of comparative tapes we prepared was a chronological series of segments that involved direct, small group reading instruction in each classroom — i.e., instruction at the round table.

Our aim was to characterize the nature of the interactions between the traditional teacher and her children, and the whole language teacher and her children, in the most seemingly similar instructional context — small group reading instruction. We believed that this comparison would provide a window through which we could view the practical application of these two different philosophies and educational goals. In these two classrooms what happened at the round table engaged children in very different literacy events and may have taught them very different things about themselves as readers and writers.

Empowering children with the tools and experiences they will need for success in the rapidly changing, technological, information age in which they will live out their lives is the current mandate for public schooling in this country.

Both teachers were videotaped during the morning reading and language arts block. Tapings took place twice a week in each classroom during the months of August through November, and again in April and May. The segmented videotapes, totaling some fifteen hours, were reviewed and corresponding field notes reread and recapitulated. Using Spradley's domain analysis,[9] both teachers' transactions with the children were listed (e.g., asks question at random, asks question of specific child, responds at random, responds to specific child, prompts, points to line, calls on child, ignores inappropriate interruption, encourages, tells child the answer, records anecdotal note, looks at manual, reassures, looks around room, demonstrates, and initiates dialogue). These actions and interactions were then coded into larger categories, or domains, to explore the similarities and differences in instruction between these two teachers. Three domains emerged: interactions involving the group, interactions involving an individual child, and interactions involving the materials.

Both teachers spent the majority of the language arts and/or reading time listening to children read and talking to the children about their reading. However, the nature of these transactions was very different. The most striking difference between the two teachers' approaches to instruction was that the traditional teacher employed a program in the form of textbooks, enabling her to interact with individuals within groups of children. The whole language teacher employed literature, the children's writing, and other print resources, enabling her to interact with individual children, sometimes within small groups.

Although the traditional teacher called upon individual children to read aloud, she cast questions randomly and waited for someone to answer. Less than half the time did any child's answer spark further question or comment from her. Usually, she simply nodded or otherwise affirmed that an answer was acceptable, and then she read the next question listed in the teacher's manual. If an answer was incorrect, the teacher repeated the question and asked another child to "help." Only twice during our taping sessions did we record instances of discussion occurring from the inquisitiveness of the children. Once in a while, the teacher asked a question of a specific child, but that tended to be her means of getting the child's attention or getting the child "back on task." Her intentions were to work through the lessons in the teacher's manual.

In contrast, the whole language teacher tended to pose specific questions to specific children and to talk to them about what they had to say. The children's comments constituted the bulk of the conversation. Her intentions were to work with an individual child, even within a small group, through a story read by the group.

Sights of the round table

The traditional teacher focused on the materials. That is, most of the time she looked at the materials rather than at the children. During each session she attended first to the vocabulary chart, then to the chalkboard where she had written the words to use in a game or group activity, and finally to the basal reader teacher's manual. The interactions between the teacher and the children were categorized as follows: looks at manual, asks questions to group, responds at random, looks at chart, asks question of specific child, and responds to specific child. For example:

> After leading the entire class through the directions for a worksheet on handwriting, the teacher (Tea) calls group 2 to the round table.
>
> Tea (to D.): "Suppose you pass out the books."
>
> Tea: "Let's go over our words."
>
> Tea points with pointer to words on a chart.
>
> Tea: "You were supposed to look up the words."
>
> D. gives correct definition. Some of the children are involved in looking up the next word.
>
> Tea: "Who would like to read the first definition?"
>
> Tea calls on A. She struggles and Tea helps.
>
> Tea: "Let's go back and see if we can sort of comprehend what we've read."
>
> Tea rereads the definition and asks the children what it means.
>
> J. answers and Tea says, "That's right, a knife has a blade...."
>
> After all three words have been looked up, definitions read, and questions answered, Tea says, "Now we're going to read the story silently."
>
> The children read. Some point to the words with their fingers as they read. Two mouth the words. D. looks up frequently to see what the others are doing.
>
> When they finish, Tea says, "Now we're going to answer questions. We're going to look for details. Turn to pg. 51. We're going to scan for an answer. Why did we have to watch the cat? Show me who can scan to find the answer. Hold up your hand when you know."

The whole language teacher appeared to focus her attention more on individual children; that is, she rarely addressed the entire group of children with whom she was working. Rather, she directed her comments and questions to individuals. She also spent more time commenting than questioning. She had no printed program that she followed. She attended almost exclusively to one child at a time while the other children in the group listened to or participated in the discussion. Her interactions took the form of dialogue, demonstrations, and engagement. She frequently followed the children's lead, and several interesting discussions ensued. These involved both the content of a story or piece of a child's writing, as well as some aspect of the form or mechanics of the text.

The whole language teacher spent the majority of her time working with children reading stories they selected, or stories she had chosen for them. In addition, the children read one another's writing. The transactions between teacher and students were characterized as follows: direct questions, elaborations, prompts, confirmations, suggestions, encouragements, and comparisons. For example:

> Tea calls small group of children to the round table. Tea takes her usual place. (The class is working on a unit about insects. Some are making an ant farm; some are working on other projects.)
>
> Tea shows the children materials on ants and several other insects. Some of these are the materials the children have been reading and some are apparently newly added to their collection.
>
> They discuss what they have learned about insects from their reading.
>
> Tea has pictures of several insects. The children name each one. They count their legs and discuss what they know about each insect.
>
> Tea shows children new book on insects. They all examine it.
>
> Tea asks C. what new information might be in this book.
>
> C. says it has bugs in it they haven't read about yet.
>
> Tea reads information book as the children follow along. Then they reread together. They summarize what they've read.
>
> The children help. C. remembers the walking stick. A. says the beetle with the horn on its nose would be scary if it was as big as a person.
>
> Tea suggests that A. might write a story about that. Then the children decide to make a chart about what they have learned about insects at this point. They write on chart paper with wide marker:
>
> 3 body parts

In these two classrooms what happened at the round table engaged children in very different literacy events and may have taught them very different things about themselves as readers and writers.

6 legs

feelers

hard shell ...

List continues. They discuss. They decide their chart needs a heading or title.

Tea tapes the chart to the lower corner of the chalkboard where the children can see it and add to it.

Tea invites the children to write about ants or any of the insects they are studying. She has paper with ants drawn across the top.

The children choose "ant" paper or plain paper.

Tea: "Who is going to write a true book, an information book about your insect?"

Two children raise their hands.

Tea: "Who wants to write a story?"

Remaining children acknowledge.

More discussion. The children make choices and begin writing. They stay at the round table where the resources are as they start to write.

Tea leaves the table. She moves to the long chalkboard and writes list of morning options for the children. Then she returns to check on her writers. She helps A. with some aspect of composing. (Can't tell what exactly.)

After three or four minutes Tea asks children to finish up or find a stopping place and come to the rug area.

Discussion

Reading instruction occurred in both classrooms. It tended to take place at a table with the teacher and a few children gathered round. On the surface one might think the teaching very similar in all such classrooms. However, we believe that is not the case. Both of these teachers were very good teachers if measured by the standard appropriate to what they believed. Each had very different beliefs and goals for their children, and these were evident in their instruction.

What these teachers believed and valued about language, literacy, and learning influenced their decisions. It determined what constituted the appropriate substance of their curriculum, their time allocations, their focus with regard to the reading and writing processes, and their decisions about where curriculum should originate. But most of all, it determined what they actually said to and did with the children.

How teachers interact with their children may ultimately influence children's sense of their own power and resources. In the traditional classroom the expression of ideas, questions, and thoughts was limited by the teacher and used mainly as an indicator that the children had understood what they read. The teacher decided if a child's response was appropriate by how well it matched the response provided in the teacher's manual or a response she thought acceptable. In essence, the published materials drove the instruction and became the curriculum. Such instruction still makes up the vast majority of elementary classrooms in this country, although change is certainly occurring.

In the whole language classroom, the children's responses, questions, and ideas became the substance upon which successive interactions were based. The teacher provided resources, demonstrated processes, listened to the children, responded on the spot, and steered discussions and events in reasoned and purposeful ways. In essence, the children's responses framed the instruction and drove the curriculum. Reading instruction took the form of dialogue, demonstration, and discussion aimed at helping children develop strategies useful to them as readers, writers, and thinkers.

The whole language teacher appeared to focus her attention more on individual children; that is, she rarely addressed the entire group of children with whom she was working. Rather, she directed her comments and questions to individuals.

Summary

In the traditional classroom reading instruction was repetitious and stylized. It was a school-type question and answer game. In this classroom, learners appeared to be treated more as performers of an expected role.[10] In the whole language classroom, instruction appeared to be designed so that learners were contributors to and generators of the teacher–learner transactions.

Interactions that occur between teachers and learners constitute instruction. In characterizing the main differences observed in the interactions of teachers and children within these two instructional philosophies, we found that in the whole language

classroom, the children's individual interests, intentions, and ideas were mediated by the teacher's knowledge and goals. In the traditional classroom, the materials were the curriculum regardless of the children's interests or intentions. This is not inappropriate if the teacher's goal is to prepare children for the curriculum in the next grade and to help them score well on standardized achievement tests and basic skills tests. Unfortunately, programs that do not consider children's intentions tend to yield surface level productions and surface level understandings.[11]

If empowering teachers and learners is what we are after, then classrooms must engage children in interesting and stimulating content while encouraging them to pursue their own interests as much as possible. Classrooms where children have no control over what they do and when they do it probably do not empower. A curriculum that focuses primarily on recall and recognition, isolated language skills, a hierarchy of other arbitrary, associative tasks, and short "right" answers probably does not promote sufficient thinking and learning to be empowering. The "knights" that we send forth from our instructional "round tables" must be better prepared if they are to grow up, work, and live successful lives in the 21st century.

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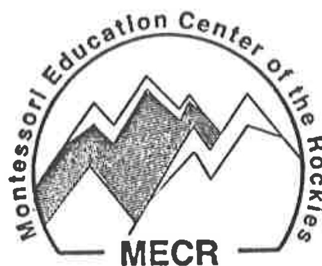

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Toward a Spiritual Curriculum

by John P. Miller

John (Jack) Miller is Head of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Niagara Centre, and a Professor in the Curriculum Department. He has been working in the area of humanistic/holistic education for approximately 20 years. He has authored and co-authored several books, including The Compassionate Teacher *(Prentice Hall, 1981),* The Holistic Curriculum *(OISE Press, 1988) and* Holistic Learning *(OISE Press, 1990).*

A spiritual curriculum is based on the concept of interconnectedness and allows the student to witness and make a series of connections. Six types of connections that form the basis of a spiritual curriculum include analytic-intuitive, body-mind, subject-subject, community, earth, and self connections.

We live in what has been called the age of alienation. Somehow we don't feel at home with our planet, our society, or ourselves. We see an environment that has been ravaged by acid rain, oil spills, and urban decay. Even the oceans now contain our debris, and there seems to be no place to hide from our waste. Our society also seems in disarray and conflict as crime, racism, and various forms of abuse characterize, in part, how we relate to one another. Often we seem to live in fear, wondering how safe our neighborhoods are from break-ins and assaults. This fear even extends into our homes, as we may fear abuse from our spouse or even our children. The other day I heard from a close friend about a mother who now lives in fear of her daughter who has attacked her on several occasions. Our sense of disconnection also lies within our own being, our very souls. The headlines continue to talk about the war on drugs. Yet, there would be no need to fight drugs if somehow we felt fulfilled within ourselves and connected to the communities within which we live.

Instead, we tend to feel cut off from others and from our own deepest longings, thus, we turn to drugs and other forms of addiction to ease the pain within. We seem to struggle to get an edge over others, rather than experiencing Martin Buber's "I–thou" relationship. In sum, we tend to live in a world that is fragmented, and our lives are filled with the experience of separateness.

Technology contributes to our sense of isolation with its emphasis on technique, or the efficient means of achieving an end. For example, Phillip Slater has written how technology promotes human isolation:

> It is easy to produce examples of the many ways in which Americans attempt to minimize, circumvent, or deny the interdependence upon which all human societies are based. We seek a private house, a private laundry, self-service stores, and do-it-yourself skills of every kind. An enormous technology seems to have set itself the task of making it unnecessary for one human being ever to ask anything of another in the course of going about his daily business. Even within the family Americans are unique in their feeling that each member should have a separate room, and even a separate telephone, television, and car, when economically possible. We seek more and more privacy, and feel more and more alienated and lonely when we get it.[1]

Jacques Ellul has argued that technology has become autonomous and that our alienation is the result of uncontrolled technique:

> "The one best way" so runs the formula to which our technique corresponds. When everything has been measured and calculated mathematically so that the method which has been decided upon is satisfactory from the practical point of view, the method is manifestly the most efficient of all those hitherto employed or those in competition with it, then the technical movement becomes self-directing. I call this process *automatism.*
>
> There is no personal choice. In respect to magnitude, between say 3 and 4; 4 is greater than 3; this is a fact which has no personal reference.... Technique itself, *ipso facto* and without indulgence or possible discussion selects among the means to be employed. The human being is no longer in a sense the agent of choice.[2]

The Ellul scenario is a bleak one and one that I cannot accept. I believe that a more reasonable view of technology holds the emphasis on efficient technique to be an extension of part of our consciousness and our institutions. The space shuttle disaster, the Chernobyl nuclear meltdown, and the Alaskan oil spill are examples not of technology run rampant but of human and organizational mismanagement. As our consciousness and our communities are fragmented, so is our technology.

In contrast to the deterministic view of Ellul, this article is based on the principle of correspondence, which suggests that material reality flows from a larger, spiritual reality of which consciousness is a part. This principle was developed by Emanuel Swedenborg, who believed that physical reality corresponds to, or mirrors, a vaster spiritual realm.[3] In this same vein A.F. Lemkow in her recent book, *The Wholeness Principle,* has argued:

> [The] universe must be a unity. But it is also multidimensional, and so organized that each dimension or level of being produces the next, less inclusive level, from the most unitive to the most particular. The universe is thus a dynamic, living whole of which consciousness is the primary datum, and form but secondary.[4]

If we accept the principle of correspondence, then, to develop a more humane technology, we must begin with our consciousness. If we can begin to move from a world of separateness to one of connectedness within ourselves, then our technology can become part of the process. But what is this process? I believe it involves an awakening within ourselves as well as an awakening to our environment. This awakening process allows us to see the underlying harmony and unity of things. Teilhard de Chardin has described this unity:

> The farther and more deeply we penetrate into matter, by means of increasingly powerful methods, the more we are confounded by the interdependence of its parts. Each element of the cosmos is positively woven from all the others... *It is impossible to cut into this network, to isolate a portion without it becoming frayed and unravelled at all its edges.* All around us, as far as the eye can see, the universe holds together, and only one way of considering it is really possible, that is, to take it as a whole, in one piece.[5]

At a human level this means our sense of separateness from one another is an illusion. In reality we are not skin-encapsulated egos but are linked to one another in a dynamic process. Both the mystic and the subatomic physicist see this reality; we are not separate but connected.

The question for educators arises, how can we address this unity which lies beyond our fragmentation? Can there be a "spiritual" education that allows teachers and students to awaken to the connectedness of the universe? Let us address this question by first examining the concept of spirituality.

Spirituality

The word *spirit* is derived from the latin word *spiritus*, which refers to the breath. *Spirit* is defined in Webster's dictionary as "the life principle, especially in man, originally regarded as an animating vapor infused by the breath or as bestowed by a deity." Clearly *spiritual* refers to the life force within us, or our deepest, most fundamental nature. After we strip away all of our conditioning and illusions, we come to our core — our spirit. Huston Smith has defined this core:

> Unconsciously dwelling at our inmost center; beneath the surface shuttlings of our sensations, percepts, and thoughts; wrapped in the envelope of soul (which too is finally porous) is the eternal and the divine, the final Reality; not soul, not personality, but All-Self beyond all selfishness; spirit enwombed in matter and wrapped round with psychic traces. Within every phantom-self dwells this divine; within all creatures incarnate sleeps the Infinite Sentence — unevolved, hidden, unfelt, unknown, yet destined from all eternity to waken at last and, tearing away the ghostly web of sensuous

Spirituality implies that we are embedded in a purposeful and harmonious universe. In other words, we are connected to something beyond ourselves and are not isolated egos struggling in a meaningless universe.

mind, break forever its chrysalis of flesh and pass beyond all space and time.[6]

Christ referred to this place as the Kingdom of God, which is within. Buddhists talk about our Buddha-nature, which is our basic goodness that is hidden by the illusions of the ego. The Hindus refer to this place as the Atman, which is connected to the infinite — the Brahman. Carl Jung called it the self, and in Psychosynthesis it is referred to as the higher self or center. I personally like the definition that Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in his journal:

> A man finds out that there is somewhat in him that knows more than he does. Then he comes presently to the curious question, Who's who? which of these two is really me? the one that knows more or the one that knows less; the little fellow or the big fellow.[7]

The little fellow is our ego, which so desperately tries to manipulate the universe according to its own ends, while the big fellow is our true self, which is in accord with the harmony of things. Gabriel Marcel said that the deeper we go within ourselves, we find that which is beyond ourselves.

Spirituality refers to our true nature, the self, which is deeply connected to a larger spiritual reality. We sometimes get glimpses of the connection between the self and the larger spiritual reality; Abraham Maslow called these glimpses "peak experiences." In the peak experience we transcend the ego and catch a glimpse of how things really are. Edgar Mitchell, the astronaut, had such a glimpse when he saw the Earth from his spaceship:

> Instead of an intellectual search, there was suddenly a very deep gut feeling that something was different. It occurred when looking at Earth and seeing this blue-and-white planet floating there, knowing it was orbiting the Sun, seeing that Sun, seeing it set in the background of the very deep black and velvety cosmos, seeing there was a purposefulness of flow, of energy, of time, of space in the cosmos — that is was beyond man's rational ability to understand that suddenly there was a nonrational way of understanding that had been beyond my previous experience....
>
> On the return trip home, gazing through 240,000 miles of space toward the stars and the planet from which I had come I suddenly experienced the universe as intelligent, loving, harmonious.[8]

Spirituality implies that we are embedded in a purposeful and harmonious universe. In other words, we are connected to something beyond ourselves and are not isolated egos struggling in a meaningless universe. This larger spiritual reality of which we are part has different names depending on the spiritual tradition or perspective; for example Taoists refer to it as the Tao, Plato called it the invisible world of ideas, Emerson named it the "over-soul," while David Bohm, the physicist, calls it the "implicate order."[9]

Timothy Ferris, in his book *Coming of Age in the Milky Way*, describes how science is confirming the fundamental insight of connectedness between ourselves and universe. For example, quantum physics has broken down the illusion of the detached observer and instead shows how subject and object are intertwined in the act of observation. Ferris also claims that astrophysics shows that matter is the same throughout the universe, follows the same rules, and thus lays bare "a cosmic unity that extends from nuclear fusion in stars to the chemistry of life." Finally, Ferris maintains that Darwinian evolution shows how "all species of earth life are related." Ferris concludes:

> The conviction that we are in some sense at one with the universe had of course been promulgated many times before, in other spheres of thought. Yahweh fashioned Adam out of dust; Heraclitus the Greek wrote that "all things are one"; Lao-tzu in China depicted man and nature alike as ruled by a single principle ("I call it the Tao"); and a belief in the unity of humankind with the cosmos was widespread among preliterate peoples, as evidenced by the Suquamish Indian chief Seattle, who declared on his deathbed that "all things are connected, like the blood which unites one family. It is all like one family, I tell you." But there is something striking about the fact that the same general view has arisen from sciences that pride themselves on their clearheaded pursuit of objective, empirical fact. From the chromosome charts and fossil records that chart the interrelatedness of all living things on Earth to the similarity of the cosmic chemical abundance to that of terrestrial biota, we find indications that we really are a part of the universe at large.[10]

Spiritual education, however, cannot be reduced to six connections or a set of techniques. Ultimately it must come from the teacher's self.

Spiritual education

Spiritual education has at its roots this paradigm of unity and connectedness described by Ferris. At the center of spiritual education, then, is relationship. In my own book on holistic curriculum I have defined holistic education in the following manner:

> The focus of holistic education is on relationships — the relationship between linear thinking and intuition, the relationship between mind and body, the relationships between various domains of knowledge, the relationship between the individual and com-

munity, and the relationship between self and Self. In the holistic curriculum the student examines these relationships so that he/she gains both an awareness of them and the skills necessary, to transform the relationships where it is appropriate.[11]

Spiritual education and *holistic education* are used interchangeably in this article because spirituality is the critical variable that makes holistic education different from other forms of education. Spiritual education allows students to make connections in a number of different areas. Rudolf Steiner said: "Moving from one thing to another in a way that connects one thing with another is more beneficial than anything else for the development of spirit and soul and even body."[12]

Once teacher and student awaken to the interrelatedness of life, they can naturally make their own connections. The six connections outlined below are seen as important to the learning and the educational process. These connections have been successfully applied in school contexts (one example was described in a previous issue of *Holistic Education Review*).[13]

Six types of connections are described here. This list is not meant to be inclusive; it is the fundamental notion of connectedness that is important.

1. Linear thinking and intuition,
2. Relationship between mind and body,
3. Relationships among subjects,
4. Relationship between self and community,
5. Earth connections, and
6. Self connections.

1. *Linear thinking and intuition.* Spiritual education restores a balance between linear thinking and intuition. Schools and academic programs have tended to emphasize rational step-by-step problem solving procedures such as the following generic model:

a. Identify a problem;
b. Clarify the problem;
c. Develop alternative solutions;
d. Develop criteria to evaluate the solutions;
e. Apply the criteria and select a solution; and
f. Implement a solution.

Models such as the one just described leave little or no room for intuition in problem solving. Alternatively, Wallas has outlined a model that includes intuitive processes.[14] The first step is *preparation*, where the individual gathers information relevant to the problem or project. At the second stage, *incubation*, the individual relaxes and does not make an effort to work consciously on the problem. Instead, it is suggested that images realign themselves in the individual as he consciously attends to something else. In the *illumination* state the solution will occur often spontaneously and unexpectedly. The second and third stages, then, are intuitive, while the third and fourth stages are more analytical. The fourth stage is *verification*, or revision, where the individual puts the idea into use and consciously works with the idea in a more detailed manner.

In my view both of the models could benefit from a synthesis wherein intuitive steps of incubation and illumination are integrated with the more analytical procedures. But how can incubation and illumination be facilitated? One vehicle is visualization, where the person lets images arise in the mind's eye, either in response to a direction, or spontaneously. For example, in social studies students could imagine themselves as a historical figure facing a particular choice and visualizing the thoughts and emotions that accompanied the decision.

Visualization can be used not only in problem solving, but also to help students relax, to help in creative writing, and to make connections between subject and the inner life of the student. For example, if the student is studying the water cycle, then she can also visualize the water cycle — she becomes the water which goes through the changes of evaporation and condensation. Visualization can connect an abstract subject such as the water cycle to the student's imagination. In making the analytic–intuitive connection, then, the connection is made between subject matter and the inner life of the student.

Visualization can be used not only in problem solving, but also to help students relax, to help in creative writing, and to make connections between subject and the inner life of the student.

Another tool for enhancing intuition is the use of metaphor. Metaphor encourages students to make

connections between things and processes that are normally unrelated, for example, a fuel system and a circulatory system. By making these connections, students begin to discover underlying patterns and principles. It is possible to link metaphor and visualization. V.L. Williams suggests an activity in which students visualize a garden of roses where they walk, smell, and touch the roses. While their eyes are still closed, the teacher reads Robert Burns's *My Love Is Like a Red, Red Rose*. After the reading, the students discuss the experience and how it might differ with a different flower or even with a different colored rose.[15]

2. ***Relationship between mind and body***. Spiritual education sees mind and body as connected and interrelated. In the West we have tended to take two approaches to the body: One is to ignore it or abuse it, such as by eating too much or taking in the wrong food and drink. The other approach is a compulsive, overactive approach, which might include running so much that one damages the knees or legs.

Spiritual education would try to let students be "at home" with their physical self. Exercises such as yoga, movement, and various centering devices allow for this connection to be made. Movement education is popular at the primary level because young children feel comfortable moving to music or themes. Older children can become more self-conscious; hence, drama and improvisation are useful strategies for connecting mind and body, speech and action.

Mindfulness is also helpful as we learn to be conscious of our movement and actions. In James Joyce's *Ulysses* there is a phrase "Mr. Duffy lives a few feet from his body." When we are not mindful, we are simply not fully present. If a student comes to us and we are not present, then the student can immediately sense our absence. I believe that what students want most from us is our authentic presence, our full attention. Mindfulness allows us to develop this presence through simply focusing more on the present moment. Often we can get lost in our own ego chatter, so that when we go for a walk our heads are stuffed with our own thoughts and we do not experience the environment where we are walking. If we bring mindfulness into our lives, then we can remind ourselves to let go of the thoughts and come into more direct contact with the world around us. Ultimately, mindfulness deepens our connectedness with ourselves, others, and our environment.

Mindfulness activities that teachers and students can do include simply walking or eating with all of our attention focused on these acts. Attention to the smallest, simplest act is the essence of mindfulness.

3. ***Relationships among subjects***. A spiritual education would focus on the unity of knowledge rather than splitting information into small segments that are unconnected. Various approaches that encourage students to make connections include *human themes* and *human processes*.

Human themes include enduring concerns that all humans share. For example, the study of mythology is a theme that focuses on the human need to make meaning out of our experience and develop some sort of cosmological map. Joseph Campbell has developed the concept of the "monomyth," which is the journey of the hero or heroine.[16] This myth, which is common to most human experience, includes separation (leaving home), trials and ordeals (e.g., going to university or starting a new job), achieving some kind of reward (e.g., a college degree), and finally return, where we share what we have learned. Campbell has used the monomyth to connect the myths of a wide variety of cultures. Studying the monomyth allows students to see their own experience in relation to literature of these cultures. In a recent book, *Holistic Learning*,[17] my co-authors and I described how the journey is particularly appropriate to adolescents who find themselves separated in many ways from their recent past. Physiological changes bring on separation from childhood as well as the entry to high school. Through the monomyth the adolescent has a map of change which he can begin to connect to himself.

I believe that what students want most from us is our authentic presence, our full attention. Mindfulness allows us to develop this presence through simply focusing more on the present moment.

Human processes include activities such as problem solving. Holistic approaches to problem solving that combine analytical and intuitive thinking can be used across disciplines and thus allow the student to see how these processes can connect various subjects.

The arts are also a powerful vehicle to link subjects. Waldorf education uses the visual arts, drama, and storytelling to connect subjects in the main lesson. Storytelling has also been used in whole language programs in publicly funded schools to stimulate student interest in a theme. Stories can appeal to the whole child, not just the child's analytical processes and thus can stimulate connections between, and inquiries into, many different subjects.

4. *Relationship between self and community.* Spiritual education focuses on how we are connected to other humans at a number of different levels. Nel Noddings has developed the notion of circles of caring where we first feel responsibility for those near us (e.g., our families), then to our immediate community, next to our country, and finally to the global community.[18] One vehicle used in classrooms to build community is cooperative, small group learning. There is evidence that cooperative learning facilitates the student's social, emotional, and intellectual development.[19]

Another vehicle is invitational education, which provides one means for making the school a community.[20] All members of school community, including secretaries and custodial staff, intentionally try to make the school a warm, supportive environment for learning.

Schools also need to connect to the communities in which they reside. School councils where parents can participate in school decisions are one vehicle; community service projects where students become involved in the life of the community are another link between school and community.

Finally, holistic education and global education are closely linked. It is important for students to see themselves as global citizens. Robert Muller's concept of a "world core curriculum" is relevant, as certain concepts, principles, and values are essential to the planet's survival. Muller suggests that schools throughout the world should focus on fundamental, universal themes that help students to see themselves as part of a global family. There are established schools that are basing their curriculum on Muller's ideas.

5. *Earth connections.* Thomas Berry claims that we have become autistic with regard to our connection with the Earth.[21] We need to restore the connection between ourselves and nature and see ourselves as part of the environment rather than separate from it. Environmental education, of course, is one vehicle, but we can use native and aboriginal people's literature to awaken our connection to the Earth. Books such as *Touch the Earth* are helpful in this process. Consider the words of Walking Buffalo:

> We saw the Great Spirit's work in almost everything: sun, moon, trees, wind and mountains. Sometimes we approached him through these things. Was that so bad? I think we have a true belief in the supreme being, a stronger faith than that of most whites who have called us pagans.... Indians living close to nature and nature's ruler are not living in darkness.
>
> Did you know that trees talk? Well they do, They talk to each other, and they'll talk to you if you listen. Trouble is, white people don't listen. They never learned to listen to the Indians so I don't suppose they'll listen to other voices in nature. But I have learned a lot from trees: sometimes about the weather, sometimes about animals, sometimes about the Great Spirit.[22]

Spiritual education is clearly a form of "heart work" and should flow from our spiritual center. As teacher and student deepen their awareness of their self and their connection to a larger spiritual reality, there is hope for genuine change in the world.

Berry suggests that we need to begin to listen to the voices of the Earth if the planet is to survive, and some of these voices could become part of the curriculum.

6. *Self connections.* This connection refers not to our ego but our big self. In his recent novel *Rabbit at Rest*, John Updike describes how Rabbit toward the end of his life turns inward and connects with his heart and a sort of "inner magic," which he occasionally experiences as a "feeling of collaboration, of being bigger than he really is."

Literature is one vehicle for awakening the big self. Jonathan Cott argues that children's literature can play an important role in this process:

> In his "Immortality" Ode, Wordsworth states that "our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting; and the older we get, the harder it is for us to wake up. Children's literature — and what is that but tales and rhymes writ and drawn large or small? — helps us to wake up. It brings us back to experiencing our earliest and deepest feelings and truths. It is our link to the past path to the future. And in it we find ourselves."[23]

Mythology and great literature often describes the awakening to our big self. Dante's *The Divine Comedy* describes the journey from the ego to big self in his journey from hell to heaven. It is a journey that ends in the highest form of connectedness — love, or in Dante's words, "the love that moves the sun and the other stars."

Another vehicle to the self involves the arts. By experiencing visual art, drama, and music, students can connect with that part of self that is not dealt with in rational discourse of most schooling. Waldorf education makes full use of the arts in this way. The students feel the colors or connect to their inner voice through movement. M.C. Richards has described this quality in Waldorf education:

> Each main lesson will call upon the child's powers of listening, of body movement, of thinking, and of feeling. Artistic activity is particularly related to the will; it is an experience of doing, of making. Artwork also invites the child's feeling for expressiveness and encourages a kind of intuitive thinking about how to get things done. In the early grades, some teachers allow the children to copy what has been drawn on the board so that they may learn to draw in ways they would not otherwise know. Other times the children draw freely. Variety exists, according to teacher and grade.[24]

According to Richards, art allows the development of an intuitive seeing that is missing in our culture:

> It is an intuitive seeing, which comes about as a result of exercising and experiencing one's physical senses imaginatively, wholeheartedly, and wholesoulfully. This is why artistic practice is so important in all learning and education. This is why neglect of the artist in each person is so impoverishing to society. Without this spiritual sense organ, this way of seeing the formative forces at work in a physical process, we are blind and duped by appearances.[25]

Another vehicle for making this connection is the study of world religions. When studying the major faiths I advocate an emphasis on spiritual practice in each religion; in other words, how does each faith become a lived daily practice? This involves studying and experiencing to some degree contemplative practice, prayer, mantras, breathing practice, movement, and storytelling. Often the study of religion focuses on dogma and ritual, and students see faith as something fixed and static. Ideally, the faiths should be paths of awakening to our true nature.

The holistic teacher

Spiritual education, however, cannot be reduced to six connections or a set of techniques. Ultimately it must come from the teacher's self. The teacher's heart should be open and vulnerable. By open and vulnerable, I do not mean weak. What I mean is best described by the Tibetan teacher Chogyam Trungpa, when he talks about meditation practice and how it helps to awaken our hearts:

> When you slouch [in meditation], you are trying to hide your heart, trying to protect it by slumping over. But when you sit upright but relaxed in the posture of meditation, your heart is naked. Your entire being is exposed — to yourself, first of all, but to others as well. So through the practice of sitting still and following your breath as it goes out and dissolves, you are connecting with your heart.[26]

For years I have encouraged teachers to engage in meditation practice in a course I teach on holistic education. I approach meditation very broadly as a form of contemplation and as one of many vehicles for opening the heart. Most of my students are tentative and doubtful as they begin their meditation practice. A few students have difficulties throughout, but the vast majority of students find the centering practice helpful in their life. One student wrote in her journal:

> My mind is finally settling, and I'm even catching myself looking forward to my meditation.
>
> The surprise for me is that I'm beginning to consider the possibility that I might actually continue this practice after the course. Not that I'm a skeptical person, but I just wasn't getting much out of it until recently. It always seemed to work against my "intense," busy nature and lifestyle. I'm now beginning to see the benefits and to appreciate the difference it might make in my daily work.

Some of the benefits this student noticed included an ability to concentrate and cope with the stress of comprehensive examinations.

Another student introduced her secondary school students to meditation, and she wrote:

> They [her students] ask to meditate and have come to enjoy the process.... They have become "stiller." They can sit for longer periods of time and their attention span has increased. Students from other classes that I do not teach have asked to be taught how to meditate because the other students claim that they have done better on tests and been in less trouble. Interesting!

If we are connected to our hearts, then students will connect to theirs. Matthew Fox argues that our work should become heart work:

> When I'm operating at my best, my work is my prayer. It comes out of the same place that prayer comes out of — the center, the heart. All work is meant to be heart work: it comes out of our heart and goes to the heart. All authentic work is an effort to move other people's hearts.... Work is the way adults return the blessing of being here to the next generation. Work is relationship. And other relationships such as friendship and mutuality and community and intimacy, I hope also come out of the same center.[27]

Spiritual education is clearly a form of "heart work"

and should flow from our spiritual center. As teacher and student deepen their awareness of their self and their connection to a larger spiritual reality, there is hope for genuine change in the world. An awareness that we are part of an interconnected reality means that technology developed from that awareness will connect rather than fragment. Such a technology will become an appropriate, conscious technology.

There is evidence that we are witnessing a global awakening. The recent events in Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R. as well as a deepening awareness and concern about the environment indicates that we are moving away from a world governed by fear and repression to a world motivated by concern and love for all life on this planet. Holistic education is clearly a part of this global awakening.

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The Educational Theory of the Bhagavad-Gita

by Dale T. Snauwaert

Dale T. Snauwaert is an assistant professor of philosophy of education at Adelphi University. His research interests focus on the relationship between democratic and educational theory, the history of educational ideas, and comparative philosophy of education. His paper on the educational theory of the* Bhagavad-Gita *is a step in a long-term process of articulating the relevance of cross-cultural inquiry to western philosophy of education.

In the past 30 years there has been much speculation about the relationship between Western approaches to knowledge, particularly in the disciplines of physics and psychology, and Eastern systems of thought. These investigations have revealed striking similarities in the description of reality between worldviews that were commonly held to be diametrically opposed approaches to knowledge: one based on empirical rationality, the other on intuitive insight.[1]

Because the Eastern traditions of knowledge predate empirical science, and thus are expressed in philosophical/religious language, these traditions have been understood as culturally bound belief systems. However, the profound similarity between the description of reality espoused by Western science and that espoused by Eastern thought has led a handful of Western thinkers to the conclusion that Eastern systems of knowledge speak to universal aspects of human life.[2]

In addition to being one of the world's great literary and philosophical works, the *Bhagavad-Gita* is a profound educational treatise. The dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna is fundamentally pedagogical, from which an educational theory, possibly of universal import, is derived.

The purpose of this article is to explore, from the perspective of its possible relevance to Western educational discourse, the educational theory of "one of the most authoritative texts in Indian philosophical literature," the *Bhagavad-Gita*.[3] The *Bhagavad-Gita* has been described as the "milk" of the Upanishadic teaching, the distilled essence of Vedic philosophy.[4] It comprises a dialogue between Arjuna, the greatest archer of his day, and Krishna, his charioteer, friend, and eventual teacher. As portrayed in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, their relationship is fundamentally pedagogical, from which educational principles, possibly of universal import, can be derived.

This article is divided into four sections. Section one sets the context of the dialogue by briefly describing the story of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Section two describes the educational purpose implicit in the *Bhagavad-Gita* and its philosophical underpinnings. Section three outlines four pedagogical principles implicit in the pedagogical relationship between Arjuna and Krishna. Section four concludes the article by briefly highlighting the relevance of the *Bhagavad-Gita* to educational discourse. A complete explication of the educational theory of the *Bhagavad-Gita* would require book-

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length treatment. Consequently, this article constitutes more of an introduction than a full explication.

The context

The story is set on a battlefield in the central plains of India (not far from Delhi) in approximately the fifth century B.C. At the time a war is about to break out between the faction led by the sons of Pandu, one of them being Arjuna, and the faction lead by Duroydhana. The events leading up to the dialogue are described in the *Mahabharata* of which the *Bhagavad-Gita* is the central part.[5] We are told that Dhritarashtra, the blind king of the Kuru family, delegated the ruling of his kingdom to his brother Pandu. Upon Pandu's death, Dhritarashtra decided to give the throne to his nephew Yudhishthira, the eldest son of Pandu and brother of Arjuna, rather than to his own evil-minded son Duroydhana. Through treachery Duroydhana seized the throne and exiled the sons of Pandu for eleven years. After their exile the sons of Pandu returned to defend their claim to the throne, which led to the outbreak of war.[6]

> ***My nature smitten with the taint of weakness, confused in mind about dharma [duty], I pray Thee, tell me decisively what is good for me, I am Thy disciple [student]; teach me for I have taken refuge in Thee.***
> ***— Arjuna***

Just as the battle is about to begin Arjuna has Krishna, his charioteer, draw the chariot up between the two armies. There, upon Krishna's prompting, Arjuna realizes that the enemy he is about to fight is his family, past teachers, and friends. This realization gives rise to a profound dilemma. His mind tells him that it is his duty to fight, but his heart tells him it is wrong to kill his kinsmen. Confronted with this dilemma Arjuna becomes despondent, unable to act. As Sanjaya, the narrator of the story, states at the end of the first chapter, "Having spoken thus at the time of battle, casting away arrow and bow, Arjuna sat down on the seat of the chariot, his mind overwhelmed with sorrow."[7]

In this state of despondency Arjuna sees no way to solve his dilemma. He comes to realize that he is helpless. In his helplessness he turns to Krishna for guidance. He states:

> My nature smitten with the taint of weakness, confused in mind about *dharma* [duty], I pray Thee, tell me decisively what is good for me, I am Thy disciple [student]; teach me for I have taken refuge in Thee.[8]

At this moment Krishna becomes Arjuna's teacher. It is here that the pedagogical relationship begins.

Educational purpose of the *Bhagavad-Gita*

The two most powerful influences in Arjuna's life, duty and compassion, are in irresolvable conflict. He is pulled in opposite directions by seemingly contradictory demands: compassion telling him not to fight, and the dictates of duty mandating action. The result of this "duality" is existential crisis. The meaning of Arjuna's life, the vision of purpose that has heretofore given direction to his life, dissolves in the face of profound inner conflict. He is left despondent. This crisis, however, is not one of "dread," of being aware of the possibility of nonbeing,[9] but one of "alienation," of being torn from the "self."

There are two apparent solutions to this crisis, both unacceptable. On one hand, Arjuna can surrender to the dictates of social obligation. He can suppress his compassion and blindly submit to social authority. As Radhakrishnan suggests, however, the resolution derived from this submission is "bought at the price of the integrity of the self."[10] This solution represents the totalitarian ideal, wherein individual freedom and compassion are sacrificed to the interests of the state. On the other hand, Arjuna can reject duty and vow, out of compassion, not to fight. This is the ideal of pacificism. However, by not fighting he allows injustice to be perpetuated. The oppressive regime of Duroydhana will continue unabated. Both solutions are unacceptable, and their rejection by Arjuna speaks to his moral sensitivity.

Enter Krishna. Krishna wants Arjuna to act out of the dictates of inner truth rather than social authority or passion. Arjuna's compassion is not founded on a universal principle of love for humanity, but rather attachment to individual persons.[11] It is also apparent that his initial willingness to fight was tainted with anger toward, and hate for, Duroydhana.[12] For

Krishna, these are signs of an unintegrated and weak state of consciousness, a state of consciousness in bondage.

Krishna's solution is to attain a state of consciousness that is integrated — a state concerned, not with the fruits of action, but with following the dictates of truth. Truth, according to Krishna, dictates that Arjuna should fight against injustice.[13] His frame of mind, however, should be balanced; he should fight based on the principle of justice, rather than out of obedience to authority, and he should act free from either anger or attachment. When he acts he should act centered in himself in accordance with higher principles that he has attained independently of social or personal constraint.[14]

The educational purpose of the *Bhagavad-Gita* is the development of this integrated state of consciousness. Krishna's aim is to transform Arjuna's consciousness from anger and despondency to balance and integration, and in the process, empower Arjuna so that he will be able to engage in social action to reestablish justice. Thus the purpose is both individual *and* social transformation.[15]

This transformation is based, in turn, upon a humanist ontology. Krishna maintains that, "as the unwise act out of their attachment to action, O Bharata, so should the wise act, but without any attachment, desiring the welfare of the world."[16] *Attachment* is defined as a state of consciousness where the objects of perception determine, through the stimulation of desire, one's action.[17] In this case action becomes, to use Paulo Freire's term, *adaptive*. Instead of acting as a *subject* who is able to transform the world in terms of one's own intentions, the attached person is an object, "a being for another," who merely reacts to, and is at the mercy of, the environment.[18]

Krishna's task is to liberate Arjuna from his bondage; however, by virtue of the nature of human consciousness with its distinctive capacity for self-awareness, liberation can only be achieved through a process of self-reflection, in an intellectual sense as well as a phenomenological sense. The intellectual sense is presented in terms of the philosophy of Sankhya.[19]

Krishna begins his discourse with Arjuna by engaging in an analysis of Arjuna's concrete situation in terms of a comprehensive understanding of the perishable and imperishable phases of life, of duty, of one's relationship with others, of the results of action,[20] and of the nature of equanimity.[21] This critical understanding cultures Arjuna's intellect so that he is able to discriminate and choose between conflictual courses of action. With this ability Arjuna will be able to act out of informed intention rather than being dictated by anger or social constraint. Through critical reflection in the form of Sankhya, Arjuna is transformed, at least partially, into a subject. Central to this process of critical reflection is dialogue. However, critical reflection mediated by dialogue is not sufficient. For Krishna, Sankhya is the first step; for complete liberation to occur critical reflection must be grounded in the experience of the spiritual dimension of consciousness. This approach is referred to as the philosophy of Yoga.

The essence of this philosophy is captured in the following verse. Krishna asserts: "Established in Yoga, O winner of wealth, perform actions having abandoned attachment and having become balanced in success and failure, for balance of mind is called Yoga.[22]

Implicit in Arjuna's plea for guidance, therefore, is the principle of* receptivity*, the tenet that for learning to take place or for understanding to develop, the student must seek out knowledge.

It is Krishna's position here that liberation is not sufficiently produced through intellectual discrimination but requires establishment in Yoga. *Yoga* literally means union, as described by the following:

> When his mind, completely settled, is established in the Self alone, when he is free from craving for any pleasure, then he is said to be united.
>
> A lamp which does not flicker in a windless place — to such is compared the yogi of subdued thought practicing Union with the Self.
>
> That [state] in which thought, settled through the practice of Yoga, retires, in which, seeing the Self by the Self alone, he finds contentment in the Self;
>
> Let him gradually retire through the intellect possessed of patience; having established the mind in the Self, let him not think at all.[23]

Krishna is describing a dimension of conscious-

ness that is simultaneously free of thought, desire, and emotion, yet not an empty void. It is in essence being conscious, not of objects of thought or perception, but of consciousness itself. Being conscious of consciousness (a phenomenologically precognitive state of self-awareness) it is unbounded, for there is no object per se to bind. For Krishna this state is the self; it is the highest form of subjectivity, for it is a pure state of self-awareness.

This kind of self-awareness is what Oliver refers to as "ontological knowing." Ontological knowing is essentially intuitive; it is a mode of knowing that involves a synthetic apprehension of being rather than empirical or analytical rationality.[24] A number of Western philosophers, theologians, and psychologists have made note of this mode of knowing.[25] For example, Saint Bonaventure maintains that human beings are capable of at least three modes of knowing, what he refers to as the "three eyes." The first eye, the eye of flesh, is essentially perception of the empirical world; the second eye, the eye of reason, is the mode through which we analyze and discriminate; and the third eye, the eye of contemplation, is the mode of knowing through which we intuitively experience the spiritual dimension of being. The latter is described as a transempirical and transrational state of knowing. Its product is spiritual wisdom rather than empirical fact or philosophical insight.[26]

"We all know children are lovers of dust; their whole body and mind thirst for sunlight and air as flowers do. They are never in a mood to refuse the constant invitations to establish direct communication coming to their senses from the universe."
—Sri Rabindranath Tagore

From this perspective, reflection occurs on two levels: on an intellectual plane through dialogue, the philosophy of Sankhya; and on an experiential plane through ontological knowing, the philosophy of Yoga. The goal, however, is to integrate Sankhya and Yoga. They are not mutually exclusive; rather, intellectual discrimination should be grounded in precognitive self-awareness, the notion of the "resolute intellect." This is similar to what David Purpel refers to as *prophecy*, defined as a "vision of the ultimate/sacred/holy" in dialectical relationship with a critical consciousness of social injustice. Without a vision of what is ultimately meaningful — which is in principle spiritual — critical reflection is baseless; it is baseless in the sense that while leading to a critical understanding, it lacks a vision of possibility. However, Krishna is not merely referring to the creation of conceptual meaning but an actual change in consciousness, grounding the intellect in a phenomenologically precognitive state of self-awareness that provides an inner centering from which critical consciousness can emerge and meaning can be constructed (the "resolute intellect").[27]

Freedom from attachment is contingent on this integration, for then one's action is completely generated from the internal, reflective dynamics of the deepest level of one's consciousness. One then acts on the basis of a balanced state of consciousness wherein the intellect is steady and resolute, grounded as it is in the self. Krishna maintains that in this integrated state one does not act out of anger, hate, attachment, or obedience to authority. The self is not driven by the external environment but acts freely, for one is in a state of inner fulfillment, equanimity, and freedom.[28] One then acts out of the internal dynamics of consciousness, dynamics that are defined by compassion and justice: One becomes devoted to "the welfare of the world," taking "delight in doing good to all creatures."[29]

In summary, the educational theory of the

Bhagavad-Gita emerges out of the philosophies of Sankhya and Yoga. Its purpose is individual and social transformation in terms of liberation and justice, respectively. Sankhya maintains that liberation is based on critical, intellectual reflection mediated by dialogue, and Yoga maintains that, in addition, liberation is contingent on grounding the intellect in a state of precognitive self-awareness. The pedagogy of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, to which we now turn, is premised on this philosophical orientation.

Four pedagogical principles

The pedagogical relationship portrayed between Arjuna and Krishna is fundamentally dialogic as well as ontological. In it we see the philosophies of Sankhya and Yoga in action. Implicit in this pedagogy are four principles that give it greater specificity.

The principle of receptivity. As noted in section one, in his state of despondency Arjuna turns to Krishna for guidance. Prior to this moment Arjuna does not seek knowledge or understanding. His path is clear. If Krishna were to approach Arjuna with advice prior to his moral dilemma, Arjuna would not have been receptive. Only when Arjuna realizes that he needs guidance is he in a position to benefit from Krishna's teaching. Implicit in Arjuna's plea for guidance, therefore, is the principle of *receptivity*, the tenet that for learning to take place or for understanding to develop, the student must seek out knowledge. From this perspective, the pedagogical process is centered in Arjuna and can only occur on the basis of Arjuna's desire to understand.

We become fully human only when we are inner directed, and dehumanized to the extent that we are dictated by external conditions.

However, Arjuna's receptivity in this case is not solely spontaneous but is partially induced by Krishna. Immediately on entering the battlefield, Krishna realizes that Arjuna is being compelled by anger. However, Krishna knows that Arjuna will not be receptive to his teaching at this point. He consequently employs a device to *produce* receptivity. He calls Arjuna "Partha," the son of Pirtha, thereby reminding him of his mother and opening his heart.[30] This opening leads eventually to his moral dilemma and his despondency. Thus, Krishna produces Arjuna's despondency by design in order to induce receptivity to this teaching. From this perspective, the pedagogical process originates in the teacher; it is teacher centered.

However, Krishna's pedagogical response is in fact based on Arjuna's problems and interests. Were Arjuna initially receptive, Krishna would have proceeded on the basis of Arjuna's recognition of his weakness. However, Krishna recognizes that Arjuna is unknowingly headed toward personal disaster. It is Krishna's compassion as a friend and his skill as a teacher that compel him to intervene. However, the intervention is ultimately based on Arjuna's problems and interests, not on a predetermined agenda set by Krishna. Therefore, even though Krishna does induce Arjuna's receptivity, the pedagogy of the *Bhagavad-Gita* may be considered as primarily student centered, with the qualification that the teacher is responsible for setting up the conditions within which students are able to become conscious of their interests.

The principle of inquiry. At key junctures in Krishna's discourse, Arjuna asks deeply thought-out questions that lead the dialogue to increasing levels of detail and profundity. For example, after Krishna's presentation of the basic tenets of Sankhya, Arjuna enters the dialogue with a pointed question: "If Thou considerest knowledge superior to action, O Janardana, Why dost Thou spur me to this terrible deed, O Keshava?"[31]

Even though Arjuna submits himself to Krishna as his teacher, this does not imply a passive relationship. Rather, Arjuna is actively engaged in the dialogue; Krishna is open to any line of questioning. Arjuna is free to ask anything, to pursue an issue or a doubt wherever it may lead. This atmosphere of inquiry is at the very heart of the pedagogical relationship between Krishna and Arjuna. Their relationship is completely open. A pedagogical relationship based on open inquiry is consistent with the goal of liberation through critical reflection. Dialogue as a means of reflection can not effectively occur in an authoritarian or threatening atmosphere. This atmosphere tends to stifle dialogue, thereby stifling reflection, for it restricts thought and com-

munication. However, when the pedagogical environment is open and free, then one can in a sense think and reflect out loud, thereby increasing the power of reflection exponentially.

The principle of direct experience. Although the dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna is primarily conducted on an intellectual plane, its pedagogy is not confined entirely to this level. A fundamental part of Krishna's pedagogy is direct experience. Krishna does not merely lead Arjuna to an intellectual understanding of "reality," he wants Arjuna to directly experience the "truth" for himself.[32] Krishna leads Arjuna to an experience of transcendence, an experience of his spiritual nature.[33]

Thus, Krishna's teaching is not confined to intellectual discourse but is rather an integration of experience and understanding. A pedagogy devoted to liberation must integrate spiritual experience *and* critical understanding. The pedagogy of the *Bhagavad-Gita* is thus fundamentally experiential as well as dialogic. In fact, it strives to integrate the two, in the sense of grounding intellectual discrimination in a precognitive state of self-awareness.

The principle of self-referral. From a pedagogical perspective the above integration entails a pedagogy that attempts to relate specific understandings to the internal dynamics of the student's consciousness. This basically constitutes the principle of connecting various understandings to the experience of the student in general, and the phenomenological experience of the student in particular. By making this connection, inert ideas become alive and full of personal meaning.

In summary, the pedagogy of the *Bhagavad-Gita* is dialogic, student-centered, open, experiential, and self-reflective, both intellectually and phenomenologically. This pedagogical approach in turn has its philosophical foundations in the tenets of Sankhya and Yoga.

Relevance to educational discourse

As stated in the introduction, this article presupposes that the *Bhagavad-Gita* speaks to universal — that is, cross-cultural — dimensions of human life, in particular, the educational process. It can be argued that certain dimensions, both implicit and explicit, of the philosophical orientation of the *Bhagavad-Gita* are universal in this sense. At least five such cross-cultural facets can be identified: (1) crisis as a necessary condition for development, (2) humanism, (3) dialogue, (4) the spiritual dimension of liberation, and (5) social justice. The universality of these principles and insights is, at this point, offered as a hypothesis rather than as a fully supported proposition.

A number of Western human development theorists — for example, Dewey, Piaget, Erikson, Kohlberg, and Gilligan — maintain that conflict or crisis is a necessary condition for human development.[34] Dilemmas are viewed as opportunities for growth, for their resolution demands reflection and choice. Through reflection and choice, cognitive and moral processes are reorganized in the direction of greater competence, perspective, and understanding. In addition, Socrates employs a similar method in Plato's *Meno* when he leads Meno through a number of detailed arguments in order to reach a state of "perplexity," from which the search for genuine knowledge of virtue can proceed. It is the state of perplexity, a state of intellectual conflict, that is the origin of the search for knowledge.[35] As discussed in section three, in order for Krishna to liberate Arjuna from his state of bondage, he must induce a crisis. It is Arjuna's existential crisis, the dilemma between compassion and duty, that is a necessary condition for Arjuna's subsequent development.[36] From this perspective, we can hypothesize that crisis may be a universal developmental principle.

What the **Bhagavad-Gita** *offers is an integration — a holistic, spiritual pedagogical approach that concerns itself with social transformation.*

Implicit in the *Bhagavad-Gita's* notions of bondage and liberation is a philosophical humanism quite similar in essence to Western notions of humanism from Aristotle to Marx to existentialism. This is a conception of human nature as inner directed. We become fully human only when we are inner directed, and dehumanized to the extent that we are dictated by external conditions. Humans are by nature

the only beings capable of manifesting their own intentions; what makes us human is the innate capacity to integrate the conception and execution of ideas. However, if our action is dictated by the intentions of others or by environmental stimuli, then we have lost our essence as humans; we have become dehumanized objects.

This notion of human bondage and liberation finds its expression in Western civilization as early as Aristotle who maintains that the essence of human nature is activity in pursuit of conscious, rational purpose. It is implicit in the Marxian conception of human nature as freely creative. In terms of existentialism we define our humanity through choice and responsibility. In the language of the *Bhagavad-Gita* we are in a state of bondage; in an Aristotelian sense we have become slaves; in Marx's terminology we are oppressed; in the language of existentialism we are unauthentic. In all cases the individual is dehumanized (although humanity is defined differently) by virtue of being externally rather than internally directed. Thus, in the *Bhagavad-Gita* we find a possible commonality between Eastern and Western humanism in terms of inner directedness.

Liberation, on one hand, entails critical reflection that must be mediated by others in a process of dialogue. In the *Bhagavad-Gita* this notion is embodied in the philosophy of Sankhya and in Krishna's dialogic pedagogy. We find similar notions, for example, in the Socratic method and in the dialogic pedagogy of Paulo Freire.[37] Thus, it can be hypothesized that dialogue as a means of liberation may also be cross-cultural.

However, on the other hand, the *Bhagavad-Gita* expands reflection to a phenomenological level through "spiritual" experience in terms of precognitive self-awareness. This notion of liberation through spiritual self-reflection is the one notion that most often defines Eastern philosophical approaches in the Western mind. However, as the work of Purpel and Oliver suggests, the spiritual dimension to liberation may also be relevant to the modern, Western condition.[38]

Finally, the concern for political and social justice in terms of upholding righteousness in the face of oppression is, perhaps, the overarching purpose of the *Bhagavad-Gita*.[39] Its pedagogy is thus directly concerned with social and political transformation, a concern explicit in critical educational discourse. In this position we find what may be a universal linkage between political and educational discourse. For example, the greatest of Western educational philosophers — Plato, Rousseau, Dewey — were also political theorists, and in their work we find a profound interconnection between education and political transformation.[40] The educational theory of the *Bhagavad-Gita* is firmly grounded in this perspective.

In conclusion, what the educational theory of the *Bhagavad-Gita* offers is a critical *and* spiritual approach to liberation. The critical approach has tended to be based on material conceptions of society and history, whereas the spiritual approach has been confined to philosophical idealism.[41] What the *Bhagavad-Gita* offers is an integration — a holistic, spiritual pedagogical approach that concerns itself with social transformation.[42] From this perspective, the spiritual does not have to be reclusive and otherworldly and the political does not have to be narrowly material.[43] The integration proposed by Krishna in the *Bhagavad-Gita* provides a means to a holistic, spiritual pedagogy that is politically and socially relevant.

Notes

1. Michael C. Dillbeck, "The Vedic Psychology of the *Bhagavad-Gita*," *Psycologia: An International Journal of Psychology in the Orient* 26 (1983): 62–72.

2. See, for example, Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics* (Berkeley, CA: Shambhala Press, 1975); Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Beyond* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958); and Michael Talbot, *Mysticism and the New Physics* (New York: Bantam, 1981).

3. See S. Radhakrishnan and C.A. Moore, *A Sourcebook of Indian Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. xix.

4. See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad-Gita: A New Translation and Commentary*, Chapters 1–6 (New York: Penguin Books, 1967); S. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavadgita* (New York: Harper, 1948); and Arvind Sharma, *The Hindu Gita: Ancient and Classical Interpretations of the Bhagavadgita* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1986).

5. See Sharma, *The Hindu Gita*, Introduction.

6. The throne is lost by virtue of a fixed dice game. The eleven-year exile is one of the conditions of the bet.

7. See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapter 1, Verse 47.

8. See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapter 2, Verse 7.

9. Van Cleve Morris, *Existentialism in Education* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 26.

10. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavadgita*, p. 44.

11. Ibid., p. 69.

12. See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapter 1, Verse 23.

13. See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapter 2, Verse 3.

14. See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapter 2, Verses 48 and 49. Implicit in this position is a distinction between nonviolence and pacificism. Nonviolence is not determined by physical action per se but in terms of a state of mind. Krishna's position is one of nonviolence even though he implores Arjuna to fight. If Arjuna fights in a state equanimity, free from anger and hate, in order to uphold justice, then he is acting nonviolently. Pacifism is the refusal to fight even if injustice will continue. See Radhakrishnan, The *Bhagavadgita*, p. 68; and Sharma, *The Hindu Gita*, p. xxii.

15. For example, the *Bhagavad-Gita* inspired such Indian revolutionaries as Gandhi and Aurobindo. In the *Bhagavad-Gita* they found a philosophy of action on the basis of which the British raj could be nonviolently overturned. See Robert Minor, *Modern Indian Interpreters of the Bhagavad-Gita* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1986).

16. See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapter 3, Verse 25.

17. See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapter 2, Verse 62.

18. Paulo Freire, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974); and Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness* (New York: Continuum, 1990). This humanistic ontology will be compared with Western humanism as exemplified by Aristotle, Marx, and existentialism in Section IV.

19. See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapter 2, Verses 11–38.

20. See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapter 2, Verses 11–30, 31–33, 33–36, and 36–37, respectively.

21. See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's commentary to Chapter 2, Verse 38, in *On the Bhagavad-Gita*.

22. See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapter 2, Verse 48.

23. See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapter 6, Verses 18, 19, 20, and 25, respectively.

24. Donald Oliver, *Education, Modernity, and Fractured Meaning* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1989).

25. For example, see Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970); William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Collier Books, 1961); and Ken Wilber, *Eye to Eye: The Quest for the New Paradigm* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1983).

26. See Wilber, *Eye to Eye*.

27. David Purpel, *The Moral and Spiritual Crisis in Education: A Curriculum for Justice and Compassion* (Granby, MA: Bergin & Garvey, 1989). For a review see Dale T. Snauwaert, "Toward a Prophetic Mythos: Purpel and Sorokin on Culture and Education," *Educational Theory* 40 (1990): 231-235. For Krishna's notion of the resolute intellect see Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapter 2, Verses 41, 44, and 50.

28. See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapter 6, Verse 7; Chapter 4, Verse 22; Chapter 5, Verse 28; Chapter 2, Verse 50; and Chapter 5, Verse 10.

29. See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapter 3, Verse 25, and Chapter 5, Verse 25, respectively.

30. See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad-Gita*, commentary to Chapter 1, Verse 25.

31. See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapter 3, Verse 1.

32. See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapter 9, Verse 2; Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavadgita*.

33. See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapter 2, Verse 45.

34. See for example, John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Free Press, 1916); Erik H. Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1964); Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982); Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981); Jean Piaget, *Six Psychological Studies* (New York: Viking Books, 1968).

35. Plato, *Protagoras and Meno*, translated by W. K. C. Guthrie (New York: Penguin Classics, 1948).

36. Although the nature of crisis is substantively different for each of these theorists, for example, Dewey's is social and cognitive, Kohlberg and Gilligan moral, Piaget cognitive, and Arjuna existential, in a fundamental sense they are the same in that in each case a dilemma is confronted which requires reflection to resolve.

37. See Plato's *Protagoras and Meno* and Freire's *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

38. In fact there exists a significant tradition of "mysticism" in the West, beginning perhaps with the Greeks and Judaism and continuing into Christianity. See Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy*.

39. See Sharma, *The Hindu Gita*, Introduction.

40. See Plato, *Republic* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1979 edition); Rousseau's *Emile* (New York: Basic Books, 1979 edition) and *The Social Contract* (New York: Dutton, 1973 edition), which are companion pieces; and Dewey's *Democracy and Education* and *The Public and Its Problems* (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1927).

41. See W.T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy* (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1960).

42. It is holistic in the sense that it integrates rationality, spirituality, and political action.

43. A socially relevant, transformative spirituality is embodied in the philosophies of Gandhi and Martin Luther King. For example, Gandhi maintains that politics and spirituality are intimately connected, so much so that he views political action as a spiritual technique. See R. Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi* (New York: Concord Grove Press, 1986).

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Educating the Whole Person for the Whole of Life

by Gerald F. Karnow

Dr. Karnow received his B.A., M.S. and M.D. from the University of Chicago. He completed his training in internal medicine at Harlem Hospital in New York City. Since 1978 he has been the school doctor for the Rudolf Steiner School in New York City and a consultant for other Waldorf schools. With two colleagues he shares a general medical practice in Spring Valley, New York, at the Fellowship Community, a multigenerational community centered around care of the aged where he is also a co-worker. He is editor of the* Journal of Anthroposophic Medicine *and president of the Homeopathic Medical Society of the State of New York.

Sitting in my consultation room with a long-married couple — he, a psychotherapist, she, with early Alzheimer's — a comment by him particularly caught my attention. Our discussion focused on the evolution and further development of dementia in general and his wife's difficulties in particular. In that context he said, "All the difficulties she has now she has had ever since I first met her many years ago, only now they're worse — and getting worse." The husband had noticed this before in others; he believed that the peculiarities of our personality early in life can, in later life, express themselves in the extreme as illness. He had noticed that there were certain particular habits of the soul which, to the observant eye, forebode trouble — that early in life one can evidence unique modes of relating to the outer and inner world which will pattern the rest of life.

The husband had experienced in his wife, early in their relationship, a quality of dissociation from the concrete world — a timidity, a reluctance to engage the world. Her inclination was to dwell in fantasy, a predilection consistent with her literary aspirations. As time went on, however, a gradual dysjunction of her mental life and the requirements of the outer world became noticeable. By the time of our meeting, she required almost complete supervision of her daily activities and was unable to direct her life in a meaningful way.

I tell this story to make a point and to raise some questions. The point is that life is a whole and that, in the early stages, if we observe with great care, we can see tendencies that will, only after considerable time, manifest themselves in specific physiological and psychological symptoms. (This, I think, is the essence of the psychologist's insight.) The questions come when we want to apply such an insight to practical life in education or medicine. In what form are the patterns, the structures of the soul, evident in the child, and how do they evolve in the course of life to adult patterns? Could an insightful educator or physician have made a diagnosis and prognosis for the psychologist's wife early in her childhood? Could he then have prevented the problems from developing? Can we creatively educate to affect, heal, and bring harmony over the course of a student's life? What is necessary to make a diagnosis, set a course of treatment, and arrive at a prognosis that anticipates the second half or the end of a person's life? In another vein, the troubling question arises as to whether our present practices of education bring about illnesses in later life.

These kinds of questions are familiar to those active in remedial education who can see in a preschool child behaviors foreshadow-

ing learning differences or disabilities. I share the view of many experts in learning disabilities that we are dealing with global disorders. The term *global* is used here to suggest that problems involve the whole person as a being of body, soul, and spirit, so that difficulties are evident on the level of the body as structural problems or movement disorders (gross or fine motor control); on the level of the soul as problems in volitional, emotional, and cognitive activities (memory, comprehension, and perception); and on the level of the spirit as problems in the realization of the true potential of the individuality. Education and medical therapies should begin with the recognition that what we do now with a developing child will affect the whole person for the whole of life.

We can look at the physical organism over the course of a lifetime, and we can observe the lawful growth of the body from newborn to child to adolescent to young adult to middle age, and the decline of the bodily structures and functions as one enters the 50s, 60s, and 70s. At the same time, we can look at the lawful development of the soul in the course of a lifetime. As the body structure in life development is marked by important transitions — growth stages, change of teeth, puberty, peak of life (after which professional athletes lose their jobs), menopause, and so on, the soul also goes through developmental stages marked by transitions or crises. Of these crises, the so-called midlife crisis is familiar to many in their mid-30s to early 40s. Not so familiar is the thought that this midlife crisis is intimately connected with the physiological events that mark the first beginnings of senescence, of the loss of youthful shape, of the loss of an innate vitality (chronic fatigue syndrome occurs primarily around this life period), and the beginning of various metabolic disorders (e.g., diabetes mellitus, rheumatic diseases).

The question for me as a physician is whether such a crisis is the beginning of a global decline to a geriatric dependency or the birth pangs of a spirit ready to soar to a creative life because of its gradual separation from the body. That the spirit begins to separate from the body becomes an ever-growing experience for those entering the second half of life. Before, there is a sense of oneness with the body. Thereafter, the body begins to become more and more an object to be carried around. The flesh, the body, can begin to predominate and follow its own inclinations, asserting its own uncontrolled, proliferative activities and leading to benign and malignant neoplasms, becoming more subject to gravity, increasingly asserting its minerality leading to diabetes, arthritis, cardiovascular-sclerosis, cerebrovascular-sclerosis, and so on.

However, it is not necessarily true that bodily ills indicate spiritual difficulties. There are those who are born as spirit after the peak of bodily life and, instead of declining with the body, can say with Shakespeare:

> Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss
> And let that pine to aggravate [increase] thy store;
> Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
> Within be fed, without be rich no more:
> So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
> And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.
>
> (from Sonnet 146)

What is it that made an arthritic Pablo Casals get up in the morning, pour his will into his stiff arthritic hands, and play Bach Preludes on his cello, or an equally arthritic Aleksey von Jawlensky take a thick brush into both hands and paint masterpieces? And what made it possible for a Vladimir Horowitz in his 80s to play the keys with the nimbleness of a youngster? My conviction is that in such and others the spirit is stronger than the flesh. My concern is to explore whether we can assist in the development of such a spirit in those under our care. Is there a connection between what we do in early life with our children's education, the illnesses we see in later life, and the possibility of the birth and growing strength of the spirit?

Is there a connection between what we do in early life with our children's education, the illnesses we see in later life, and the possibility of the birth and growing strength of the spirit?

Let us return to the psychologist's comment that he saw the manifestations of his wife's present dementia many years before as subtle, problematic personality traits, not yet disabling and socially disruptive: problems discernible to the eye trained in observing soul phenomena. Let us compare such a

condition with an elderly person suffering from arthritis. We then have before us two forms of illness: the first characterized by the spirit's inability to take hold of the body and relate to the world of space and time, hovering as it were in its own world; the second characterized by the predominance of the body, which asserts itself through pain and loss of form and function, potentially imprisoning the spirit.

In many cases, we can see these problems developing during midlife. We encounter two kinds of problems: the "midlife crisis" and the "chronic fatigue syndrome." From the point of view presented here, both are spiritual problems, both are problems of intentionality. The former is experienced as a kind of hovering disorientation in relation to one's direction in life; major disruptions in life's continuity occur here. The latter is experienced as loss of innate vitality, of increasing predominance of a noncompliant, aching body, of cloudy, sluggish mentation and sensation. The former can be conceived of as dementia in status nascendi; the latter can be conceived of as arthritis in status nascendi. This might be a rather audacious assertion, but let us follow the line of thought still further back to childhood, to consider again the experiences of those active in dealing with learning differences or disabilities.

This is an area where teacher and physician can and do meet, at least where I am active. This is a period of life when body, soul, and spirit are still a kind of unity. The experiences and the difficulties of the child are of a global nature. The younger the child, the more global the experience. The baby's delight can be observed down to the toes; the child at play is a total being, almost a world unto himself; the school-ready child, beginning to learn in the classroom, is ideally a totally receptive being, but already liberated enough from the body to have the capacity to receive what the teacher wants to bring. Here then we begin to notice difficulties. Some children will not take in what they see; others will not take in what they hear; some can't sit still; others can't get moving, and so on.

It is well known that difficulties in the acquisition of laterality, of a definite right–left orientation, precede the manifestation of learning disabilities. Another way of saying this is that the developing child has difficulty in attaining a liberated relationship to his body. This is reflected in problems of orientating first in physical space and later in "soul space." What becomes evident is that there is a developmental interdependency between the acquisition of body movement mastery and, once that mastery has been achieved to a certain extent, with the mastery of "soul movement," with everything that is involved in the mental processes of receiving, comprehending, and remembering. Here lies the significance of play early on and sports later, which on one hand can provide us with an early diagnosis of future problems, and on the other gives us the chance to intervene therapeutically with guided play and sports activities. The object of diagnosis here is the gesture quality. Is it sluggish or lithe, is it furtive, is it direct or tentative, is it rhythmical, is it mechanical, is it encompassing, is it repelling, is it liberated enough to imitate or is it inflexibly fixed, and so on. Body gesture then becomes soul gesture.

The central educational task is the gradual liberation of the spirit from dependency of the body and soul, to be born, hopefully, unencumbered and free to be creative.

Closely connected with the gesture quality is the body form. It is out of the body that the soul is born. As the rate of body growth declines and attains definite stages of development, the soul is born out of the body and increasingly able to relate to the outer world. This relation of body form and developing consciousness with capacity to relate to the outer world is most evident in the first seven years of life, when body growth and formation are still rapid. Three stages can be distinguished. Approximately the first 2½ years are characterized by a general roundness of form, the head predominates, and the arms and legs serve as mere accompaniment to what the head is experiencing. The consciousness of the stage could be described as self-enclosed, expressing body needs globally.

As uprightness, walking, and speaking are acquired, as the head is carried through the world and begins to take in the outer world, the second stage begins. This is noticeable in the body form in the

stretch growth of the trunk, which gradually separates into a chest region distinguishable from the abdominal region. During this stage, there is gradual development of social relations through play. It is not just a receiving, sensing relation to the world, but a breathing, heart relation that requires the level of bodily maturation attained during this stage.

The third stage is marked by the continuing longitudinal growth of the body as a whole and ending with a stretch growth of the limbs and the beginning of the second dentition. During this stage of child development, we can observe a new component in play: it is goal directed. As the limbs attain their "proper" length, the forces of growth become increasingly available for free use in goal-directed play activity and finally for receiving and working through what is brought by the teacher in the classroom.

During this first period of the development of body form, there can also be problems, such as persistence of the head growth activity so predominant in the embryo, or predominance of the linear growth. In the former case, the extreme would be hydrocephaly; in the latter, the extreme would be microcephaly. As tendencies we would have head-predominant or limb-predominant body types with the accompanying inclinations to passive-receptive and active-nonreceptive behaviors (body and soul movements), respectively.

I have thus touched on three very broad phases of the whole of life and, within these phases, pointed out deviations tending to the pathological: in the late-life phase, to the extremes of dementia and arthritis; in the midlife phase, to the midlife crisis and chronic fatigue syndrome; in the early-life phase, to head-predominance and limb-predominance. Each phase represents a different yet lawfully connected relation of body and soul and spirit.

In early life, body, soul, and spirit are one unit, as it were. The creativity of the spirit is still active in building the body, in creating its own, individual instrument. The soul also is active working on and in the body to build an instrument for consciousness. And the body substance is at the same time physical living substance, unique sentient substance, and spiritualized substance (consistent with the unique individuality). When the spirit aspect predominates, the head tendency will predominate; when the body aspect predominates, the limb tendency will predominate. The soul, as mediator between spirit and body will, unless dealt with appropriately, follow the predominating tendency.

Taking this line of development into midlife — when the connection between body, soul, and spirit has loosened and the crucial stage has been reached where the spirit can be born as a potentially free, living being within a soul and through a body — we can see the potential for a progression of the two extremes in early-life development into the problems I have described as being connected with this phase. If the head tendency continues to predominate, then the gradual separation of body, soul, and spirit will result in a difficulty of the soul and spirit to maintain a creative connection with the body. Then we have the midlife crisis with all its problematic manifestations. If the limb tendency continues to predominate, then there will be an excessively close connection of the soul and spirit with the body, and we have the various manifestations of chronic fatigue syndrome.

In late life, the body is mostly body; soul and spirit are external to it. They can now be so far removed from it by virtue of earlier, untransformed tendencies that the connection with the body is not maintained or only slightly maintained — then we have dementia or the tendency to have a mental life quite separate from the real outer world. If, again by virtue of earlier untransformed tendencies, the soul and spirit are too closely bound to the body, they will move along with the processes of the body and be ruled and overcome by them. The attention-directing activity of the soul and the creative activity of the spirit will be imprisoned in body processes or, in the former case, in a world removed from the surrounding world of space and time.

Obviously, the educator does not play a primary or direct role in the management of these or other medical problems. However, if there were a recognition that the "what" and "how" of education might decrease or enhance the likelihood of the development of these difficulties in midlife and late life, then teachers might participate in the proper growth and potential healing of the human being.

The central educational task is the gradual liberation of the spirit from dependency of the body and soul, to be born, hopefully, unencumbered and free to be creative. To permit this to happen, we must recognize that it is possible for us as teachers and physicians to be creatively active out of insight to so work that the potential deviation into either extreme — spirit too far removed or spirit too closely bound to the body — is remedied at a time when there is

still the plasticity of the human organism that permits changes to be brought about.

As an example of the power of a teacher in affecting the future life of a human being, consider Rudolf Steiner's work with Otto Specht, a hydrocephalic child. As a university student, Steiner was engaged as a private tutor for Otto, who was believed to be uneducable. Steiner described how, through a very carefully structured curriculum, he was able to educate the boy so that he (Otto) was later able to go on to the university and become a physician. The most stunning result of this curriculum was that the enlarged head decreased in size. This was achieved, Steiner reported, by very carefully planned movements with the extremities.

I can't say that I know of any other such dramatic demonstrations of the capacity of educators to affect the body form of an individual. However, it suggests the development of a direction of work I take to heart. Such a pursuit obviously requires immense insight, reverence, devotion. The process of realizing such potentials begins with the step from a purely technological approach, to education and medicine, to an approach balanced with creative, artistic perception. Teachers and physicians must then begin to develop a unique capacity to perceive the human aesthetics. The object of their work is the human being in the course of time. The goal of their work is the birth of the spirit, a birth that will actually not happen until many years after the conduct of the work.

During the preschool years the teacher's aesthetic mode is similar to that of a sculptor. He/she must develop his/her sculptural technique in relation to the body. He/she must learn to develop an eye for the form of the body and see where there might be an imbalance in form and dynamics. Is there a proper balance of gravity and levity, of expansion and contraction, of head and limbs? We can recognize such patterns and relations only by virtue of an inner effort that engages our consciousness in the form before us, similar to that of a sculptor who wants to give dynamic attributes to his/her creations. Instead of a passively observing consciousness, this is an active, participatory consciousness through which we gain insight into a sculptural activity that reveals itself in the outward forms of the body. This activity plays itself out in the dynamic interaction of the spherical growth tendencies of the head and the linear growth tendencies of the limbs. We might then consider that a directed head or limb activity could creatively intervene and contribute to bringing a form to balance.

Once the child is ready for school, the teacher becomes a "sculptor of the soul," and for this she/he must acquire a different faculty. She/he must become a musician so that she/he can apprehend (hear) the resonance, harmonies, disharmonies, and melodies of the soul. This is a very different state of consciousness from the previous one, which enables us to recognize meaningful dynamics in the outwardly visible forms of the body. Here we are focusing our attention on the soul life emerging out of the body. This soul life, constituted by thinking, mental imaging, emotional experiences, feelings, memories, volitional activity, and so on, has a developmental and contemporary relation to the human body as a whole. Thus, we do not forget our sculptural "diagnoses," but consider them now the soil out of which the soul life emerges.

We must bridge the split in our view of humankind as physical and spiritual beings. The investigations by Rudolf Steiner have, in many ways, spanned the chasm...

For example, imagine a child bursting with organic vitality. It may be that very little of what we say and do makes an imprint; everything is just too dense. Here, the physician who perceives in an aesthetic manner may, together with the teacher, devise a program to permit this child's organism to be more resonant and receptive. In this context, the teacher and physician can be active as musicians, conductors, and composers. Both listen to what emerges from the soul of our children, adding new tones, melodies, and themes. We listen to the dissonances that will affect the social life of the classroom, and we attempt to resolve them creatively in new harmonies. We can act therapeutically to heal what would, in the future, develop into more serious problems.

With puberty, a still different consciousness is

needed. It is that of a poet — a "maker" as the Greek word signifies. I like the German word, *Dichter* better — literally translated as a "densifier," one who densifies the spirit into the word. A dialogue begins now with the stirring spirit of the child, not yet enriched with a wealth of life experiences. The goal of such a dialogue is the child's self-recognition: "I am a being that can act creatively into the world." The problematic extremes here would be an early grandiosity on one hand and self-negation on the other. The goal would be to bring the grandiose to an experience of the interdependence of all things and beings, and to bring the self-negating to an experience of the creative potential while recognizing the necessity to act responsibly in the world. In brief, both need to be brought to the recognition that they can become poets, "makers," "densifiers." With this, we let our charges enter the college and early professional years with the hope that we have provided the basis for a life that permits the spirit to maintain a creative and harmonious relation to the inner and outer world.

I have attempted to show how it can be possible to look at life as a whole by focusing on the potential problems that might arise for the educator and the physician. I have suggested that it may be possible to prevent health problems later in life through educational efforts with the understanding that such problems are developmentally connected with inclinations of a bodily nature early in life. I have raised the question whether education might also be a source of future health problems.

In this context, it is important for physicians involved with schools and teachers to develop methods of working together for the benefit of the developing human being. We must bridge the split in our view of humankind as physical and spiritual beings. The investigations by Rudolf Steiner have, in many ways, spanned the chasm and provided the foundation for the views I have briefly shared. They are rooted in Steiner's anthroposophical, spiritual science. His discoveries concerning the interrelations of body, soul, and spirit have, to my mind, a paradigmatic quality permitting a view of the human being as a totality of body, soul, and spirit. They can provide a secure theoretical and practical foundation for a holistic education that directs itself to educate the whole person for the whole of life.

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Book Reviews

Reflections from the Heart of Educational Inquiry: Understanding Curriculum and Teaching through the Arts

Edited by George Willis and William H. Schubert

Published by State University of New York Press (State University Plaza, Albany, NY 12246), 1991. 388 pages, $17.95, paperback.

Reviewed by Ron Miller

> The chapters in this book may indicate a collective turning point in how at least some educators have come to understand curriculum and teaching. That is big stuff. (p. 349)

I agree with co-editor William H. Schubert's assessment at the close of this remarkable book — it is a volume filled with "big stuff." Believing that artistic endeavor is a truer form of reflective inquiry into life and education than the highly "technical" approach commonly adopted in the field of curriculum theory, Schubert and his colleague George Willis asked 31 of their most intellectually and morally reflective peers in this field to write personal essays on the role of the arts in their own lives and work. The result is a powerful critique of the technicist, reductionist foundations of modern schooling and a compelling vision of an education that would serve the deepest and most meaningful of human aspirations.

The contributors draw from a wide variety of artistic endeavors, from classic literature, music, dance, drama, and painting to filmmaking and rock and roll. They reflect on particular artistic achievements that inspired them (e.g., *Moby Dick, The Magic Flute, Guernica*) and on the meaning of the artistic process itself. Art is an existential struggle, engaging the whole person (feelings, dreams, intuition, spirituality as well as rational, calculating intellect) in a search for meaning in a world that is ambiguous and filled with conflict. Art provides no fixed formulas, no neatly quantified solutions, to the questions that spring from a person's (or a culture's) ever-unfolding encounter with the world. This book strongly suggests that education cannot provide such formulas or solutions either and should not continue trying. Many of the authors here reach the conclusion that teaching and curriculum designing should themselves be conceived as arts — concerned with the "aesthetic, ethical and political" dimensions of our lives as Michael Apple puts it (p. 213) — rather than as strictly technical professional endeavors.

The authors fully recognize that, in the context of education today, this view is heretical and revolutionary. Alex Molnar even draws a distinction between "apologists" and "outlaws," and he argues that any established system needs its outlaws in order to continually examine its own premises. But he warns, "The institution of schooling will always be the outlaw's enemy" (p. 327). There will always be a tension between the personal urge for liberation and the societal imperative to maintain itself. This tension, this ambiguity, which is the very crux of the educational process, is also a major focus of the artistic quest.

Artistic experience is valuable because it enables us to perceive the things of ordinary experience — our tightly held, taken-for-granted assumptions — in a fresh light. William Ayers argues,

> A central part of what we do as teachers and curricularists must be to peel away layers of mystification, levels of understanding and perception, to reveal other means of seeing and alternative ways of knowing. Art can help, opening our eyes to other worlds, to broader scenes, to different choices, to criticism and alternatives. But works of art must be subject to critical scrutiny, too, to readings of text and subtext, to interpretation and thoughtful analysis. (p. 211)

Again, art is seen as a serious effort to come to terms with existential realities, including the historical and social context of these realities. Good literature, says Thomas E. Barone,

> urges us to place the minutiae of daily life in an imaginary context, thereby estranging us from them.... This imaginary world then stands against, and comments upon, the familiar qualities of life-at-hand, allowing us to see them in a new light. (p. 338)

Barone concludes that the lesson of good literature — and good education — should be to

> stay open, tuned into the world and ready to change it. Use your judgment in considering how to make it better, even while avoiding any final pronouncements about its constantly evolving status. And so become accustomed to the doubts and anxieties inevitably involved in the exercise of that judgment. Learn not to submit to imperialism or tyranny in any guise — political, intellectual, technological, moral. (p. 345)

Artistic inquiry, then, embodies intellectual and moral freedom. It is a way of expanding our selfhood, our personhood. Francine Shuchat Shaw writes,

> Most of my general cultural experience and surely all of my educational experience could be characterized as a long, arduous process of looking outward and taking on what belonged more to others — determining others' expectations and trying to meet them, getting a hold of authoritative ideas and trying to learn them, looking to others for decisions and trying to follow them.... [However, in a filmmaking course] we were encouraged to begin with our own critical interests and purposes rather than to defer to others' priorities, and to examine and experiment with our own individual and collective interpretations rather than begin and end our inquiries with the mastery, adoption, and imitation of others' ideas and methods. (pp. 228–229)

Elliot Eisner, perhaps the leading advocate for an aesthetic conception of teaching and learning, has this to say about individuality:

> Educational practice does not display its highest virtues in uniformity, but in nurturing productive diversity. The evocation of such diversity is what all genuine art activities have in common.... Educational programs, I learned from the arts, should not be modeled after the standardized procedures of the factory; the studio is a better image. (pp. 46–47)

The revolutionary message of *Reflections from the Heart of Educational Inquiry* is crystallized in this image: Schools must be transformed beyond the factory model and toward a studio model. Mass production and efficiency must give way to personal, moral, imaginative, and deeply meaningful inquiry as the highest values and purposes of education.

Yet the revolution called for here goes even further; several of the authors emphasize that artistic knowing taps into and expresses levels of experience that lie beyond the scope of everyday thought and language. Maxine Greene observes that artistic imagination plunges beyond the fragmentation and "multiplicity" of ordinary consciousness to discover "integral wholes" (p. 117); in other words, there are meaningful structures of experience and consciousness that are obscure to ordinary ways of knowing.

Arthur W. Foshay writes about "transcendence" — peak or mystical experiences (often triggered by great art) that take the person into this deeper relationship with the world. Foshay considers the transcendent or spiritual to be one of several essential dimensions of human growth and learning: "One can only hope that this significant dimension of human experience will soon receive the attention it deserves" (p. 132).[1] Co-editor Schubert himself, discussing the "spirit of possibility" that accompanies the teacher and student's mutual journey of discovery, says,

> If this sounds mystical, then much of life needs to be acknowledged as mystical. The mystical character of the universe and therefore of education has been set aside too long in favor of the technical side which seeks to mold or program people. (p. 285)

There are numerous other essays in this book that deserve close reading. James Henderson's piece on "native experience" is an inspiring reflection on the "Thoreauian feeling of being grandly related to the dance of life" (p. 135); William Pinar describes the role of "abstract expressionist" scholarship; and there are selections by respected curriculum theorists and educational philosophers including Max van Manen, Noel Gough, Madeline R. Grumet, and others. There is only one aspect of the book that troubles me, and it is not a criticism of the book so much as a recognition of the tremendous gap that continues to separate educational scholars from the countercultural holistic tradition. Holistic educators have said many of the same things about teaching, curriculum, and the arts for decades. Indeed, Rudolf Steiner's theory of art, knowledge, and education would provide a brilliant philosophical foundation for the themes that emerge from this book. But not one of the essayists even refers to him or to any other "alternative" educator. At least it is gratifying to see that scholars are beginning to join the holistic education tradition in voicing a radical moral and cultural critique of schooling — we're saying much the same thing — but we still need to begin working together in a serious way.

Note

1. Foshay refers to his "Curriculum Matrix" that he presented in previous articles. (See "The Curriculum Matrix," *Educational Forum 51*, no. 4 [1987]: 341–353; and "The Curriculum Matrix: Further Thoughts," *Thresholds in Education 14*, no. 3 [1988]: 8–10). In this model he proposes the following six elements of human development: intellectual, emotional, social, physical, aesthetic, spiritual/transcendent. These are *precisely* the six essential elements of holistic education that I identified after interviewing numerous holistic educators. (See "Conversations with Holistic Educators," *Holistic Education Review 3*, no. 2 [Summer 1990]: 47–55).

To Know as We Are Known: A Spirituality of Education

By Parker J. Palmer

Published by Harper & Row (New York/San Francisco), 1983. 130 pages.

Reviewed by Ron Miller

To Know as We Are Known is not a recent book but an overlooked classic in the holistic education literature. Parker J. Palmer is a former professor of sociology whose own spiritual journey brought him to Pendle Hill, a Quaker retreat center near Philadelphia where he taught for ten years. He came to view established modern ways of teaching, learning, and knowing as essentially *violent*, because they objectify both the person and the world. This book describes Parker's "quest for a holistic way of knowing" — the knowledge of the heart working in harmony with intellectual, analytical knowing.

Palmer observes that modern knowledge arises from a passion for power and control: We have employed our minds "to divide and conquer creation," to use the world (and other persons) for our own chosen ends. He proposes, as an alternative, a knowledge arising from love and compassion that "will implicate us in the web of life; it will wrap the knower and the known ... in a bond of awesome responsibility as well as transforming joy; it will call us to involvement, mutuality, accountability" (p. 9). Palmer's fundamental premise is that the world — the cosmos — was created whole and that this wholeness transcends all intellectual distinction. Furthermore, there is a spiritual force, a loving presence, calling every human being back into a communal participation with the rest of creation. The individual person (the knower) is not separate from the world (the known) but exists in mutual relationship with it; we ourselves are known, opened, engaged in community by our act of compassionate knowing:

> We are known in detail and depth by the love that created and sustains us, known as members of a community of creation that depends on us and on which we depend. This love knows our limits as well as our potential, our capacity for evil as well as good, the persistent self-centeredness with which we exploit the community for our own ends. (p. 11)

Holistic knowing, then, always involves *self*-knowing, it involves the serious responsibility of acknowledging our relationship to the world and to other persons. And Palmer stresses that any true relationship requires vulnerability and openness to change. We cannot manipulate such knowledge but must humbly offer it as one perspective on a larger truth

— a truth that can only be arrived at in a community of knowers.

This plunges us into the tricky philosophical area of epistemology, and it is difficult to summarize Palmer's position in a few paragraphs. But *To Know as We Are Known* is not an esoteric philosophical text; in very clear, very plain language Palmer calls for a teaching and learning process grounded in an ecological, spiritual understanding of the world.

> The structure of reality is not exhausted by the principles of empiricism and rationality. Reality's ultimate structure is that of an organic, interrelated, mutually responsive community of being. Relationships, not facts and reasons — are the key to reality.... (p. 53)

In order to know and live in these relationships, spiritual discipline is necessary. Prayer, silence, solitude, humility, and reverence, by opening up our imagination, intuition, feelings, and empathy, are pathways to this relational knowledge. Palmer writes from a Christian perspective and illustrates his points with frequent references to the teaching methods of fourth-century monastic communities, but his message is, I believe, universal. This book offers a powerful antidote to modern culture's materialism and loss of meaning, and it suggests a strong holistic response to postmodernism's denial of essential truths. Truth, says Palmer, is neither "out there" (objectively factual and morally neutral) nor "in here" (subjective, relative), but in relationship and *dialogue*. Truth emerges only from an authentic "I–Thou" encounter in which the full personhood of each participant, including the loving core of the self, is engaged. Truth lies in the paradoxes and tensions that exist between our perspectives, and the main task of spiritual discipline is to cultivate "the humility that enables us to hear the truth of others ... in creative tension with the faith that empowers us to speak our own" (p. 109). Only love transcends the space between us.

Palmer asserts that "to teach is to create a space in which obedience to truth is practiced." He describes how he organizes his classroom (at the college level, but the principles apply to all teaching) to facilitate such a space. His key principles — openness, boundaries, hospitality — remind me of those Shelley Kessler associates with the "teaching presence" (see "The Teaching Presence," *Holistic Education Review* 4, no. 4, [Winter 1991]. Palmer is currently traveling around the country, giving talks and workshops on the themes he first developed in this book. Having attended one such workshop, I can confirm that Palmer practices what he preaches; he is an educator in the truest sense of the word. *To Know as We Are Known* invites us all to follow that calling.

Secular and Spiritual Values: Grounds for Hope in Education

By Dudley Plunkett

Published by Routledge (London, England), 1990. 156 pages, hardcover.

Reviewed by Peter W. Cookson, Jr.

Dudley Plunkett's new book explores a number of issues that are vitally important if schools are to become places of purpose, enlightenment, and joy. This is a book of unpretentious poetry, good sense, and vision. Working against the utilitarian grain, Plunkett argues that, without recognizing the fundamental centrality of the spiritual in society and education, educational reform cannot help being superficial, incomplete, and probably counter-productive, in the sense that more dispirited failure will lead to more apathy, confusion, and even despair. In an age dominated by the ideology of entrepreneurship and pragmatism, Plunkett's openness, compassion, and warmth provides us with a role model of the educational thinker who has retained a deep faith in the divine, humanity, and the wholeness of experience.

The author summarizes:

> The rational world-view in education has to do with distinction and fragmentation, dividing to understand. The holistic world-view has to do with integrating, systemically relating, in order to comprehend. The spiritual world has to do with completing, in order to arrive at truth, perfection, or holiness. (p. 116)

Plunkett seeks a child-centered education that engages the mind, touches the heart, and kindles the spirit. To his way of thinking, we stand at a crossroads, having to choose between an education for "social functionality" and one for "spiritual enlightenment" (p. 118). Put somewhat differently, the author challenges us to choose between the fragmented consciousness of the modern, materialistic, homeless mind and the spiritual vision of the whole, empathic, and productive mind.

In the last decade, educational reform proposals flooded the public consciousness with almost numbing frequency. Many, if not most, of the reforms have been educational calls-to-arms, often underpinned by metaphors of economic and national competition. The vocabulary of the educational reform document, "A Nation at Risk," is almost frightening in its unabashed economic aggression and nationalism. According to the dominant view of educational reform, American children are to be little economic warriors-in-training, the next generation of consumers and producers.

Plunkett is sensitive to this economic educational ideology:

> My basic concern is that education is increasingly being treated as if it were simply a commodity in a market economy, and that because of this the human person is displaced, their rights, needs and wants disregarded, except in so far as these can generate a monetary transaction. (p. 28)

As an alternative to this market-driven metaphor of educational reform, Plunkett offers a tripartite "map of the values terrain." These include the rationalist/pragmatic, the holistic/intuitive, and the spiritual/other-worldly. When these values overlap, they create new values including the rational-scientific, sectarian, secularized religious, and regenerative (p. 19). The last of these values represents a synthesis of the rationalistic, holistic, and spiritual by uniting mind, heart, and spirit. This unified approach to the human experi-

ence suggests an educational perspective that is child centered, peace oriented, and accepts the reality of the divine.

Much of Plunkett's book is the development of this theme. It is the analytical lens through which he views what is wrong with contemporary education and how it can develop toward a transcendent view of the learning process. The basic elements of this transcendent view of education are outlined in chapter seven, "The Task: Regenerating Education." The essential elements of Plunkett's educational philosophy include individual responsibility, the centrality of the individual, equality, peace, and the primacy of the spiritual nature of the human being. Thus, Plunkett calls for the reenchantment of experience and education.

One, of course, can always hope for more when reading a book. How concretely can holistic practices be implemented? How can we wake up children and adults so that a reverence for life becomes part of their conscious reality? How can schools reconnect to society in a healthy and productive manner? Naturally, Plunkett is a little vague in these areas; sailing in relatively unchartered waters, one cannot always accurately map a distant shore. I agree with Plunkett that something is terribly inadequate with conventional approaches to children and education. Grand reform plans that depersonalize children and mechanize learning create learning environments similar to psychic prisons. Yet, as Plunkett himself points out, good intentions alone cannot create a humanistic educational reform movement that is effective. There is a place for rationality, precise thinking, and critical awareness. Contemplation and good feelings alone will not bring about an educational renaissance.

In sum, Plunkett's book provides readers with an opportunity to ask fundamental questions about children, education, and how schools can become oases of authenticity. This is an illuminating book that speaks directly to the dilemmas of the modern consciousness and deserves to be read in the spirit that it was written, that is, as a working document towards a theory and practice of education for the mind, heart, and spirit.

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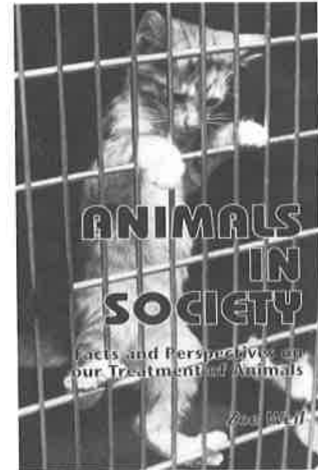

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