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EDITORIAL

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DEPARTMENTS

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On the Question of Assessment and Educational Substance

Educational assessment is so prominent a part of the American educational landscape that it often is difficult to step back to get some perspective about what we assess and why.

We can begin to address such questions by reflecting upon the nature and purpose of modern psychometric testing. Beginning with sorting of Army inductees during World War I, assessment has been used to manage large groups of people. The psychometric instruments developed enabled authorities such as military and educational officials to analyze the characteristics of individuals and groups in a clear and specific fashion without the need for extended narrative or personal experience. In education, assessment has largely developed along industrial lines using industrial models and has served such functions as sorting students into tracks and

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translating educational achievements into the language of cost analysis. Although the specific techniques have changed, the managerial utility of assessment has been the constant and driving force. Assessment centralizes power.

In this context, educational assessment has developed with reference to an individual's performance given an "objective task" in comparison to others rather than the meaning or utility of knowledge to the knower. The key here is that assessment is primarily comparative — it describes learning not as it pertains to individual experience, but in terms of the individual's relative performance. In this way, performances can be grouped, students assigned, school systems rated, and national educational policies compared. The price for this grand utility is the

depth, richness, and complexity of knowledge, learning, and education itself.

The trivialization of the expansion and development of a child's mind derives, in part, from the notions that knowledge consists of discreet bits of information, and that learning consists of the acquisition of specific behaviors given particular stimuli. These assumptions allow for the creation of units of academic measure that are believed to be objective and quantitative. Thus, the standardized test composed of multiple choice questions has arisen as the measure of mind.

The inadequacy of this measure is known by every school child who has chewed the eraser of a No. 2 pencil while selecting a "correct" answer from four uncomfortable options. On one hand, the tests often lack the permeability or flexibility to reflect the child's creative grappling for understanding in a world that is profoundly ambiguous and uncertain. Much of what the child thinks, the questions he raises, the means by which he constructs his understanding finds no parallel, finds no representation in the rows of circles on his answer sheet. On the other hand, children frequently can identify correct answers without even superficial understanding of their meaning.

The profound superficiality of what often passes as objective knowledge was clearly illustrated for me by a second grade girl who proudly shared with me her copy of a test on which she had scored 100%. She had properly defined the equator as "an imaginary line drawn between the northern and southern hemispheres." When asked why anyone bothered to draw an imaginary line, the little girl responded, after some thought, "so the countries wouldn't 'squoosh' together?" The fact was that this second grader thought of the equator as no less imaginary than the lines on the map she saw in her textbook or the lines in her penmanship book that kept her from "squooshing" her letters. What had passed for an objective demonstration of knowledge was hollow performance. The failure here was to assess the

child's understanding of her own performance, her ability to meaningfully integrate what she had learned into the world that she sees, her capacity to transform the information she acquired into meaningful questions she might yet explore.

This is particularly problematic when we recognize that educational assessment is the driving force in American education. Knowledge that cannot be decontextualized and broken into pieces, knowledge that is a vital component of an intelligent person's mind rather than a bit of information pigeonholed in her brain, does not translate into the standard measures or, as a result, into curricular priorities. The curricula we create and the educational practices we employ have as their objective the achievement of results that can be measured by our tests. As we assess, so we teach, so we define knowledge, so we define learning, so we define quality of instruction, so we define effectiveness of schools, so we set educational priorities of the nation.

In many cases, instruction amounts to no more than the repeated administration of sections of tests provided by textbook manufacturers and testing services. Instead of reading stories or books, children often learn to read paragraphs and to identify the best possible title by looking for key words in the first and last sentences. They learn to make quick and hard inferences without the depth that comes only in living with characters and exploring in the unhurried narrative the events that draw us to them. Children often learn to read for content, but rarely as a means of reflection. In the words of Arthur Costa (1988), "What was educationally significant and hard to measure has been replaced by what is insignificant and easy to measure. So, now we measure how well we have taught what is not worth learning!"

The inadequacies of our measures and limitations of our educational objectives are yet more pronounced where, in Buber's terms, we are committed to the "education of character." As we address the development of the student as a human being — his capacity to reflect critically and with gratitude, to act autonomously and with a sense of the profound responsibility of freedom, to know himself and lovingly embrace others — the measures we now use to compare rather than truly assess students become so limited as to be virtually meaningless.

Perhaps the most problematic aspect of current assessment models is not that they trivialize learning, knowledge, or education, but more so that they teach children to perceive their own education as trivial. Assessment is seen as a final hurdle rather than a means of reflection on one's progress or guide to work that must be done. Students learn that the significance of a lesson is not to be found in its content or process, but in its inclusion on a test. They learn, further, that the test and education itself have no bearing on anything of substance.

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> —Arthur Costa

Fortunately, advances in intelligence theory, such as Gardner's work with multiple intelligences, as well as our understanding of the social and personal construction of knowledge, and the rising status of teaching as a profession, have created a dynamic context for the development of new models of assessment that operate on the local level and are sensitive to the vast dimensions of the growing child. These new models are more integrally related to the learning process and, as a consequence, are shaping new instructional practices as well as opening new educational horizons.

The articles in this issue of *Holistic Education Review* describe a variety of efforts on the part of teachers and researchers to devise and implement innovative forms of assessment. The articles describe varied pioneering efforts that may spur creative local activity. They offer a sense of direction and of the effort required to walk the road to an authentic assessment of an education of substance.

—Jeffrey Kane, Editor

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Alternative Assessment

Essential, Not Sufficient, for Systemic Change

Giselle O. Martin-Kniep and Willard M. Kniep

Efforts involving the design and use of alternative forms of assessment are yielding richer and more meaningful ways of documenting what students have learned. They are also helping teachers monitor and improve their instruction. However, these efforts may not be holistic and systemic enough to result in significant school and district-wide change. At the school and district level, as long as individual efforts to design and use alternative forms of assessment remain piecemeal and unconnected, they are unlikely to impact entire school systems.

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Will changing the way we assess what students have learned change our schools and transform the educational enterprise in this country?

By paying attention to recent discourse of educational reform, it would not be difficult to reach the conclusion that it will. Educational journals are devoting increasing space, and in some cases entire issues, to articles describing the possibilities and promises of alternative forms of assessment. Alternative assessment is at the heart of the dialogue surrounding the development and proposed implementation of "world class" standards and a national curriculum. School districts, in ever greater numbers, are adopting alternative assessment as a strategy for improvement and are providing training for teachers in its applications. And, of course, no professional educational conference, large or small, would be complete without a number of prominent sessions devoted to this topic.

The arguments for alternative forms of assessment are strong and compelling: Changing this aspect of the educational enterprise holds potential for affecting not just how students are assessed, but also how curriculum is designed and taught. Alternative assessment measures, such as performances and portfolios, present possibilities for assessing student outcomes that are socially and personally derived and require the application of knowledge and skills rather than recall of knowledge and decontextualized demonstration of skills (see Wiggins, 1989, 1991; Moss et al., 1991). They have the added benefit of eliciting and supporting curricula and instructional practices that engage students in the use of problem-solving, critical and creative thinking, and knowledge application across different subjects and contexts — outcomes that traditional forms of testing and assessment seldom promote (see Calfee & Hiebert, 1990; Paris & Kraayenoord, 1992). Moreover, both teachers and students are empowered as they use the information derived from these alterna-

tive measures to adjust instruction and to improve performance (see Paris, Lawton, Turner, & Roth, 1991).

Alternative assessment holds the promise of bringing a new openness and holism to schools, especially as it encourages a shift from the "testing culture" prevalent in our country to an "assessment culture."[1] In this new culture, rather than relying on secrecy to ensure validity, the emphasis is on explicit and agreed-upon standards of performance and competence among relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, as assessment increasingly values the integration and application of knowledge in ways that "pull together" relevant knowledge and skills, teaching also focuses on such tasks. To the extent that both assessment and curriculum emphasize the application, transfer, evaluation, and analysis of knowledge, the two become distinguishable only through the purpose served by the tasks (see Wiggins, 1989, 1991; Wolf et al., 1991; Martin-Kniep, 1992).

Given these characteristics, it is not difficult to imagine how classrooms could be transformed by making authentic curriculum and instruction the norm. Students would be collaborating with other students to solve scientific problems while teachers act as facilitators, helping students revise their work toward mastery. Visitors to such classrooms would find it difficult to determine whether activities constitute instruction or assessment as they observe both students and teacher routinely engage in self-assessment.

Will current efforts lead to systemic change?

Because of these potential benefits, alternative assessment is being embraced at state and national levels as a primary mechanism for educational reform (see *National Standards*, 1992; U.S. Dept. of Education, 1991). At the local level, alternative assessment is also being embraced, both as a strategy for helping teachers improve curriculum and instruction and as a tool to ascertain students' performance and monitor instruction (see Martin-Kniep, 1992).

While these purposes are desirable, we believe that much of the current focus on developing and using authentic assessment is flawed, especially if the broader goal is significant and systemic educational change. Although implementing alternative approaches to assessment may lead to im-

provements in current educational practice, by itself it is unlikely to lead to a significant and systemic transformation of education.

At state and national levels, major educational change efforts are currently underway that are based on the use of alternative forms of assessment. One of these is an effort to develop "world class" standards in various disciplines, which, in some cases, are being used as the basis for state or national curriculum and performance-based assessment systems. Among the shortcomings of these efforts: They are simplistic in their treatment of the complexities embedded in schools; they are undemocratic insofar as they stifle debate in local communities about what it means to be educated; and they lack sensitivity to the diversity in local cultural and economic conditions in which our countries 110,000 schools are immersed.[2]

> *In this new culture, rather than relying on secrecy to ensure validity, the emphasis is on explicit and agreed-upon standards of performance and competence among relevant stakeholders.*

Another related effort is underway at state and national levels to develop and incorporate alternative forms of assessment, primarily performance-based assessment, into state-mandated and national tests.[3] The incipient literature on their implementation and potential use suggests some sobering news. First, it is increasingly clear that the technical capacity, will, and resources required to use alternative forms of assessment in a large-scale fashion is much greater than originally thought.[4] Second, even if the design issues are successfully addressed, alternative assessment will not, by itself, lead to significant educational reform, especially if used in high stakes situations, where it will probably be as corruptible as our current testing technology.[5]

At the local level, on the other hand, the use of alternative forms of assessment as a strategy for helping teachers ascertain students' performance and monitor their instruction commonly proceeds in a piecemeal fashion, usually ignoring the need to define common outcomes and standards for an entire educational system. The need to explicitly define and communicate student outcomes and standards

is perhaps the greatest challenge facing teachers at the classroom level, since they find it very difficult, as they probably should, to set standards of excellence for a course or grade, independently of other teachers. Furthermore, even if teachers are able to generate outcomes and standards for their course and grade, these will vary greatly from grade to grade and from course to course. This variation not only leads to inconsistencies in what is expected of students, it also precludes students from the pursuit of mastery or excellence past the completion of a given course or year.

The problem with these approaches, as we see it, is twofold. First, alternative assessment seems too often to be seen as the primary fix for our educational system, if not an end in itself. We believe that the experience of educational reform of the past fifteen years provides more than ample evidence that strategies focusing on only one aspect of the educational system are unlikely to bring about true and lasting change. We are convinced that alternative assessment must be seen as one tool in a larger strategy of systemic change.

The second, related part of the problem is that insofar as there has been debate about *what* to assess with these new technologies, that debate has been too far removed from educational stakeholders at the grass roots. Unless that debate is brought into local communities, we would predict that the efforts to impose world class standards linked to performance assessment will suffer the fate of most top-down reform efforts. They will fade away because they lack the support and ownership of those who must implement them and provide the resources to carry them out. Based on our own experiences, we believe that the real potential of alternative assessment will be realized only when it is applied as one critical tool in systemic change efforts that engage entire communities of local stakeholders in determining standards for educational achievement.

Alternative assessment and systemic redesign

Significant educational change requires a larger holistic and systemic process that incorporates alternative forms of assessment as one major component. But it must address a number of important and fundamental questions prior to the assessment question. In such a process, student outcomes and standards must be defined for every student in the system based on how a community addresses these fundamental questions. At the same time, individual

schools as well as classroom teachers must retain some autonomy in creating local assessment processes and measures. These processes and measures are designed with the primary goals of ascertaining student performance and achievement, and of helping teachers make informed instructional decisions. At the same time, district-wide outcomes and standards guide teachers' assessment design so that they can provide evidence of accountability to the district and to other relevant stakeholders.

For the past several years, we and colleagues at the American Forum for Global Education have been engaged in an effort, in partnership with local communities, to totally redesign schools from a global perspective. This effort, called Education 2000, has been initiated in six diverse communities in different parts of the United States since 1987.

This systemic design effort focuses first on *what* the assessment should address and second on how the assessment should be carried out. Within it, the design of curriculum and assessment becomes intertwined. The fundamental assessment questions have to do with how and by whom decisions are made (and standards are established) about valued educational outcomes, for both program development and assessment.

When we initiated this project nearly six years ago, we did so out of a strong conviction that there is a serious mismatch between schools, and their programs, and the realities of an increasingly interdependent, rapidly changing, and ever more diverse world.[6] In fact, the task of establishing educational systems that will equip students to function effectively in such a world and to contribute to society and the economy is considered by many to be one of the greatest challenges facing our nation today.

We believed that schools would need to be radically different if they were going to be up to this challenge. We were also convinced, and remain so, that the creation of such radically different schools is unlikely to result from restructuring efforts proceeding school by school. What is needed is a new design, not only for individual schools, but for entire educational systems.

By choosing to participate in Education 2000, schools and their communities have committed themselves to a process that is driven by one central question: "What kinds of schools and schooling will our children need to prepare them for the 21st century?" In addition, they are committing themselves to a process that is distinguished from other restruc-

turing and school improvement efforts in the United States by three unique characteristics.

The first of these characteristics is that the project is explicitly designed to surface a worldview. Education 2000 reflects the assumption that the world in which we, and our children, are living is characterized by rapid change, increasing interdependence, and cultural diversity. The process itself is designed to enable local communities to determine how these characteristics are reflected within their own contexts and how their schools should respond to them if they are truly to be schools that prepare students for the challenges of the future.

On a practical level, students and their needs in a changing world must be placed squarely at the center of the design process. If this principle is followed, we expect that the design will be based in and driven by desired student outcomes which are responsive to the needs of community and child and that reflect the belief that all students can learn. These desired student outcomes will provide the basis for standards of excellence; they will incorporate the conviction that all students, as whole human beings, possess unique intelligences that need to be tapped and developed by the school.

Education 2000 reflects the assumption that the world in which we, and our children, are living is characterized by rapid change, increasing interdependence, and cultural diversity.

Second, Education 2000 has evolved a process of design that is systemic and system wide. Rather than tinkering around the edges of the existing system or attempting to make piecemeal changes in programs or schools, the process is to result in a system-wide infrastructure that is ultimately enabling of redesign at the school and classroom levels. Increasingly, we have incorporated principles and strategies from social systems design theory into our work. Not incidentally, there is an elegant congruence between the global perspective embedded in our work — that we live in an interdependent world which is increasingly dominated by global systems — and a systems view of schools and educational organizations.

To be sure, schools are among the most complex of social systems. They have changed very little in over a century and are driven by hundreds of powerful external constraints. Most recent innovations or intrusions into the existing system have failed to live up to their potential or have been outright rejected because they don't account for the complex nature of a system.[7]

In practice, the design process must focus on the entire system and the range of functions within it. Among the primary functions to be addressed are the substance and organization of programs and curricula; the specifications for valued and effective professional practice; and the extent to which the system's organization and its structures support effective programs and practice.

Third, the process embodies a commitment to the broadest possible involvement of all educational stakeholders within the local community both in the decision to participate in Education 2000 and in the design process itself. From the outset of the project, we knew that the support and involvement of entire communities would be needed if educational systems were to be successfully redesigned. Our strategy has been to engage entire communities in rethinking the mission and goals of education in light of the changes that are taking place all around us.

This informed input is the first step in developing an "educational blueprint" that provides an overarching conceptual framework defining the domains as well as the comprehensiveness and balance that students' curricular encounters should reflect.[8] This blueprint, starting with the new statement of mission and based upon the system's goals — which are its expected outcomes for students — addresses questions of what the schools should be teaching, the kinds of learning experiences most valued by staff members and the community, and the kinds of organizational structures that need to be in place to support effective programs and good teaching.[9]

The design of this blueprint for the larger system must ultimately empower local schools, and their communities of stakeholders, to redesign themselves. The process embodied in Education 2000 is intended to result ultimately in both unique local school designs and a larger educational system that has been redesigned to support these local efforts. This commitment reflects the belief that while visions, goals, and standards can be owned by an entire community, local schools and their communities

of stakeholders are in the best position to determine how they are to be realized in their own context.

One of the most successful communities in the project has been Yonkers, New York, an increasingly diverse, urban community in the New York City metropolitan area. On these pages we have included two elements of the educational blueprint they have developed: their vision for education as embodied in a new mission, and the goals they hold for all students in the system. Literally hundreds of people participated in community forums and other events to have their informed input into how the educational system might look if it were to be designed to fit the realities of a changing world. (See the mission statement and statement of goals in the Appendix at the end of the article.)

The mission and goals are the foundation of the Yonkers blueprint, which is nearing completion. From these two elements the district is in the process of identifying exit standards and performance assessment measures for all students, regardless of where in the community they live or in which schools and programs they are enrolled.[10] The development of system-wide student outcomes and standards for achievement and performance to guide the design of curriculum and assessment within local schools, is basic to the development and use of alternative assessment within this systemic change effort.

We have applied a number of principles, consistent with systems design, to the development and use of alternative forms of assessment within the project. These are summarized below.

Authentic assessment is derived from district-wide goals and outcomes, and not from the disciplines.

In a systemic design effort, the student goals and outcomes emerge from a community-wide conversation around the previously noted question: "What should students know or be able to do to function effectively in the 21st century?" The answer is not bound by a disciplinary framework, but by an integrated web of themes and domains, reflecting the ways in which we use knowledge as adults. In Yonkers, for example, five educational goals and 43 outcomes determine desired students' knowledge, abilities, dispositions, and values (see Appendix). Although it might be possible to organize these outcomes into the commonly used disciplines that frame schools' curricula, these outcomes naturally cluster themselves into thematic domains and categories, such as global, national, and multicultural history and contemporary issues; systems (environmental,

technological, political, economical); literacy (English, other languages, computer and media); and higher order thinking and reasoning.

All students should be provided opportunities to attain mastery of and proficiency in all valued outcomes in a variety of ways and at different times.

The curriculum and assessment design is generated from the exit outcomes, working backward from the exit outcomes to the lower grades. It is assumed that students will be given the opportunity to see samples of excellence and mastery of all valued outcomes, so that they can work toward such standards. It is also assumed that different students will reach these standards at different points in time. Thus, bench marks will be provided in different grades to provide feedback of progress for both teachers and students. However, these bench marks will be used primarily for formative purposes, to assist teacher and students in terms of needed resources and coaching, rather than to determine, in absolute terms, whether students have "passed" or "failed."

Related to the above, and consistent with a multidimensional view of intelligence and learning, the assessment system allows, whenever pertinent, for students to demonstrate mastery or proficiency in different ways. For example, students would be free to demonstrate their attainment of outcomes related to reasoning and problem solving in science or mathematics in writing, through models or other graphic devices, or in an oral presentation.

Grading and reporting are aligned with the assessment system.

The grading and reporting procedures that teachers and schools use should reflect the assessment measures and processes utilized. In other words, until exit outcomes are achieved, schools should make increased use of progress reports, student portfolios, and summaries of performances rather than reporting grades in absolute terms. Similarly, because students are assessed relative to a universal set of standards, norm-referenced assessment is not the focus of the grading process.

The primary purposes of the assessment system are to determine student outcomes (diagnostic, formative, and summative) and to help teachers make instructional decisions.

The secondary purposes of the assessment system are to evaluate curricula and to provide evidence of accountability to stakeholders and relevant external agencies.

Many of the assessment procedures will be embedded in the curriculum. They will also be contextualized within the activities and instructional practices used by teachers. It is possible that some of these measures will be used across grade levels and subjects, allowing for their use for curriculum evaluation and accountability. However, some of these measures may not be as transportable, leading to their use in single classrooms. Therefore, we do not assume or expect that the measures used to assess students will always be appropriate to monitor instruction or for accountability purposes.

An Example

One of the goals identified by the Education 2000 Yonkers project was, "Students will be prepared to live in a world that is characterized by a variety of individual differences and great diversity in social and natural systems." One of the outcomes generated from this goal was, "Students will be people who can understand the historical contributions and significant roles of the variety of groups that make up their community, nation, and world." The standards that have been derived from this outcome include the following:

- Students will be able to trace the social, political, geographic, and economic forces that influenced the historical contributions of the variety of groups that make up their community, nation, and world.

- Students will be able to follow the chronological (including longitudinal) progression of group ideas, roles, and norms.

- Students will understand the present contributions and influences of the variety of groups that make up their, community, nation, and world.

Two of the alternative assessment tasks and measures that would provide evidence of students' attainment of this outcome include the following:

- Identification of a specific cultural group, and the creation of a museum exhibit, that clearly illustrates the social, political, geographic, and economic forces that influenced the historical contributions made by that group. This museum exhibit would include a historical timeline depicting the progression in the cultural group's ideas, roles, and norms. It would also include fictitious primary sources (e.g., letters, laws) illustrating how different forces have impacted the cultural group selected.

- Creation of a documentary script or book review (of a hypothetical book) that focuses on the contributions the selected cultural group has made to the local community in which students live.

Within the ongoing process of design, the standards for these tasks are being further developed in conjunction with the development of tasks for assessing other related outcomes. One of the challenges we face is to combine and synthesize them so as to produce a limited and manageable set of measures and tasks, which as a whole will elicit all desired student outcomes. Over the longer term, the process calls for development of the assessment tasks and measures that will serve as the bench marks, in the lower grades, toward the attainment of these outcomes. To the extent that these tasks and measures are compiled systematically through portfolios and exhibitions, over time they will also serve as a means for accountability.

A related challenge is to generate the assessment tasks in the context of a curriculum design process that informs teachers and curriculum planners in the district about what should be taught, and about how it should be delivered. In other words, when we talk about designing an assessment system, we are also referring to the design of a curriculum.

Conclusion

Many of the current efforts to design and use alternative forms of assessment may not be holistic and systemic enough to result in significant school and district-wide change. While students in individual classrooms may benefit from the efforts of teachers and other professionals to design and use alternative forms of assessment, as long as these efforts remain piecemeal and unconnected they are unlikely to impact entire school systems. On the other hand, the national-level discussion regarding exit standards may lead to a healthy debate about the knowledge and skills we value; but this debate, by itself, will not transform schools in the United States. We believe the best use of alternative assessment is one that recognizes its essential but not sufficient role in a systemic process of educational change.

Our ongoing experience in Education 2000 has confirmed the importance of starting such an effort with a shared vision and common understanding of valued educational outcomes among all stakeholders in the system. We have learned that broad involvement of the community in shaping the design

of the educational system is not only viable, but a powerful factor in the project's success.

So far, Education 2000 has demonstrated that, with support and under the right conditions, it is possible for local communities to develop a vision and a blueprint for their educational systems that are quite different from the systems in place today. It has also demonstrated the importance of using alternative forms of assessment as a tool in the design process. It remains to be seen whether these blueprints can be implemented and sustained over time, and whether they will yield the kinds of educational outcomes that their designers had envisioned.

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Notes

1. For an extensive description of the characteristics of an assessment culture see Wolf et al., 1991.

2. See the special supplement of *Education Week* (*By All Measures*, 1992) for an extensive discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of national standards, assessment, and curriculum.

3. Much work has been done by the states of California, Connecticut, Maryland, Kentucky, Vermont, and New York.

4. For a thorough discussion of the costs of developing measures to ensure adequate levels of equity, validity, and reliability, see Koretz et al., 1992; Madaus, 1992; Shavelson et al., 1992; Torrance, 1991.

5. For an extensive discussion of this issue, see Madaus, 1992.

6. The project grew out of the work of the Study Commission on Global Education (1987). Some of the dimensions of this mismatch are documented in their report: *The United States Prepares for Its Future*, published by the American Forum for Global Education in 1987.

7. Bela Banathy (1992), one of the foremost theorists in systems design, has argued that the only way education will be changed to deal with the demographic and economic shifts of a changing society at the same time we deal with the human needs of the individual, is through a complete paradigm shift to a systems perspective. At the core of this shift is a move away from problem solving and linear approaches to school improvement, and a move toward the creation of new visions for the system and the use of cyclical and organic strategies to accomplish those visions.

8. Reflects the findings of John Goodlad in his "Study of Schooling" (see Goodlad, 1987).

9. For a more detailed description of how the process has been implemented in two Education 2000 communities, see Kniep, 1992.

10. Two community-wide committees are currently at work to develop recommendations for how the knowledge base offered by the schools should be defined and organized and for the delivery of learning systems. A third committee, to develop recommendations regarding the organizational structure of the districts, will be convened in the near future. Beginning in the Fall, the building blocks developed so far will be turned over to four selected schools who will begin to implement the design process within their own school-communities.

Appendix
The Mission of the Yonkers Public Schools

The mission of the Yonkers Public Schools is to prepare all students to be lifelong learners who fulfill their potential to meet the challenges of today's world and the 21st century. Among the challenges and opportunities that our children face are living and thriving with diversity, interdependence and accelerating change.

The Yonkers Public Schools are committed to the bold actions necessary for preparing students to competently adapt to change, think critically and creatively, model ethical integrity, and value democratic ideals. Students will develop self-esteem, be prepared to recognize the contributions of diverse groups, uphold the dignity and human rights of others, and acknowledge the responsibility of each individual for the welfare of the whole. Our students will be literate, numerate and steeped in the arts and sciences. They will possess the sophisticated skills for life and work. A balanced perspective of humanity will be fostered through an accurate and representative presentation of historical truths.

The district will ensure that all students in its care realize their full potential to become well-rounded individuals and contributing members of society. Therefore, the education provided to our children will stimulate their respect for the similarities and differences in individuals and among cultures, ethnicity, and religious beliefs. It will also develop the interpersonal skills and encourage the multi-lingual ability that communication with others requires.

For our schools to meet the needs of students in a world of changing social, economic, environmental and technological structures, they must be responsive to the entire community. The Yonkers Public Schools will provide an environment for nurturing and empowering both children and adults within the learning community to be decisive, creative, and flexible human beings.

The school district will model its goals for its students by engaging all educators and parents in shared decision-making and problem-solving that will result in productive and inspiring learning environments. The school system will enable and ensure that teachers can participate in decision-making and problem-solving on a school and system-wide basis because of their special role as primary agents in students' learning in school.

Our children's basic needs for safety, food, shelter, health and self-esteem must be met. Throughout the entire educational process, these needs must be met through an alliance that includes not only students, parents, teachers and administrators, but also government, business, health, community and religious agencies — all members of the learning community — to support and enhance the work of our schools. All are responsible for the education of our children.

Student Goals: Yonkers Public Schools

Goal 1: Students completing their education in Yonkers Public Schools will develop a love of learning and will be prepared and committed to be lifelong learners. They will be people who:

- Recognize that knowledge is personal and has meaning in and of itself.
- Are motivated to apply their knowledge to the betterment of humankind in their community, nation, and planet.
- Experience the joy of learning throughout their lives as they consider their own questions and probe the universal issues that have motivated human inquiry throughout history.
- Use their understanding of the arts, humanities, physical and natural sciences, and history as the basis for their own quest for knowledge.
- Are literate, numerate, articulate and communicate effectively in English and another language.
- Are able to access, process, analyze, and evaluate information to solve problems.
- Use alternative and creative strategies in problem-solving.
- Are skilled in the use of computers and other emerging technologies.
- Use leisure time effectively.

Goal 2: Students completing their education in Yonkers Public Schools will achieve their full human potential as individuals and contributing members of society. They will be people who:

- Have a personal philosophy of life which will contribute to their self-respect and their sense of personal responsibility and also will serve as a guide for making satisfying and responsible decisions throughout their life.
- Are committed to ethical integrity in all areas of living.
- Possess habits of perseverance, determination, and independent thought which will contribute to their ongoing physical, intellectual, and spiritual growth.
- Are able to make appropriate and realistic vocational choices based on marketable workplace skills and the ability to assess their own interests and abilities.
- Are concerned with creating a vision of the future based on knowledge of local and global issues and problems, their role in them, and a commitment to shaping solutions.
- Sense the opportunities afforded by living in today's world and are determined to make the most of them.
- View adversity as a challenge to be met with optimism and creativity.
- Have a sense of belonging, pride, and loyalty to family, community, nation, and the planet.
- Are committed to patterns and life-styles that contribute to personal health and physical well-being.
- Possess physical fitness and recreation skills.
- Have the desire and competence to be successful parents who will raise physically and mentally healthy children and have high expectations for their offspring.

Goal 3: Students completing their education in Yonkers Public Schools will be prepared to live with the challenges and opportunities of a world that is characterized by interdependence and a variety of interconnections. They will be people who:

- Know that they live in a variety of systems, understand the basic structure and characteristics of systems, and comprehend how systems are interrelated and connected.
- See their role and the community's role in the global political, economic, technological, and ecological systems that connect people, communities, and nations in today's world.
- Understand and appreciate the uniqueness of their own country's economic and political systems and the special role played by them within the global systems.
- Value democratic principles and participate in the political process as informed and responsible citizens.
- Recognize the interdependent nature of all social groups and possess the sensitivities and understandings necessary for effective relationships and group participation.
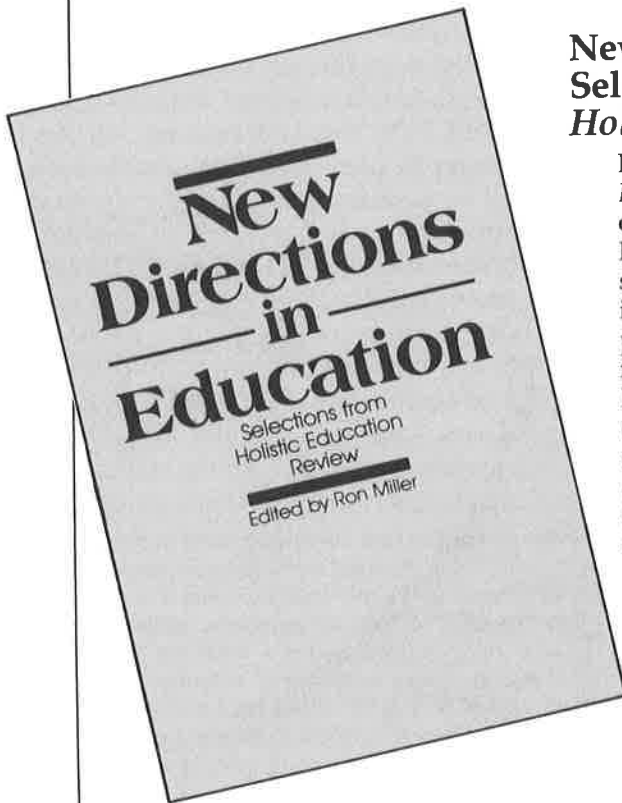- Demonstrate the respect and commitment necessary to function effectively in the family.

Goal 4: Students completing their education in Yonkers Public Schools will be prepared to live in a world that is characterized by a variety of individual differences and great diversity in social and natural systems. They will be people who:

- Understand, value, and act to preserve the great biological and physical diversity of the planet's ecosystems.
- Understand the historical contributions and contemporary roles of the variety of groups that make up their community, nation, and world.
- Understand that all societies and cultures adopt unique economic and political systems based on their own histories and circumstances.
- Appreciate that many diverse cultures have contributed to humankind through unique forms of artistic expression and their histories of ideas.
- Are able to interact effectively with a variety of people regardless of individual differences due to heredity or culture.
- Respect and are open to the opinions of others in a free exchange of ideas.
- Understand the perspective of others and are able to negotiate and resolve conflicts.
- Are aware of the differences in how they see themselves and how others see them.

Goal 5: Students completing their education in Yonkers Public Schools will be prepared to live in a world that is characterized by accelerating change. They will be people who:

- Have a historical perspective on how and why change occurs in social and natural systems.
- Understand that change is central to human development and cultural evolution.

- Know how to evaluate and adapt to change in order to make intelligent and realistic choices.
- Understand the forces and changes that have shaped the history of their community and nation.
- Understand the evolving role of the United States and other nations within the international community.

- Comprehend and are able to evaluate the role, appropriateness, and effects of technology in accelerating rates of change.
- Comprehend the changing demands of the contemporary workplace and be prepared to meet them.

On the Need to Assess Authentically

Roland Case

The call for more authentic assessment warrants teachers' attention as an important supplement to traditional classroom evaluation practices. However, the alternative forms of assessment typically associated with authentic assessment must be well understood if the purposes for adopting authentic assessment practices are to be furthered.

There is a common saying among educators: "What is counted counts." In other words, the only educational objectives that are, in fact, important are the ones we assess. Student sensitivity to this maxim is implied by their common refrains: "Is this on the exam?" and "Will it be for marks?" Consequently, if we value, for example, promoting students' abilities to thoughtfully assess and defend their beliefs, then we should be concerned that our assessment practices reflect this goal. Yet, as John Goodlad (1980) reports the vast majority of questions on teacher-made tests are limited to recall of information (pp. 207-213). This shortcoming will not be redressed simply by increasing the amount of attention devoted to assessment of thinking. Ironically, many commonly employed ways of evaluating thinking abilities are self-defeating. Often they measure little more than the ability to complete essentially vacuous tasks, and they reinforce habits antithetical to developing students' abilities and inclinations to reason thoughtfully about issues in their own lives. Consider the following task, intended to promote (and assess) young students' skill in classifying objects:

> A large pile of assorted shoes are placed in the center of the classroom. Student volunteers are asked individually to go to the pile and show how these shoes might be classified. Without exception, students hunt through the pile looking for a matched pair. The teacher encourages subsequent volunteers to find other ways of sorting the shoes. Students respond by looking for different matched pairs, say a pair of running shoes instead of the pair of oxfords that a previous student had tracked down.

In this actual example, the teacher had hoped to improve her students' thinking by encouraging them to find novel ways of classifying the shoes, such as by clustering right-footed shoes, or all brown shoes, or shoes with holes in their soles. When they failed to do so she concluded that her students' abilities to classify were poor. If we remember that classification schemes (and thinking generally) should serve a purpose, we can appreciate that the students were classifying the shoes on a very reasonable basis. Given that the only *sensible* purpose for sorting the pile of shoes that the students could imagine is to facilitate

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the wearing of them, it made sense for them to look for matched pairs only. In fact, if students had begun to classify the shoes in other ways which in their judgment were silly, say by sorting according to the number of eyelets, they would have demonstrated less thoughtfulness. Rather than assessing students' ability to classify creatively in sensible ways, this test implicitly measures the opposite — students would have been judged to be better thinkers had they been less concerned that their answers made sense or more willing to guess blindly what the teacher wanted.

Because this sorting task is essentially a purposeless challenge, it cannot test students' ability to classify in *thoughtfully* creatively ways. A more appropriate challenge would be to create a purpose for sorting the pile of shoes—for example, so that a charitable organization could distribute them to needy people around the world or so they could be recycled. Thinking through these purposive problems requires that students imagine the relevant factors that their classification schemes must accommodate. For example, students need to consider the terrain and climate of the countries served by the charitable organization (e.g., people living in the desert do not need snow boots, and mountain people are unlikely to need beach sandals). Unlike the sorting task originally posed by the teacher, these classification tasks enable us to assess students' abilities to classify in meaningful ways.

As I hope this example illustrates, we are no further ahead by instituting assessment practices that measure insipid and often counterproductive facsimiles of the important educational goals that schools should serve. This concern to overcome what many regard as the perversive effects of common evaluation practices is the driving motive for the relatively new but quickly growing reform referred to as "authentic assessment." In this article, I propose to justify why teachers need to be particularly attentive to this call for more authentic assessment.[1] A second, concurrent objective is to reduce the potential for confusion and misapplication. Authentic assessment is not a simple cure: There are many misapprehensions of what makes assessment authentic, and we must guard against implementing any innovation without understanding its core features. In short, my objective is to encourage teachers to make extensive use of authentic assessment techniques, and to do so critically.

Much confusion arises because the term *authentic assessment* is the emerging general label for a cluster of overlapping innovations, including notions such as "alternative assessment" (Maeroff, 1991), "whole assessment" (Boykoff Baron, 1990b), "outcome-based assessment" (Nickell, 1992), "performance assessment" (Boykoff Baron, 1990a, p. 127), "performance testing" (Boykoff Baron, 1989, p. 8) "performance-based assessment" (Boykoff Baron, Forgione, & Rindone, 1991), "portfolio assessment" (Wolf, 1989), and "naturalistic assessment" (Reithaug, 1992). We can be assisted in deciding both what is meant by authentic assessment and why it is so important by considering the typical forms that authentic assessment takes and the purposes it is

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intended to serve. In the process we will see how authentic assessment connects with many of the related innovations mentioned above.

Typical forms of authentic assessment

Typically, those who support more authentic assessment recommend three alternative forms: performance assessment, portfolio assessment, and naturalistic assessment.

Performance assessment. Performance assessment refers to student evaluation based on completion of specially set, complex tasks. The task may be to perform a feat (e.g., present a dramatic piece, formally debate a controversial issue, have a five-minute conversation in a foreign language, teach a special-topic science class, play a musical piece, run a school fundraising event, conduct an experiment) or to produce an object (e.g., a prototype of a solar house, a film about promoting racial harmony, a "consultants' report" on solutions to a local pollution problem, a foreign-language script for a radio play, "museum" displays depicting local history, a class newspaper).

We can more clearly distinguish performance assessment tasks from typical assessment assignments, such as completing a mathematics problem, writing an essay, or answering questions about a story, by contrasting dramatic performances and rehearsals.

The performance of a play requires pulling together various aspects of theater craft worked on during a rehearsal period (e.g., blocking, script interpretation, physical movement and gesture, lighting, costumes, set). In addition, the performance is not a "walk-through" or mere exercise but the bringing about or execution of the actual play. Analogously, most regular assessment assignments isolate discrete outcomes, while performance assessments are "intgrated" (Boykoff Baron, 1990b, p. 2; Nickell, 1992, p. 92) or "holistic" (Kruglanski, 1990, p. 3) tasks, requiring synthesis of a complex mix of competencies. In addition, traditional assessments often involve little more than walk-throughs or textbook approximations of actual problems, whereas performance assessments arise in the context of closely approximating, if not bringing about, the real challenges. For example, instead of merely answering a series of questions in a foreign language, students would engage in an actual conversation; instead of explaining how they would deal with a series of problems associated with planning a trip, students would actually plan a trip. As some writers note, performance tasks emphasize *"performing* with knowledge" (Nickell, 1992, p. 92) and putting "ideas *in* use" (Boykoff Baron, 1990b, p. 2 [emphasis added]).

Heckley Kon and Martin-Kniep (1992) describe a simple performance task in geography that illustrates these features (p. 95). Each student is given a map of California and a list of state parks with camping facilities, and is asked to plan the details of a family camping trip from the San Francisco area to any state camping facility in northern California. The task involves measuring the distance, calculating traveling time, describing the travel route, and developing a contingency plan in the event of a strike by workers on the Golden Gate and Bay bridges. The appeal of this performance task is that it allows us to assess students' abilities to integrate competencies in map reading, arithmetic, problem solving, and written expression while carrying out a realistic operation. We can contrast this task with the following example, purported to be a performance task:

> Given 80 feet of fence, what is the largest area that can be enclosed to form a free standing dog pen? Given 36 square feet of area, which shape, a triangle, rectangle, square or circle uses most of the 80 feet available for a free standing dog pen? (Boykoff Baron, Forgione, & Rindone, 1991, p. 24)

Although these two questions are interesting and challenging, they do not obviously meet the criteria I offer for performance assessment—they are neither integrative nor actual tasks. Applying a competence (i.e., the ability to calculate area) to particular problem-solving situations is not equivalent to integrating a number of competencies in the course of completing a task, and merely solving problems associated with the design of a dog pen is not the same as actually completing the design.

The importance of both integrative and actual (or, at least, proximate) tasks was brought home to me when I prepared my grade seven students for a day-long field trip. Several weeks before beginning to plan for a picnic lunch on our field trip, we practiced answering word problems like the following:

> If there are thirty students in the class and students want on average two sandwiches each, how many slices of bread will be required? How many loaves of bread will we need if there are twenty slices of bread in each loaf? What will be the total cost if bread sells for $1.25 per loaf? How much must each student contribute to cover the cost of the bread?

Despite their ability to successfully solve these kinds of word problems (as determined by a unit quiz), my students were incapable of determining how much money each would have to bring for lunch on our field trip. They made no connection between the arithmetic we had been doing and the challenge before them. Even after the connection was explained, they were unable to solve the problem. In the word problems, all of the mathematical "ingredients" had been supplied to them. Not only did they not know the real-life answers to those questions (i.e., the number of sandwiches we would want, the number of slices in an actual loaf, and the current cost of bread), beyond getting an adult to tell them, they were not sure how they would find the answers.

Notice that although I had successfully taught my students to solve word problems on costing lunches, I had not taught them how to cost the lunch. As Wiggins (1989) suggests, "school tests make the complex simple by dividing it into isolated and simplistic chores — as if the students need not practice the true test of performance, the test of putting all elements together" (p. 706). My students' mastery of all the requisite competencies involved in this task and their ability to integrate them successfully were tested only when they were charged with planning the actual lunch. Significantly, I would never have realized the gaps in their abilities, and subsequently addressed them, unless I had undertaken what I now recognize to be a simple performance assessment. As was aptly noted in a recent National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (1991) document on au-

thentic assessment, "what you test is what you get" (p. 1). Herein lies the value of performance assessment: If we do not assess beyond isolated competencies in artificial situations, we are unlikely to know of, and less likely to promote, our students' abilities to use their knowledge in significant ways.

Portfolio assessment. A second form of assessment typically associated with authentic assessment involves students in compiling a collection or portfolio of work they have completed over a period of time. Portfolio assessment draws heavily on the practices of artists and designers, who carefully assemble samples that represent key characteristics of their work for use in demonstrating to others particular competencies. Student portfolios are characterized in a similar vein, as "a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas" (Paulson, Paulson, & Meyer, 1991, p. 60).

Typically, students are involved to varying degrees in selecting, analyzing, evaluating, and reporting on the products that make up their portfolio. Portfolios may be drawn from a vast array of student creations including annotated bibliographies, artwork, audio tapes, book reports, charts and graphs, drawings, essays (drafts and final copies), group reports, notes, peer evaluations, photographs of projects and murals, reading inventories, self-evaluations, tests and quizzes, videotapes of presentations, and worksheets. The criterion for selecting products for inclusion in a portfolio may be to represent major understandings in each topic covered over an entire term or, more narrowly, to exhibit students' strengths and weaknesses in a particular learning dimension, say the ability to express themselves. Alone or in collaboration with peers and the teacher, students analyze and evaluate their portfolios by establishing relevant standards, identifying patterns or key features, diagnosing strengths and problem areas, and setting personal plans and targets.

Because they are based on cross-sections of student work completed over time, portfolios offer a richer portrait of a wider range of student achievements than, say, a single end-of-unit test. Also, unlike traditional forms of assessment, where assignments are marked and then forgotten, portfolios encourage both teacher and students to monitor growth over

time. In addition, students' involvement in selection for and evaluation of their portfolios often results in significantly greater personal ownership of their learning. These benefits are particularly likely when portfolios are used as the focus for conferences where students explain to their parents or teachers what the portfolios show about their progress and levels of achievement. In fact, it has been suggested that portfolios be seen primarily as "a reason for talking" (Murphy & Smith, 1990, p. 1) — that is, the collection of products is essentially a means to engage students, teachers, and parents in informed dialogue about learning.

Naturalistic assessment. A third typical form of authentic assessment refers to assessment occurring during the normal course of classroom activities — as opposed to during completion of specially set performances or as a result of specially compiled student portfolios.[2] Naturalistic assessment, which draws heavy from anthropological methodologies, involves the teacher as a participant-observer — collecting information about student learning while en-

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gaged in the normal duties of teaching. In some respects, teachers are involved in naturalistic assessment every time they confirm that students have understood a lesson, or check to see which students have done their work, or ask students to explain any trouble they are having. The differences between these *ad hoc* assessment strategies and naturalistic assessment are the extent of their systematic use and whether or not records are kept for use in student evaluations.

Naturalistic assessment makes use of several types of information-gathering strategies. Anecdotal records involve making regular field notes about significant comments or incidents — for example, by noting, during a one-on-one session, the strategies that a particular student uses to solve a problem, or

collecting over several months indications of all students' growth in self-esteem or attitudes toward school work. Student–teacher conferences increasingly are recommended as means of gathering information about students while helping them learn. Frequently, checklists are used to record information such as completion of work, the number of books read, or the incidence of a particular classroom behavior, say, the frequency of students' cooperative participation in group assignments. Also, many of the same documents that would belong in a student portfolio are collected and analyzed as part of naturalistic assessment. (When documents are selected and analyzed by students, the product is a student portfolio; in naturalistic assessment, documents about the student are chosen and analyzed by the teacher.) Often, like the anthropologist, the teacher will seek to "triangulate" evidence, using several sources of information to corroborate judgments about students. For example, in drawing conclusions about students' critical thinking abilities, a teacher may use information obtained from peer and self-evaluation of students' willingness to entertain alternative opinions, analyses of selected student products for the quality of students' reasoning, and suggestive anecdotal comments about students' attitudes toward "thinking things through."

Naturalistic assessment is seen to be particularly appropriate for assessing student behavior and attitudes not measured by traditional pen-and-paper assignments or by isolated assessment tasks. In addition, as with student portfolios, the extended basis of naturalistic assessment is more likely than one-shot tests to provide rich accounts of student learning and insightful indications of factors that may influence learning.

Before discussing the general purposes behind authentic assessment, a few remarks are in order about the differences among the three forms of assessment. Although I have tried to present a defensible, representative account of each, there is confusion about them. In part this stems from the considerable ambiguity in the literature about these forms.[3] For example, some authors describe a portfolio as providing "a complex and comprehensive view of student *performance* in context" (Hargreaves & Earl, n.d., p. 166 [emphasis added]). Others define performance-based assessment as any assessment that occurs in the context of normal classroom tasks. Presumably, according to these writers, as long as students are "performing" in the classroom — including completing a worksheet or drill exercise — assessment would be "performance-based." Confusion stems also from the fact that these forms of assessment overlap.[4] For example, as mentioned above, the same document may belong both in a student portfolio and as part of a naturalistic assessment. Similarly, a work of art can be both a performance task and a portfolio piece. (If students are asked specifically to create a piece of art showing mastery of particular techniques, it would qualify as performance assessment; if students are asked to identify, for inclusion in a collection, a piece of work that, in their view, exhibits mastery of particular techniques, it would count as a portfolio piece.) Finally, the distinction among the forms are blurred because some projects use all three forms of assessment concurrently (Krechevsky, 1991).

To some extent, it does not matter how we designate the different forms of assessment, provided we are clear what each involves; yet we can be misled easily if we are unaware that terms are used differently by different writers. For example, the loose definition of performance-based assessment as any classroom-based assessment is inconsistent with the views of most writers, who refer to performance assessment as a complex culminating task that is specifically set to allow students to demonstrate how well they have mastered disparate components of their studies. As we will see when considering the purposes served by authentic assessment, performance assessment understood in this very loose way as assessment of classroom-based tasks may cease to be a particularly promising form of "authentic" assessment.

Defining purposes of authentic assessment

Although authentic assessment is closely associated with performance, portfolio, and naturalistic assessment, it should not be defined in terms of them. Rather, they are better seen to be three typical ways in which assessment can be made authentic.[5] For reasons that will become apparent, I suggest authentic assessment denotes any form of assessment that emphasizes the following three purposes or goals: (1) validity or authenticity in assessment, (2) fairness in assessment, and (3) use of assessment to enhance learning.

Valid assessment. Clearly, greater validity, or authenticity, is the preeminent goal of the authentic assessment movement. Although *validity* has a long history as a complex technical term, in the context of

authentic assessment it can be defined as a close fit between the kinds of attributes actually measured by an assessment device and those educational goals that we value. Similarly *authentic assessment* refers to measuring the real, actual, or genuine thing as opposed to measuring a poor substitute. The previously discussed performance task of planning a camping trip is an example of authentic assessment in that it measures the sorts of competencies that we actually want students to acquire as a result of learning to read maps and to evaluate alternative courses of action. Initially, authentic assessment, largely couched in the language of performance assessment, appeared as a protest against standardized tests of student achievement. To use Grant Wiggins' (1989) term, standardized tests are not "true tests" of student achievement (p. 703). For example, by their nature, multiple choice questions measure only students' abilities to select correctly from a set of

the educational goals that we value. In getting clear how we might promote this greater authenticity, it is worth noting the two approaches that have been offered about how to begin "asking for the behavior you want to produce" (Mitchell, 1989, p. 3).

One approach is to make assessment more like regular classroom "learning tasks" (Shepard, 1989, p. 7) so that assessment "reflects the regular conditions of the classroom" (Peat, 1992, p. 51) and "establishes a closer relationship between what is tested and what is taught" (Hargreaves & Earl, n.d., p. 167). In part, this recommendation arises because of a legitimate concern that the tasks upon which assessments are based should not be far removed from the kinds of tasks that students encounter as they learn. Otherwise, the assessment is unlikely to provide an accurate picture of what students have learned. This interest in harmonizing assessment and learning also arises out of concern that assessment be used to support learning.

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Despite the merits of this approach, there is need for caution. Making assessment more like classroom learning tasks will promote more authentic assessment only if classroom learning tasks richly reflect the full range of educational goals that we value. As was suggested by the example of the sorting task involving the pile of shoes, this assumption about learning tasks may not be always warranted. In fact, Jack Fraenkel suggests that despite long-standing acceptance of critical thinking as an important educational goal, little progress has been made because many teachers are unclear about what it is and uncertain as to what counts as achievement of this goal (Fraenkel, 1991, p. 323). Similarly, the mere use of, say, portfolio assessment will not make an assessment authentic. If a portfolio contains little other than worksheets or drill sheets, it is unlikely to capture adequately the sorts of goals that we value. Clearly, it is essential that both learning and assessment tasks reflect important educational values.

supplied answers; yet we care about promoting students' abilities to generate original responses to open-ended challenges, such as the ability to organize information and present cogent arguments. Multiple choice questions reduce complex learning outcomes into atomistic units, whereas we are concerned with students' abilities to integrate what they know in the context of realistic situations. In addition, many valued attitudes and character traits are not measured by standardized tests. For example, good thinkers must not only be able to do certain tasks, they must be committed to doing them (e.g., be disposed to look for reasons, care about being well informed, be open to differing viewpoints). Rarely are these attributes assessed by standardized tests, and there is reason to suspect that many of the same concerns mentioned above apply to classroom-based assessment (see, for example, Adams & Hamm, 1992, p. 103; Wolf, 1989, pp. 35–36).

The proffered solution is to improve the fit between the kinds of attributes actually measured and

A second recommended approach to improving the authenticity of assessment (and presumably learning tasks) is to make assessment tasks more like the sorts of "real-life" challenges that a person would typically face as a citizen, writer, businessperson, scientist, community leader, historian, and so on (Wiggins, 1989, p. 45). In other words, the desired adult "end states" of learning are used as indicators

of what we value educationally. For example, the point of teaching students to perform mathematical operations is so that they can solve the problems expected of them as carpenters, scientists, comparative shoppers, and statisticians; the point of teaching sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, and vocabulary is so that students will be able to communicate intelligibly and expressively in correspondence to their friends, reports to their clients, articles appearing in newsletters, and diaries written for personal reasons. Although there is considerable appeal to this approach as a way of making concrete what it is

Increasingly, advocates of authentic assessment have expressed an interest in encouraging the use of assessment to enhance learning — especially to enhance the full range of goals that we value highly.

we value in education, it is not without its difficulties. The desired end states of education are controversial. For example, Elliot Eisner's (1991) conception of "what really counts in schools" stresses personal exploration, wonder, imagination, and sense of community; others will have significantly different conceptions of what we ought to value.

Besides the difficulties in determining what it is we value educationally so that we may assess it authentically, there are two technical problems associated with promoting authentic assessment. It is not sufficient that our conceptions of what we value be defensible and comprehensive; we must also gather sufficient information about students' achievements in these areas. The criticism of traditional "one-shot" tests — that they are insufficient indicators of what students know — is applicable to authentic assessment, for example, when judgments about students' cooperative nature are made on the basis of a single "naturalistic" observation or performance task. As Wiggins (1989) reminds us, we need to observe students' "repertoires" or "habits" as opposed to "lucky or unlucky one-shot responses" (p. 711) — "a single performance is inadequate" (p. 706).

Another potential technical difficulty involves the adequacy of the means used to collect information. Just as multiple choice questions are unable to pro-

vide information about students' generative abilities, so too authentic measures may be inadequate devices for representing certain aspects of students' knowledge. For example, Kruglanski (1990) recommends a "performance task" that invites eighth grade students to demonstrate what they have understood from reading a story by drawing a picture of the location of the story (p. 3). Although use of a drawing has the advantage of requiring that students "translate" what they have read, it may not allow students equal opportunities to communicate what they know. Students who are poor artists may be embarrassed about drawing and consequently not represent all that they comprehended. This problem raises doubts not only concerning the validity of any assessment about these students' reading comprehension, but also, as we will see, about the fairness of the assessment.

Fair assessment. As suggested by the title of Wiggins's (1989) widely cited article, "A True Test: Toward More Authentic and Equitable Assessment," authentic assessment is centrally concerned with fairness in assessment. In fact, Wiggins regards fairness to be "embedded" in the idea of authenticity (see Nickell, 1992, p. 92). This close connection between fair and authentic assessment arises because evaluations are often used to make decisions that dramatically affect students' lives (e.g., decisions about promotion, acceptance to other educational programs or institutions, scholarships, employment opportunities). Evaluations based on invalid assessment practices may assign important rewards or sanctions unfairly. Common practices of assessing students with "surprise" tests and not informing students of the standards against which they will be judged impairs students' abilities to show what they know — instead, students are rewarded for anticipating what the teacher wants. Testing conditions may favor some students over others. For instance, traditional timed tests reward students who perform well in on-the-spot situations and discriminate against students who are equally knowledgeable but are unable to perform under contrived conditions. Consider the fairness of the following timed "performance assessment" recommended by Kruglanski (1990, p. 17):

> After reading and answering questions about a story (involving a man's unsuccessful efforts to protect himself from extreme cold by building a fire) and an article (on hypothermia), students are asked to imagine cop-

ing with an extreme condition other than cold (e.g., heat, hunger, or fatigue) and through creation of a story, poem, or other creative piece of writing "imaginatively" express in a supplied formal examination booklet the experiences and feelings they might encounter in coping with that extreme condition.

Many students who have the ability to express themselves well may dry up when expected to perform on command in this way.

Unfairness in assessment may also arise from standardization of the ways in which competence must be demonstrated. For example, since the objective of the above-mentioned task was to assess students' written expressive ability, it would have been unfair if the task required all students to produce a poem—this would discriminate against equally imaginative students who perform best through another genre, say that of the narrative.

Assessment that enhances learning. A final defining concern of authentic assessment is the use of assessment to enhance learning or, at the least, not to impair learning. Traditional standardized assessment practices are seen by some as, at best, useless in supporting learning (Haney, 1985) and, at worst, seriously deleterious in their effects on student learning. Assessment measures have considerable influence in directing and often distorting instruction — as is sometimes suggested, "what gets tested, gets taught" (Kurfman, 1991, p. 314). More specifically, high-stakes tests are seen as having a "dumbing down" effect on teaching and learning: Promoting *bona fide* understanding and proficiency is often sacrificed for reproduction of correct answers and rote drill (Shepard, 1989). Many school-based assessment practices — the "surprise" nature of many tests, the emphasis on producing the single unambiguous correct answer found in the textbook or supplied by the teacher, and the "once-over and one-time nature" of examinations — were seen to deter students from taking ownership of their own learning (Wolf, 1989, pp. 35–36).

Increasingly, advocates of authentic assessment have expressed an interest in encouraging the use of assessment to enhance learning — especially to enhance the full range of goals that we value highly. Greater validity of authentic assessment measures is in itself an aid to increased use of assessment to support learning. As suggested by the example about planning for the field trip lunch, if an assessment does not capture what it is we really value, then we are less likely to know when we have succeeded (or have failed to succeed) in reaching our objective.

Only after the performance task did I realize that my students could not calculate the cost of our lunch.

Much authentic assessment focuses on what is sometimes called the "integration" (Krechevsky, 1991, p. 45) or the "intersection" (Paulson, Paulson, & Meyer, 1991, p. 61) of instruction and assessment. These refer to the blending of purposes and practices so that instruction and assessment are served conjointly. For example, feedback from student–teacher conferences and from peer and self-evaluations, and analyses of portfolios, can be used to promote students' awareness of and thoughtfulness about their individual strengths and weaknesses as learners. Nurturing students' abilities to evaluate their own work and their peers' work may be one of the more effective ways of improving learning. Personally, I have marveled at how much graduate students learn about (and improve upon) their own writing from frequent opportunities to critique the work of fellow students. Not only are they better able to appraise their own writing after noting the same strengths and weaknesses in others' writing, but they also benefit considerably from critiques of their work because they have a richer context for making sense of others' comments.

The very act of making more public the criteria for evaluation is seen to be helpful in drawing students' attention to the essential features to be learned. Greater student ownership for assessment criteria, and ultimately for students' performance in light of these criteria, may also be encouraged by joint teacher and student negotiation of the criteria upon which students are to be judged (Jarowski, 1992).

To be or not to be authentic?

In my closing remarks I want to build upon the ambiguity of the question offered as the title of this section. According to one interpretation, the question asks whether or not we ought to be authentic in our assessment practices. A second interpretation of the question asks what it means to be authentic in our assessment practices.

In response to the first interpretation, I have little to add beyond summarizing what appears to be a compelling rationale for authentic assessment. The three purposes behind the authentic assessment movement are obviously important. We have seen the consequences of traditional assessment practices that fail to assess the comprehensive range of what we value educationally. Concerns about the fairness of "inauthentic" assessment focus on reducing the

likelihood that important educational decisions will be based on invalid assessments of educational outcomes, and that some students' opportunities to succeed will be prejudiced because of the conditions under which assessments occur or the limits placed on students' ways of representing their knowledge. Finally, the move to make assessment less inimical to learning and, more positively, to find ways to enhance learning through authentic assessment techniques may be the most important considerations for classroom teachers. Instead of detracting from student learning, authentic assessment stresses greater fit between what we value and what we assess, and

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Nurturing students' abilities to evaluate their own work and their peers' work may be one of the more effective ways of improving learning.

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increased use of assessment to involve students in taking responsibility for their learning.

In my review of performance, portfolio, and naturalistic assessment I suggested how these approaches support the purposes discussed above. More specifically, performance assessment represents a particularly promising approach to assessing students' abilities to integrate and make use of their knowledge in meaningful ways. Portfolio assessment offers opportunities to assess a fuller range of competencies than traditional measures, and to nurture students' self-reflection about their learning. Naturalistic assessment promises the most richly contextual picture of student achievement and growth, particularly regarding key educational attitudes and character attributes.

In response to the second interpretation of the question, I propose to deal with two misperceptions about the implications of authentic assessment. It is sometimes thought that adopting authentic assessment requires abandoning all traditional forms of assessment in favor of the new "authentic" forms (Peat, 1992, p. 51). This is an unfortunate exaggeration. One reason for defining authentic assessment in terms of the purposes or goals it serves, instead of the forms that are commonly associated with authentic assessment, is to discourage this impression. Any form of assessment, *under the right circumstances,* can be an authentic measure if it captures richly and in a

fair and educationally useful way what is valued. To take an extreme example, a timed multiple-choice test of general knowledge may be the most authentic measure of the ability to succeed at "Jeopardy" or at some other quiz show. Most traditional assessment practices are not entirely inappropriate measures of educational outcomes; rather, they are often incomplete measures of what we value educationally. Problems arise primarily because we ignore the significant gaps in what traditional assessment techniques can measure. As a consequence, key educational goals are not assessed, resulting in considerable unfairness and significant curricular flaws. The sensible solution is not to abandon traditional assessment techniques but to supplement and enhance them with alternative assessment practices.[6] As Lorrie Shepard (1989) suggests, we must expand the range of what we assess "so that teaching to the test does not imply teaching only a subset of learning goals" (p. 9).

Despite the impression that may have been created, traditional assessment techniques, such as multiple choice questions, that assess atomistic components of learning serve a useful purpose. For example, there is little point in involving students in the performance task of planning a camping trip if they do not already know how to read a map legend and calculate distance between two points on a map. Mastery of these intermediate objectives can be competently assessed using traditional assessment practices.

The final misperception to be noted is that the mere use of performance, portfolio, and naturalistic assessment techniques does not guarantee that assessment is authentic. I have already identified instances where suggested alternative assessment techniques have failed to serve the purposes that I suggest define authentic assessment. This observation is not intended to dampen support for authentic assessment, rather the opposite — by drawing attention to and clarifying the goals that motivate authentic assessment, I hope to encourage use of any form of assessment that will serve these three vitally important purposes.

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Notes

1. My focus is on classroom implications of authentic assessment, not with program- or system-wide assessment of student achievement, which was the initial thrust of the call for more authentic assessment.

2. For an account of an "exemplary" use of "naturalistic assessment," see Haney (1985, pp. 11–12).

3. Bateson (1992, p. 6) makes this observation about performance assessment.

4. For examples of this overlap, see Barone (1991).

5. This view is held by Mitchell (1989, p. 3).

6. Even supporters of standardized achievement tests recognize the need to supplement their techniques with alternative forms (see Worthen & Spandel, 1991, p. 65).

Toward a Reading / Writing Assessment Portfolio

Rose Caliendo Peppe and Maria R. Petraglia

This article focuses upon the Reading/Writing Assessment Portfolio, designed and implemented by teachers in the Lawrence, N.Y., public schools. The portfolio's evolution and particular attributes of each of the various components are described.

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How does one successfully bring about deep, meaningful, and lasting change within a school district, specifically a move toward portfolio assessment? Our experience in the Lawrence Public Schools in New York may provide one possible answer. Over a period of three years, we designed and implemented a reading / writing portfolio format for student assessment in 125 classrooms from kindergarten through grade six. Through several drafts, field tests, and pilot programs, we encountered the challenges not only of automatic assessment, but also of cooperative professional development.

There often seem to be only two common ways in which districts can approach new programs or innovative practices — self-selection or imposition. In many cases, the self-selection model operates one teacher at a time. Individuals who are interested and responsive receive support and encouragement; others without such interest (or perception) are left to their own devices, allowing new ideas to travel randomly through the system. When schools do take a district-wide perspective, top-down mandate is often the approach imposed by administration on a program or practice in which teachers have no real input or understanding. In such cases, teachers do not develop a sense of ownership or commitment. When the classroom doors are closed, previous practices dominate. In our opinion, both methods guarantee failure.

Instead, we prescribe a third approach, which is based on the belief that meaningful change requires reciprocal respect between teachers and administrators. This model requires time, effort, open and honest communication, flexibility, and commitment. It was through this process that we, in Lawrence, had the freedom and took the responsibility to reconceptualize our means of reading/writing assessment. The change was possible because of a supportive environment that encouraged risk-taking and fostered professional growth.

Our process took us through several phases. During phase one, we explored ideas, read articles, stud-

ied models, wrote drafts, and conducted pilots. Phase two began as teachers put to use the ideas we developed, ideas new to us. There was much experimentation, trial and error, and growth in new understanding. In phase three, the new portfolio concept became an integral part of life at the schools. Organizational arrangements were made to continue the new practices so that they became part of the teacher's personal repertoire.

The origins of change

To understand the roots of our Reading/Writing Assessment Portfolio, we must go back seven years to the formulation of our district writing committee. Dissatisfaction with students' abilities as writers precipitated an investigation of alternative ways in which to strengthen writing skills. Through training workshops sponsored by Teachers College, Columbia University, and classroom interactions with consultants, we solidified our understanding of process writing and motivated teachers to think more subtly about writing instruction.

Beginning in 1985, 21 professionals, teachers, and administrators worked intensively as members of the district writing committee to design a program consistent with what we had learned from research and practice about the teaching of writing. This program was designed to provide students with the opportunity to write as authors do, creating a writer's workshop in the classroom setting. The instructional emphasis was on the connections among the language arts rather than on particular, isolated skills; for example, spelling, grammar, and vocabulary were taught in connection with one another rather than as separate "mini" subjects.

Through the implementation of the program, we recognized and responded to the need for more meaningful assessment. We developed a *writing folder*, which has become an integral component of our portfolio. The folder, consisting of a cumulative record of a student's writing, was developed as a vehicle to provide a systematic method of diagnosing, prescribing, and assessing student writing. Writing pieces selected for the folder represented actual day-to-day writing (using the writing process) and reflected stated grade-level expectations. The cumulative folder shows individual growth within a school year, as well as growth from year to year.

In our experience, the reading process was an outgrowth of the writing process. From our initial focus on the writing process came an awareness of fine children's literature and how literature could foster better writing. By reading what recognized authors wrote, students were exposed to extensive samples of good writing form and a variety of genre that they could attempt to reproduce in their own work. This exposure to quality literature led us to think about the reading process and to the understanding that reading skills could best be fostered through the experience of good models rather than the watered-down literature of traditional basals. With this emerged the natural connection between reading and writing, now commonly referred to as the integrated language arts.

The move to authentic assessment

Four years ago, the district reading committee, a natural outgrowth of the refocusing of writing instruction, was formed. The committee was comprised of 22

> *In our experience, the reading process was an outgrowth of the writing process. From our initial focus on the writing process came an awareness of fine children's literature and how literature could foster better writing.*

teachers and administrators who volunteered to do this work through their building principals. The committee was to recommend a district-wide reading program reflecting current trends and knowledge, methodology, materials, and assessment procedures. After much study and investigation of current research and practices over a two year period, a reading program reflecting the philosophy of whole language was adopted. The program differed from the traditional approach to reading instruction with respect to its perspective on how children learn to read and write. Whole language requires a holistic approach in which children are introduced to entire stories first, rather than sub-skills, and are encouraged to understand story meaning before focusing on individual words. This approach affects instructional materials, teaching strategies, learning activities, the roles of teacher and student, and, of course, assessment.

With the ultimate implementation of this new literature-based reading program, it became apparent that traditional forms of assessment were no longer compatible with teaching materials or methods. Assessing student performance in light of whole language created a need to document outcomes in a new way. The key strategy in whole language evaluation is observing youngsters as they engage in using language (Heald-Taylor, 1989). This provides a natural bridge between teaching and assessment in the language arts. If we

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*I*f *we were going to be whole language teachers, then we had to change the way we looked at children and assessed their learning. This understanding led to a transition from a testing culture to an assessing culture.*

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were going to be whole language teachers, then we had to change the way we looked at children and assessed their learning. This understanding led to a transition from a testing culture to an assessing culture.

Recognizing that change required us to travel down a difficult road, the district prepared pioneering practitioners with a broad knowledge base. Our belief was, and is, that staff development, with a variety of vehicles to educate and reach teachers, is the key to professional growth. Reading committee members studied and debated alternative forms of assessment; their participation at relevant workshops and conferences was extensive. Professional texts were distributed, read, and discussed. During the summer of 1990, the district offered a three-day workshop on authentic assessment, which focused on classroom strategies for monitoring student acquisition of critical abilities in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Realizing that teachers must actively participate in the planning and development of a new practice, funds were allocated for a curriculum project in which teachers developed an assessment portfolio for the integrated language arts program. This was the first of many working drafts of our portfolio. Knowing that commitment grows out of ownership, the curriculum writers presented the portfo-

lio to the reading committee for review. The committee expressed concerns about the record-keeping and general manageability of the portfolio, and the echo of their questions remains in our memory:

> If we require teachers to meet in conference with each student four times a year and complete individual checklists three times a year, will they ever have time to teach?
>
> Will students be honest when they complete the *Am I Developing as a Reader?* self-assessment form?
>
> How can I keep twenty-five students actively involved in their learning if I am conferencing with only one?

Was there some truth in the concerns that were expressed? On and on the discussions went until the committee agreed that personal experience should prevail: The only way that we could be certain if the new ideas that we had studied made sense in the classroom was to try them. Committee members implemented components of the portfolio with their students so they could react to it and revise accordingly. As a result, some components were modified, others were discarded, and still others were developed. This process was repeated throughout the 1990–1991 school year and led to a second project for the summer of 1991: to create a portfolio.

The portfolio

This project became especially important because of our belief that the more organizational arrangements which are in place to support an innovation, the greater likelihood that the new practice will be used. The committee agreed that it was necessary to have, at teachers' fingertips, a portfolio that would provide information, adequate storage, and easy accessibility. Therefore, details such as design, printing, and distribution procedures demanded attention. The result was a tri-fold folder that provided descriptions of core and optional elements. This work was greatly influenced by leaders of reading/writing process, particularly Harp (1991), Hornsby, Sukarna, and Parry (1986), and Routman (1988). The six essential core elements are used by all teachers and students; the optional elements, which range from an entry in a reading journal to photographic records, are merely suggestions which encourage teachers to consider other creative and divergent ways to collect information about students:

LAWRENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Number Four
Kindergarten

STUDENT LANGUAGE LITERACY PROFILE

STUDENT: _____

D.O.B. _____   C.A. _____   QUARTILE _____

CLASSROOM TEACHER: _____   DATE: _____

Please circle the appropriate numbers, as they apply. Kindly note:

1 - Not Yet Apparent   4 - Developed
2 - Beginning to Develop   5 - Highly Developed
3 - Moderately Developed

I. VISUAL DEVELOPMENT:

A.	Recognizes:					
	square	1	2	3	4	5
	triangle	1	2	3	4	5
	circle	1	2	3	4	5
B.	Recognizes some letters	1	2	3	4	5
C.	Recognizes own first name	1	2	3	4	5
D.	Prints some letters of first name	1	2	3	4	5
E.	Identifies familiar cover of a book	1	2	3	4	5
F.	Tracks from left to right with teacher	1	2	3	4	5

_____ Total

II. CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT:

A.	Demonstrates understanding of:					
	first	1	2	3	4	5
	next to	1	2	3	4	5
	last	1	2	3	4	5
B.	Identifies a story or book character from an illustration	1	2	3	4	5
C.	Demonstrates temporal understanding of:					
	morning	1	2	3	4	5
	afternoon	1	2	3	4	5
	evening	1	2	3	4	5
D.	Knows how to take turns	1	2	3	4	5
E.	Knows how to request assistance	1	2	3	4	5

_____ Total

III. THINKING STRATEGIES:

A.	Indicates an understanding that print contains a message	1	2	3	4	5
B.	Is able to transfer knowledge from one experience to another	1	2	3	4.	5
C.	Is able to make reasonable predictions from a story that is read	1	2	3	4	5

_____ Total

IV. RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT:

A.	Responds appropriately to teacher verbalization	1	2	3	4	5
B.	Follows two step directives	1	2	3	4	5
C.	Recalls a main character from a story	1	2	3	4	5
D.	Relates a detail/idea from a story	1	2	3	4	5

_____ Total

V. EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT:

A.	Knows last name	1	2	3	4	5
B.	Can answer spontaneously in a complete sentence	1	2	3	4	5
C.	Uses correct vocabulary words for common nouns	1	2	3	4	5
D.	Uses adjectives in spontaneous spoken language	1	2	3	4	5
E.	Able to formulate questions to get needed information	1	2	3	4	5

_____ Total

VI. MOTOR DEVELOPMENT:

A.	Can sit quietly in a chair	1	2	3	4	5
B.	Can walk in a group without touching (children/walls)	1	2	3	4	5
C.	Can carry an object without dropping it	1	2	3	4	5
D.	Can cut with scissor	1	2	3	4	5
E.	Can hold a crayon with a 2-finger grip	1	2	3	4	5

_____ Total

_____ Total All Categories

Comments: _____
_____
_____
_____

Core Elements
Language Development Profile
Writing Folder
Record of Books Read
Conference Log
Am I Developing as a Reader?

Optional Elements
Reading Journals
Audio/Video Tapes
Photographic Record
Running Records
Anecdotal Records
One Minute Read-Aloud
Interest Inventory
Related Projects

For a portfolio to be a tool for both instruction *and* assessment, it should contain information that illustrates growth (Paulson, Paulson, & Meyer, 1991). Each of our core elements fits this criterion. For example, the *language development profile* is completed twice a year for each student. It contains a checklist of student behaviors and reading strategies that the teacher is observing and provides a system for documenting the language traits. Another element, *record of books read*, helps the teacher to monitor the choices the child is making and whether or not the child is reading a wide range of materials for different purposes. It indicates not only how many books are being read, but also whether or not the student is reading a variety of genres and authors.

A core element which provides records that are particularly important in the assessment process is the *conference log*. The individual reading conference permits the teacher to assess and make notations about a student's comprehension, oral reading, attitude, participation, selection skills, use of textual clues, and word identification strategies. This documentation serves as an evaluation tool that the teacher uses to get to know the students as learners and to guide them in making literacy connections (Routman, 1991). The behaviors observed are indicative of the student's progress. With this type of information, teachers are able to plan instruction

for students based upon individual needs. It also discloses particular thought processes that, if not for the student/teacher dialogue in a conference, could go undetected. For example, as a result of a conference, a second grade teacher discovered that one of her students was reluctant to participate in literature discussions for fear of having an incorrect response. Once the teacher explained that opinions are never wrong, the student became an active participant in class. The conference format facilitated conversation, which provided greater insight for both teacher and student.

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*A*s a result of a conference, a second grade teacher discovered that one of her students was reluctant to participate in literature discussions for fear of having an incorrect response. Once the teacher explained that opinions are never wrong, the student became an active participant in class.

Equally important to a teacher's assessment of a student's performance is a student's opportunity to engage in self-reflection (Paulson, 1991). Our portfolio contains *Am I developing as a reader?* which is a yes/no checklist of reading/writing behaviors for kindergarten to second graders to complete. This same concept for self-assessment is adapted in the form of open-ended questions to which students in grades three through six respond. Both of these provide a means for examining progress or changes in attitude when completed a minimum of two times a year by each student. *Interest inventories* also provide a vehicle by which students can measure changes in self. Although this is an optional element in our portfolio, sample surveys are distributed to teachers. Teachers and students are encouraged to document individual interests according to personal preferences and make notations on *teacher comments about student's interests* in the portfolio.

The optional elements of the portfolio vary from folder to folder and classroom to classroom. Although optional elements are listed and described, teachers and students make decisions about what to include. A few pages from a reading journal are in-

sightful because they illustrate a student's involvement with a self-selected book. Audio or videotapes, if done several times a year, are shared with parents and used by students as a way of noting increased fluency and phrasing as well as overall reading gains. Photographic records document a student at work. Some other optional elements used by teachers and students include demonstrations, projects, informal reading inventories, and both running and anecdotal records. Any measure of literacy development may be incorporated into the portfolio; this is up to the teacher and student.

Implementation

With the printing of the portfolio we had an assessment tool ready to be shared with those beyond the members of the reading committee. Agreeing with Fullan (1985), "If a new program requires that major changes be made, it's best to ease into its use rather than expect comprehensive implementation at once," the district elicited one volunteer per grade level per school to participate in a 1991–1992 Reading/Writing Assessment Portfolio pilot program, using the draft developed and field tested by more than 20 teachers. Ultimately, 24 teachers participated in the pilot. Opportunities for continual feedback were provided for the piloting teachers through regular articulation meetings. The supportive environment of both large group and grade level discussions nurtured the change process. This sharing provided piloting teachers with affirmation and allowed them to foster enthusiasm for the pilot. The collaborative setting provided an avenue in which teachers could learn from one another as well as enable them to form a cohesive group for honest collegial exchange. If a teacher was having a problem with any aspect of portfolio assessment, many colleagues were available to offer suggestions and provide assistance. Therefore, even when a task seemed to be overwhelming, teachers were able to rely on one another, thereby turning a potentially unproductive experience into a growth opportunity.

The implementation dip is a time in which one experiences skill regression and loss of confidence before growth takes place and restoration of self-esteem and skill occurs. Those in leadership positions, cognizant of this, urged piloting teachers to forge ahead, recognizing that each had to grow at his own

LAWRENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Office of Curriculum & Instruction

READING DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

TEACHER/STUDENT ASSESSMENT SHEET

Student_____   Year_____

Teacher_____   Grade 1 2 3 4 5 6
                                             (Circle)

The Reading Development Checklist has been designed to record a child's reading development based on the teacher's professional observations.

This checklist should be completed twice a year: the first time between the months of November and January and the second time between the months of March and May.

KEY:

NE - **Not Evident:**   The student has not yet consistently demonstrated the attitude or the behavior. It has not been observed by the teacher.

E - **Evident:**   The student consistently demonstrates the attitude, or behavior.

S - **Sometimes:**   This attitude or behavior is present intermittently.

NA - **Not applicable**   This attitude or behavior is not developmentally expected at this time.

Note: The <u>Evident</u> and <u>Not Evident</u> categories are <u>not</u> intended to represent pass or failure status.

READING PARTICIPATION	Between Nov. - Jan.	Between March - May
The child:	NE E NA S	NE E NA S
listens to others		
participates meaningfully in class discussions		
regularly completes assignments		
reads beyond required assignments		

READING COMPREHENSION	Between Nov. - Jan.	Between March - May
The child:	NE E NA S	NE E NA S
identifies character traits		
gleans meanings of words and phrases from text		
identifies story elements. (characters, setting, problem and solution)		
comprehends at literal level (details, factual information)		
comprehends at interpretive level (central meaning, inferences, relationships, prediction)		
comprehends at critical level (makes judgements, can support statements with facts from text)		

READING ACCURACY		
The child:		
reads smoothly and accurately		
corrects own mistakes		

READING RESPONSE		
The child:		
organizes ideas in response to literature (brainstorming, webbing)		
responds effectively to literature through writing (uses response logs, reports, stories, poems)		
speaks effectively in response to literature (class discussions, speeches, dramatization)		

pace. It became evident that schools in which principals encouraged experimentation were the places in which teachers made the greatest strides.

Just as assessment and instruction inform and transform each other, so it is with initiative and learning. By taking risks, by trying new ideas, we at Lawrence learned more about our own assumptions and practices, as well as the learning characteristics of our students. We verified in our own experience the value of new ideas. We found, as most teachers have, that the value of a theory is ultimately found in our own classrooms (Guskey, 1986). One only has to listen to the enthusiasm and commitment with which our assessment portfolio pilot teachers speak about the evidence of insights into students provided by implementation of the portfolio's components. Some teachers have chosen to collaborate with students when completing the *language development profile*, creating a vehicle for open communication between student and teacher, and thus making assessment interactive. Such cooperative effort generates feedback about student learning that is both immediate and regular. Thus, teachers are able to design instruction and students are able to focus attention as indicated by the evidence provided. In this way, the assessment tool becomes the catalyst for the improvement of teaching and learning.

Along with the learning that took place because of first-hand classroom experience, teachers participated in continual staff development opportunities: conferences, in-service training, dialogue with recognized experts, and cooperative interaction with teachers and administrators from other school districts. These vehicles enabled teachers to be exposed to new ways of thinking that enhanced their ability to conceptualize what portfolio assessment should be.

Because of real life classroom experiences and opportunities provided to dialogue and study with colleagues, piloting teachers were able to make recommendations for improvement of the portfolio based upon newly acquired knowledge. Reading committee members discussed these suggestions and worked with piloting teachers to modify the assessment portfolio once again. Fear of the unknown no longer provoked unfounded concerns. Instead, com-

ments reflected legitimate reactions to an instructional/evaluation tool that each individual had grown to respect. The process had become one of implement, review, and revise.

It is significant that throughout the process teachers did not lose sight of the need to permit flexibility and allow personal preferences to prevail. So, although the philosophy upon which the portfolio was developed remains intact, some of the individual components may be implemented differently by using an alternative method or format. For example, a teacher may prefer to document a student's interests either by making notations during a conversation with the student or by asking the student to complete a personal interest inventory. The end is the same; the teacher learns the likes and dislikes of each student and can use this information to focus instruction to meet the needs of the child. Variations ensure that individual styles and comfort levels of teachers and students are recognized and addressed. We see this as a positive step in developing ownership in portfolio assessment.

Today

Because there is so much to learn, participants decided to continue the experiment through the 1992–1993 school year on a district-wide basis, involving every teacher. In this way, each of the teachers expected to implement portfolio assessment will have a voice in its design and further development. The extensive feedback will ensure that the ultimate adoption of a Reading/Writing Assessment Portfolio will reflect the involvement of more than 125 teachers and their classes. We believe that this all-inclusive, multi-year process is rarely seen as districts attempt new practices.

Although we are proud of our portfolio, we recognize we are still learning. For this reason, we are unwilling to finalize the portfolio at this time. It is still evolving and must be permitted to continue its development as we continue ours. So the Reading/Writing Assessment Portfolio will be reprinted with suggested modifications and marked DRAFT once again.

We began our journey to portfolio assessment seven years ago with the birth of the district writing committee, and we are still traveling the road of change. It is a long and challenging journey, but one that continues to reap valuable rewards in student outcomes. It is a two-way street on which administrators and teachers work collaboratively to over-

come resistance and obstacles and to develop new understandings. There is comfort provided along the way by a board of education willing to provide the necessary resources and support to ensure success. Professional growth, exploration, and experimentation are the signposts by which we travel. If asked where we see ourselves in five years, we can only respond — still changing!

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Holistic Assessment in the Waldorf School

Eugene Schwartz

Unlike most schools with conventional methods of student assessment, the Waldorf schools work with evaluation techniques that are qualitative and teacher intensive. The community of teachers, the continual dialogue between teachers and parents, and the ongoing relationship of the Waldorf class teacher with a stable group of children over the years are all essential elements in this evaluative process.

Eugene Schwartz, a product of New York City public schools, graduated from Columbia University with a B.A. in 1967 and received a M.A. from Colorado State University (in American literature) in 1970. He has been a Waldorf school class teacher for sixteen years, working with both handicapped and normal children, on the high school as well as the grade school level. He has traveled to over 60 Waldorf schools as a consultant, and teaches in teacher training programs on both coasts. He has recently been awarded a teaching fellowship from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Waldorf teachers are fond of characterizing their method of assessment by relating a story about a King and his trusted, though somewhat dull, steward. One day the King, having to leave his palace and venture on a journey of several months' duration, asked his steward to look after his beloved rose garden. Unfamiliar with flowers and their care, the steward asked what his most essential task would be.

"Above all things," replied the King, "be sure that the rosebush roots receive enough water."

To the King's great surprise, he returned some months later to a rose garden in which not one living plant remained.

"My instructions could not have been simpler!" he cried to the shamefaced steward, "What have you done?"

"Exactly as you commanded," was the steward's response. "Every day we pulled up the rosebushes to determine whether they were moist by examining their roots. If the roots were dry we watered them well and returned the plants to the soil."

As the King knew well, there are other ways to determine if the roots are receiving sufficient water! Wilting leaves, desiccated buds, or withering flowers would all have been adequate indicators that water was needed. And, above all, using these indicators would eliminate the need to destroy the plant in order to understand it. Educators active in the Waldorf school movement are convinced that most contemporary methods of child assessment in levels K through eight take the pull-up-the-roots approach. With the zeal of the steward, they may inadvertently undermine the very abilities that they seek to evaluate.

The Waldorf method of evaluation might be characterized as the look-at-the-leaves approach. Rather than asking children to assimilate information at a rapid pace, only to have it pulled out of them shortly thereafter on an examination, the Waldorf method acknowledges the child's need to digest information

and experience so that it can gradually develop into knowledge. Among the signs which tell us that this digestive process is proceeding healthily are the child's alertness and enthusiasm in class; her ardent desire to share what she has learned with classmates, friends, and family; and her wish to translate her school experiences in artistic form. These outer manifestations of an inner process are analogous to the way in which the healthy bloom and sweet fragrance of the rose are indicators of well-watered roots. This milder and more spontaneous approach gives the child time to assimilate what she has learned, to the point where it does not merely go "in one ear and out the other," but has the possibility of becoming part of the very fiber of the child's being, and a source of future moral guidance. The "portfolio method" of evaluation, which is rapidly gaining acceptance among American educators, is therefore more appropriate in regard to Waldorf methodology than are regular quizzes or standardized tests. However, the portfolio itself is only one part of the complete Waldorf assessment method. In this article, I will try to describe the numerous "assessors" and "assessment instruments" that are in place in a Waldorf school. Although they will be approached in a linear way, it must be understood that most if not all of these factors are in force at the same time. To facilitate this indirect and qualitative assessment method, several important elements must come into play.

- *The "class teacher."* In the Waldorf system, the class teacher remains with the same group of children from grades one through eight. A relationship is thereby cultivated in which the teacher comes to know the children, their "learning styles," and their developmental needs in a comprehensive manner.

- *The "patient parent."* Just as the class teacher commits himself to the long-term development of the child, so must the parent be willing to put aside a number of culturally determined anxieties and accept an educational method that allows the child's capacities to unfold gradually. Rather than acting as the passive consumer of evaluative judgments made by the school, the Waldorf parent is asked to be an active part of the assessment process. As we shall see below, parents of Waldorf students are also committed to a process of ongoing self-education so that they, too, can "read" their child in a more comprehensive way. By working actively to understand the Waldorf curriculum and methodology, parents can help to assess their child's response to it.

- *A closely-knit "community of evaluators."* In making his evaluation of the child, the class teacher works with a group of special-subject teachers who can speak of the child's progress and so contribute to the total picture of the child. The special subjects taught in the Waldorf school may include foreign languages (e.g., Spanish, German, French, Japanese), handwork (knitting, sewing, clothes making) woodwork, eurythmy (and art of movement), physical education, orchestra, and so on. Each of these subjects engages a particular part of the child's nature that would not be so engaged anywhere else. Thus each specialist teacher is afforded one window into the child's being, and values the views that other teachers are able to share. The whole picture provided by all of the special subject teachers is of the greatest value to the class teacher. Other class teachers are in turn actively guiding and assessing the class teacher's judgments.

- *A variety of assessment instruments and methods.* Eschewing the graded quiz or the standardized test as the only "objective" methods, the school community employs a portfolio approach that considers things such as the child's drawings, paintings, knitting, facility of movement, musical skills, and oral expressiveness as no less important than the more easily determined powers of cognition and verbal memory.

- *Conversations.* As may be deduced from the above, the Waldorf assessment methods are time and labor intensive. Such assessments require numerous meetings and conversations between teacher and teacher and between teacher and parent. The written evaluations (described below) are only the final step in an unceasing process throughout the school year.

The class teacher

If we accept the premise that the child is a being who unfolds his capacities over the course of time, then it follows that the most valid assessments to be made of a child's development are compiled over long periods of time. It is also helpful if the dynamic and rapidly changing developmental stages of the child can be recognized and appreciated by an individual who observes them. This is the role assumed by the class teacher. Over the eight years in which she remains with her class, the class teacher is the "first among equals" in the child's constellation of teachers. It is the class teacher who greets the child in the

morning and dismisses him in the afternoon, and it is she who leads the class's "main lesson blocks" all year long. In the course of these blocks, which extend for three or four weeks each, the class is led through the major academic subjects. Thus the class teacher is responsible for teaching reading and writing, arithmetic, history, geography, the sciences, grammar, and so on. Most class teachers serve as their class's painting teacher, drawing teacher, recorder teacher, and modeling teacher. The class teacher also leads the younger children in rhythmic games and song, and guides the older students in discussions about current events and the perils of adolescence. In addition to teaching the main lesson class, which consumes the first two hours of the school day, the class teacher instructs the children once or twice more daily, and is present and available at recess and lunchtime and in between classes. Her relationship with the class is nearly as intense as that of a parent with his children; indeed, in our time of weakening marriages, a child sometimes sees the class teacher more often than he sees an estranged parent. All too frequently, teachers feel like workers on an assembly line, specializing in but one year of the child's life, only vaguely aware of the experiences undergone by the child on an earlier level, and only slightly able to affect the course of the child's future educational experience.

Such awareness — and such responsibility — are the hallmarks of the class teacher's work. That which she perceives to be a problem for a given child at the close of first grade will not simply be noted and passed on to a new second grade teacher; on the contrary, the child will continue his schooling under the careful eye of the same teacher. Thus the class teacher's evaluations of children not only delineate achievements or problems, but also incorporate a cohesive understanding of the educational measures that will likely be necessary in the future. No less significant is the potential that such a long-term relationship provides for the involvement of a teacher with the whole child. By *whole child* I mean not only as a being of body, soul, and spirit, but also in connection with family, community, and environment. The class teacher avails herself of opportunities to visit the child at home and comes to know the child's parents, grandparents, and/or stepparents. She leads the child on challenging hikes, accompanies

him on canoe outings, or lives with him and his classmates for days at a time on camping trips. She observes his changing and maturing response over the years to the joys and tragedies that accompany all growth. She knows well how he performs under pressure, and whether he tends to be content with quick "nibbles" of knowledge or prefers to savor it slowly and privately. In short, the class teacher has the unique possibility of developing a long-term, involving, and yes, loving relationship with every student in her class.

It is also important to consider the role of love, not only in creating an environment for human interaction, but also in the process of perception that underlies assessment. Such a contention is far beyond the

> *If we accept the premise that the child is a being who unfolds his capacities over the course of time, then it follows that the most valid assessments to be made of a child's development are compiled over long periods of time.*

logic of psychometry. It lies at the center of how we as human beings may come to understand others, and see them fully and with sensitive insights. Although a love too strongly tinged with sentimentality can make one blind to the faults of another, the love that the class teacher strives to cultivate can awaken her to the highest potential which lives in another. By measuring a child's performance in relation to such a realm of possibility, the class teacher acknowledges that the most basic and valid "standard" in testing is that of the unique individual.

A community of peers

Although it might be accepted that the long-term relationship of the child to the class teacher could be a fruitful one, it still could be argued that having teacher and evaluator rolled up into the same person — especially when so much of the work is qualitative rather than quantitative — presents a moral challenge. What is to prevent the class teacher from skewing his assessments, if ever so slightly, so that by ever and again stressing the children's improvement, he fails to see the child's problems or his own deficiencies as a teacher? No method of assessment

is in itself proof against human frailty. The standardized test arose, in part, to minimize this problem, and it has had success in this area. The price of such success has been the gap between the testee and the test giver, and, consequently, the fading importance of many of the human factors enumerated above.

The means by which the Waldorf school attempts to strike a balance between "objective fairness" and the significant but potentially subjective "human factors" involved in evaluation, is to have the final responsibility for assessment rest in the hands of the community of teachers, represented by the full faculty meetings. In any Waldorf school, the entire faculty meets once or twice a week in sessions that are two to three hours long. A centerpiece of the faculty meeting is the "child study," in which all of the teachers share their questions and insights concerning a student whose schoolwork and biography have been presented by a class teacher. A student is often discussed for two or three meetings, as the varying perspectives of class teachers and special subject teachers combine to fashion a picture far richer than that which any one teacher might have created. The purpose of such discussions is twofold. They not only help solve an immediate problem that the child

Child study sessions help to bring a commonality of vision to the faculty as a whole and help to foster greater objectivity among individual faculty members.

is facing (though in this regard they are most efficacious), but also allow the class teacher to experience a multiplicity of evaluative methods and approaches. Over the months and years — for Waldorf teachers tend to make long-term commitments to the school community — such child study sessions help to bring a commonality of vision to the faculty as a whole and help to foster greater objectivity among individual faculty members. Younger teachers usually are guided by older, more experienced faculty members (mentors). All colleagues are encouraged to visit one another's classes and to critique various approaches and results. Out of this sense of community and colleagueship, the faculty is able to oversee and "evaluate the evaluator," helping him to maintain objectivity in regard to his class's achievements.

In recent years mainstream educators have expressed concern about the tendency of a syllabus that is driven by a standardized test to encourage teachers to work apart from one another, each striving to improve the scores of his particular group. Out of this have come such laudable innovations as team teaching or the recognition of the school as a community of scholars and parents. Through the full faculty meeting and the mentorship program, the typical Waldorf school is inherently founded on the ideal of a community of peers.

The patient parent

The parent's role in the ongoing assessment process is an essential one. In most Waldorf schools, parents are expected (or even required) to attend three or four "parent evenings" a year, in the course of which the class teacher, often with the assistance of special subject teachers, shares her picture of the class as a whole. The teacher will often engage parents in the sorts of artistic/pedagogical activities done by the children of that grade level, discuss aspects of child development, and share her approach to the subject matter being studied. While these meetings take place, the work done by all the children is on display, so that parents not only see their own child's work, but observe it in the context of the whole class. Rather than have their child's work judged against an abstract "standard" that is statistically derived, parents can judge for themselves where their child's achievement stands in relation to a very real and visible peer group.

As part of an independent system of schooling in which individual schools are faculty administered, Waldorf educators are answerable not to the mandates of school boards and legislators, but only to those whom they serve — parents and their children. Several years ago, any author describing the Waldorf methods of evaluation would have had to be cognizant that Waldorf's "soft" methods of evaluation, and its slower, process-driven method of teaching, ran against the grain of much that was acceptable, indeed unquestioned, in modern education.

The assessment picture has changed dramatically in recent years and, as other articles in this journal indicate, holistic evaluation methods, relying increasingly on the teacher's powers of observation, are appearing in numerous school settings. In many

respects, however, Waldorf methods remain on the cutting edge of this innovative trend, and persist in educating and evaluating with long-term results very much in mind. This undoubtedly puts a burden on parents, most of whom are themselves the products of educational systems that used only "hard" assessment methods and were generally "test-driven." Parents are barraged with a ceaseless flow of "research" generated by the testing services and their affiliates espousing the need for ever more testing on the state and even the national level. With this in mind, Waldorf schools regularly organize parent education workshops, in which evenings or weekends are devoted to sharing aspects of Waldorf pedagogy that cut across specific grade levels. In conjunction with displays of student work from grades one through eight or beyond, such gatherings give parents insight into the way our methods of assessment, like our education itself, unfolds over time. This emphasis on a gradual unfolding of the child's capacities and knowledge is perhaps what presents the greatest challenge to parents.

The Waldorf teacher sees the child as a soul who, "still trailing clouds of glory," (Wordsworth) only slowly finds her home in her physical body. Every step forward in education also marks a step forward in taking hold of the necessities of earthly life. But just as there are physical limits to the types of food that a developing infant can eat, so, in creating the foundations of the Waldorf curriculum Rudolf Steiner stressed the limits of soul and spirit that determine the healthy pace at which a child can learn. Compared with other "developmentally appropriate" methods, Waldorf education moves slowly in the kindergarten and early grade years. But just as a broad jumper who leans back before leaping goes farther than one who makes a standing jump, so the "holding back" of the child in the lower grades makes it possible for her to jump forward with grace and intensity in the junior high school years. This philosophy and approach underlies all that is presented to parents in the way of evaluation. Obviously, a qualitative evaluation method depends on the trust and support of parents. The more these parents know about the rationale for such an approach to assessment, the more their trust and support will be justified. The Waldorf method depends upon the patience of parents. A task of the teacher is to help the parent recognize that, in the Waldorf school at least, patience can be its own reward. Just as qualitative evaluation demands the community of teachers, so it demands a community of parents, which is, after all, a well-recognized foundation for effective educational efforts.

The assessment instruments

Not only are graded tests missing in the lower school years of the Waldorf school; textbooks are rarely to be found either. For many children in mainstream education, learning is a process of vacillation between text and test — rapidly ingesting the contents of the book (like so much fast food) and rapidly regurgitating those contents at the command of the test giver. Any sense of a digestive process, of taking the subject matter within and genuinely making one's own, is missing from this process. In the Waldorf school, the main lesson book serves both as text and test; it performs the seemingly contradictory purposes of imparting knowledge and skills and evaluating the degree to which the child has mastered them. It is thus able to serve as the keystone of the Waldorf evaluation process. A main lesson book may be either a collection of loose sheets that are bound together after the child has worked on them, or in its more common form, a softbound book with 24 to 60 blank pages. Young children work with books with large pages, 12" by 12" or even 12" by 18"; older classes' books are 9" by 12". The main lesson book contains a text created by teacher and child together that represents a quintessence of all that the child has learned in a *main lesson block* (the term given to Waldorf "units" and usually lasting between two and four weeks) in which a particular subject is studied intensively. In the lower grades, a main lesson book for a subject such as "fables" would consist of retellings of a number of stories, with accompanying illustrations. Much of the younger child's book contents would have been copied in beeswax crayons from drawings and writing done by the teacher on the chalkboard.

As the children write, the teacher moves about the room, commenting on the children's work, giving advice and assistance, and making mental notes of the students' struggles and triumphs. Is the child reading what is on the board with comprehension, or merely copying a succession of words? Is the child "penetrating" his drawing by firmly pressing on his crayon and filling the page with color, or is he tending to create a light, pastel effect? In the middle years, main lesson books for subjects as diverse as house building or botany or ancient history increasingly include the child's own compositions (rough drafts

are first corrected by the teacher and then entered into the book), drawings, and diagrams. By seventh and eighth grades the main lesson books are created almost completely by the youngsters themselves, with strikingly original compositions and drawings throughout. Math books have pages describing the new concept or operation learned, as well as sections with practical problems, and may be supplemented with folders containing the year's math homework. Science main lesson books are replete with descriptions of laboratory demonstrations, as well as essays about the general scientific principles that have been explored.

We continue to believe that a real conversation between a child and an adult of flesh and blood is a profoundly superior experience to the point-and-click conversation a student might have with the dialogue boxes found on educational software programs.

All of these books are collected at the end of a main lesson block and reviewed and critiqued by the class teacher. When they are returned to the student, these books become catalysts for conversations between students and their parents concerning what has been learned in a block (or school year). I have seen individuals who were students in the first Waldorf School proudly showing their main lesson books to their grandchildren. Could anyone imagine doing that with an old textbook? Thus the main lesson book is a "textbook" that arises out of real-life lessons, rather than a prewritten volume that shapes the lessons in advance. Before the child writes, or draws, or places diagrams, or math problems into her book, she has heard the subject fully discussed in class. If she is still unclear about an assignment, she is free to ask questions of the book's "author," her class teacher. How different from the conventional textbook, which is written by a distant committee of authorities who quiz the student at the conclusion of every chapter but are themselves unavailable for questioning!

Another assessment instrument used by the Waldorf teacher is the oldest testing method of all — asking students questions in class discussions. From

first grade on, a portion of every main lesson is devoted to review, which is primarily oral in nature. In first grade, various children are asked to retell a fairy tale or recite a poem. In third grade, a child will stand in the front of the room with a clock with moveable hands, setting it to different times and asking classmates to correctly tell the time; another child will begin a poem and throw a beanbag to a classmate, who is to say the next line and throw the bag again. In eighth grade, two students, portraying monks at the time of the Reformation, engage in a lively debate about Martin Luther and his conflict with Pope Julius; later that year, they invite their parents to visit the classroom while the youngsters demonstrate electrical and magnetic phenomena.

This Socratic dialogue, though endangered in many spheres of modern education, remains alive and well in the Waldorf schools. We continue to believe that a real conversation between a child and an adult of flesh and blood is a profoundly superior experience to the point-and-click conversation a student might have with the dialogue boxes found on educational software programs. The Waldorf teacher not only judges the "correctness" of the child's answer, but also weighs the way in which the child stands, her clarity of speech, her enthusiasm or lassitude in answering, and a host of other subtle nuances that transcend any standardized formulae.

The typical Waldorf main lesson not only involves desk time, but also brings the children into movement. From first through fifth grade, many subjects are approached through rhythmic games as well as through discussion and book work. Thus a teacher is able to assess the youngster not only as a developing intellect, but also as a being of "heart and limbs." This calls for the faculty of active observation to be developed by every Waldorf teacher, for it is the teacher who is the ultimate assessment instrument. The child is thereby assessed as a whole person engaged in activities that challenge every component of the developing human being.

Communicating assessment results

Parents of children in the Waldorf school movement learn of their child's progress through two methods: the required parent meeting with the class teacher and the written report sent home once or

twice a year. Conversations with parents usually take place immediately before or after the written report has been received. In a situation where parents and teacher discover that they disagree strongly over a report or evaluation, further discussions are scheduled; it is essential for a consensus to be reached about the child's needs and progress. The written report takes on a number of forms in Waldorf schools across the country. In most cases, it is a narrative description of the child's work, attitude, and social integration presented without any number or letter grades; rarely is any sort of grid used to make the report appear standardized. Although the class teacher's report is the longest and most descriptive, each of the special subject teachers is also required to write at least a paragraph or two about the child's performance in the time period under discussion. The parents of a Waldorf fifth grader may receive three or five pages (in total) of reports at midyear, and six to ten pages at the year's end. As the years go by, the advantages of the community of teachers become evident. Every new report is enhanced by comparisons of the child's performance in prior grades, and subtle changes may be noted that would fall in between the cracks were the child passed from one teacher to another through the grades. The ongoing dialogue between class teacher and special subject teachers also helps to bring consistency and clarity to the various voices heard in the reports.

Many Waldorf teachers accompany this parent-directed report with a report written directly to the student. This may be simply a letter to the child, which recapitulates in simpler terms what has been written to the parents. More often, it is a creative effort on the part of the teacher to capture the essential nature of the child in a story, a poem, or even a drawing or painting. While we acknowledge that parents need the facts to evaluate their child's progress, we also recognize that the child needs a picture, or better yet, an "imagination" in which the child's own nature is envisioned in terms of the outer world. Here is an excerpt of a report written to the parents of a fifth grader:

> Kathleen's initial reaction to any new work in math is to cry out, "I don't get it!" and to convince herself that she never will get it. After this initial period of uncertainty, however, she quiets down, makes the requisite effort, and gradually masters the work along with her classmates. Kathleen followed suit by resisting our transition from fractions to decimals, even though her teacher insisted that she would find that decimals were much easier to manipulate.
>
> Working with decimals in the abstract or in relation to fractions did not do the trick with Kathleen, but as soon as we looked at the decimal system that underlies the monetary systems of the world, she was thoroughly engaged! Her workbook will make it clear to you how her neat and clear methods of working with numbers make it very easy for Kathleen to trace any mistakes she has made, and you will note that after three lessons about decimals, her mistakes are few and far between. Kathleen shows full comprehension of adding, subtracting and multiplying decimals. She is well able to divide whole numbers into decimals, but still shows some hesitation when dividing decimals into decimals. We will be reviewing this last, challenging operation early in sixth grade, before we take up percentages, and I think that Kathleen's usual persistence will lead her to mastery in this area as well.

Kathleen herself received a poem from her teacher, based on the study of Alexander the Great that the class had undertaken at the end of fifth grade. Bucephalus was a spirited horse who could not be broken by Prince Philip's staunchest generals:

> Bucephalus stood wild and free,
> His nostrils proud and flared;
> He seemed to whinny and neigh to all,
> "Come tame me, if you dare!"
> So many were thrown as they mounted him
> That all were filled with fear.
>
> "I'll tame this steed!" Alexander said,
> Rushing in where generals feared to tred.
> Around the horse was gently led,
> Away from the shadow that caused it such dread,
> And now towards the sun it galloped instead.

Tempting though it might be to add another few lines providing a moral to the tale, the teacher chose instead to let the girl make her own connections!

For the teacher, the possibility of communicating the same evaluation in one way to the parents and in another way to the child is challenging and energizing. The opportunity to respect the profound differences in consciousness between adult and child is but one of the potentials afforded by the Waldorf method of assessment. As our nation questions the rationale for standardized and quantitative testing ever more profoundly, I hope that the experience Waldorf educators have had with their innovative modes of evaluation over the course of seven decades will be an example to all who are concerned about the proper development of the child.

Creating Performance Assessments

Bil Johnson

The program of the Coalition of Essential Schools offers a step-by-step method that classroom teachers can use to develop performance assessments. Using an actual example from the classroom, the reader moves through each successive step that teachers must take in developing effective, quality performance assessments.

Bronxville High School, in Westchester County, just north of New York City, has been a member of the Coalition of Essential Schools since 1985. As such, Bronxville has been part of an evolutionary process — attempting to apply the philosophy of the coalition's Nine Common Principles[1] to actual classroom and schoolwide practice. Six of those principles, in particular, have found their way into the daily practice of several teams of teachers at Bronxville engaged in teaching coordinated English/social studies interdisciplinary curriculum in grades 9, 10, and 11. Although teachers have tremendous latitude in implementing their curriculum, they are clearly guided by the principles that students should learn to use their minds well; that less is more; that teaching and learning should be personalized; that the governing metaphor of the school should be "student-as-worker"; and that the work should culminate in a final demonstration of mastery — an exhibition. With these principles as guidelines, then, curriculum is designed and implemented. An integral part of that process, not explicitly delineated in the common principles, is how students are assessed in such a setting. The exhibition is clearly a "demonstration of mastery," but how will students know what comprises an excellent exhibition as opposed to a mediocre one? That is where the challenge and the genuine hard work of developing performance assessment begin.

Performance assessment, simply put, is a way for students to show what they know and can do through active, multi-tasked activities which address a specific criteria developed from the desired outcomes of what students learn. The "performance" aspect is what the students actually do: research, writing, speaking publicly, participating in discussions, role-playing in simulations, etc. The "assessment" part evolves from activities and criteria which can be designed not only by the teacher but also by the teacher *and* the students. For example, if we want to know if our students have acquired effective, active listening skills, we will design an activity which requires students to speak and listen to each other, or to recordings, or to the dialogue in a movie or a

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videotape. To assess if the students have listened effectively we must create reliable *indicators;* actual signs that would show an audience the student is an active listener. The best way to create effective indicators is to consider *exemplars*[2] which we find around us in the real world. Students, because they know "effective, active listening" is a desired outcome, can help develop indicators by discussing with the teacher who they think are exemplars of that trait in the society. Who is an effective listener that we all know? Many would say Ted Koppel, or Robin MacNeil, and Jim Lehrer. Why? What makes them effective, active listeners? What are the *indicators*? They ask probing questions which directly address statements made by their interviewees. They are well-prepared to ask questions about the topic they are pursuing and probe for more than the superficial. They redirect questions to others to find another opinion. Those become the criteria for assessment. If we can clearly delineate what exemplary performance is, we can assess whether our students, who have helped us create the criteria, have met the standards we all agree are outstanding. In this manner students know what is expected, know what the ultimate goals of their performance are, and can aim for the standard. Teachers, and students, can assess performances based on what they see and hear. And, particularly with the help of videotape in an instance such as this, students can self-evaluate their performance. The same template can be applied to writing and all other skills we would want our students to acquire. Ask the students to bring in what they believe is an excellent piece of editorial writing, for example. The class can then determine what elements the various excellent editorials share. Based on those findings, a criteria for exemplary editorial writing can be created. Nothing is secret and there is no Bell Curve formula in this kind of assessment. Students can succeed based on what is *known* and can work toward a definite and clear goal. Once this is clear, we can return to other Coalition principles to develop rich and engaging performance assessments.

In ascribing to the idea that "less is more," a teacher is no longer bound to simply "cover content" and plow through a textbook from September to June. That can be a liberating thought or a terrifying one. If a school has clearly defined what its graduates will know and be able to do upon graduating — if, in fact, they have developed a well-defined graduation exhibition that would show this — then the classroom teacher has clear guidelines to show the way. Knowing a student must demonstrate mastery of x, y, and z at graduation, what should that student be able to demonstrate by the June preceding graduation? And by the June preceding that? This concept of "planning backwards" (see McDonald, 1991, 1992; Podl, 1992) is integral to developing performance assessment activities and criteria. If we do not have any idea of what students *need to know and be able to do* at various junctures in their academic career, how can we genuinely assess their progress? So, all assessment planning begins with a vision of what student work might look like in its final form — a vision that will be shared with the students.

Vision, of course, is all well and good — but where does one go from there? Imagining what one's vision

> *A goal in authentically assessing students' work is that the students develop the ability to self-assess and self-critique.*

really looks like — in terms of content, skills, and behaviors — in *exhibited* demonstrations is what "the call" must be for students. A clearly defined final exhibition, delineating *exactly* what is required of students must be presented *before* any work is assigned or begun. This would carefully explain to students the content to be covered, the skills that must be learned/applied/mastered, and the behaviors (individually and in the context of the class or school community) students would be expected to exhibit publicly by a specific deadline. In the same way, the parameters of the exhibition would be defined and discussed with students before work begins: where they will go for source material, and how they will pursue the essential questions that guide the exhibition, what they will need to do to prepare for their public performance.

Finally, what are the standards by which the exhibition is to be judged? When designing performance assessment activities there is no mystery as to what is expected (in terms of product) and the criteria used to judge that product. It is essential that the students know not only what their goal is regarding the exhibition they are to present, but also the criteria for an excellent performance, a satisfactory performance,

an unacceptable performance. If they can observe or review benchmark performances from the past, all the better! A goal in authentically assessing students' work is that the students develop the ability to self-assess and self-critique. If our aim is academic progress, not simply "monitoring" student work (see Wiggins 1988, 1989a, 1989b, 1991a, 199b), then students must learn to gauge their own work. To do this effectively they must be aware of what the standards for that work are and what outstanding performances look like. It is incumbent upon teachers, then, when designing performance assessment activities that they include — indeed, publish for student "consumption" — clear and delineated criteria for their exhibitions.

The elements of sound performance assessment design are: a carefully defined vision of what the exhibition is, based on the desired performance outcomes; a "backwards planned" assignment for students that delineates parameters, logistics, and all the "whats" and "hows" of the exhibition; published criteria that establish clear standards for exemplary performance.

With this template, teachers should be able to design activities that genuinely reflect whether their students know and can do what has been taught. Recognizing that it is easy to postulate, particularly regarding any educational theory, let's walk through the creation of a performance assessment from initial idea to completed exhibition to see how, exactly, it works in a classroom setting.

The setting and the desired outcomes

The 11th grade interdisciplinary class at Bronxville High School, taught by myself and the English department chair, Anthony Angotta, focused on several essential questions throughout the 1992–1993 school year: "What makes something uniquely American?" "What are the elements of, or nature of, revolution?" "What does it mean to 'come-of-age'?" The class of 22 heterogeneously grouped students met twice a day, and teachers worked together with the class during both periods about 80% to 85% of the time. By early November the class was ready to tackle the concept of "coming of age." The first step for the teachers, then, was to determine what outcomes were appropriate for the students to exhibit at this point in the year. Based on our year-end desired outcomes, what did we need to focus our students on in terms of content, skills, and behaviors? As we saw it, our goals for this period developed as follows:

1. Content — critically reading literature (*Huckleberry Finn*) for tone, style, point of view, satire, and the idea of coming-of-age; understanding the significance of regionalism and sectionalism in the culture of the United States and its history, in political, economic, and social terms; exploring whether a growing nation goes through a coming-of-age the way people do, and if so, how.

2. Skills — reading, research, writing (for a particular audience, from a particular point of view, in a specific style), and public speaking and debate.

3. Behaviors — individual responsibility, group/team work, interpersonal skills.

The design and the call

With the outcomes known, and essential questions framing the ideas, the next objective for the teachers was to design an exhibition that would clearly guide student performances to meet the desired outcomes. In what ways could our students incorporate their reading of literature, understand the complexities of regionalism, do authentic research, write in a prescribed and challenging style, and work responsibly on individual and group levels? Our decision evolved from a project I had had success with in past years, with some added twists. In the past I had divided American history classes into "family" groups and asked the families to keep diaries or journals in reaction to lists of historical events. The "families" were described in some detail, with each representing a region of the fledgling United States (New England, southeastern seaboard, northwestern frontier and southwestern frontier), circa 1800 to 1840. Each family was given an appropriate regional name (Adams, Smith, Clark, and Jackson) and background information about its economics, politics, and social/cultural interests. Retaining this basic "family" format, we decided the best way to approach the stated outcomes at all three levels would be to have the families produce regional newspapers to comment on the significant events of the day. The families exchanged their newspapers after each deadline and compared how other regions viewed the same historical events. It seemed all our desired outcomes could be attained if we carefully prepared the assignment, clearly delineated its logistics, and established standards for excellence.

The final exhibition was a multi-task event. Teams produced a newspaper that was published for the entire class to read, discuss, and defend. To better guide the students to their ends, assessment criteria

Dartmouth vs. Woodward is Decided

by Ashley Adams
Washington, D.C. 1819

After a year of deliberation the Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall finally announced the decision in the case of Dartmouth College vs. Woodward, on Friday. In a six to one majority, the court ruled in favor of Daniel Webster and the trustees. Marshall held that: 1) Dartmouth's charter was a contract protected by the Constitutional specification that state cannot pass any "law impairing the obligation of contracts" and 2) The state's revising the Dartmouth charter was Unconstitutional.

For those of you that have not kept track of the progress of the conflict of Dartmouth vs. Woodward, over the past year, you may recall that the problems began when the state of New Hampshire amended the college's original charter, placing it under the control of the state and appointed a new board of trustees. Finding this action unconstitutional, the old trustees sued William H. Woodward, Secretary of the University for recovery of the charter and other documents. The State court supported the action of the state legislature, declaring that what was created under the charter of 1769 was a public not establishment and it was not a contract within the limits of the Constitution. As a result of this outcome, the board of trustees appealed to the Supreme Court. Daniel Webster, a graduate of Dartmouth in 1801, was chosen to defend the old board of trustees. Webster argued "a grant is a contract," as was the charter " is embraced within the very terms of that decision (Fletcher vs. Peck)" since " a grant of corporate powers and privileges is as much a contract as a grant of land." In other words he argued that the revision of the charter harmed the contract originally made between the state and the college when the chapter was presented. Webster's outstanding performance brought tears to the eyes of the justice Friday when he concluded, "It is, sir, as I have said, a small college. And yet there are those who love it."

Fridays descision has been long awaited and the ruling will most probably have significant bearing on the development of business corporations in the future, as it takes away the ability of the state government to control corporations. In addition, the decision raises a constitutional question, does the Supreme Court have the power to override the decisions of the state courts? The Judiciary Act of 1789, along with this decision, appears to establish that the Supreme Court does have this right.

Monroe's Message to The World

by Cemre Adams

On December 2, 1823, President James Monroe announced a new policy while presenting his annual message to Congress. The basic concepts of his policy have to do with the role of Europe in America and the role of the United States in Europe.

According to his policy; 1)Western Hemisphere is closed to further European colonization, 2) The United States will not interfere with the existing colonies of any European power, 3) The United States will not meddle with European politics, and, 4) Any attempt by European powers to intervene in the Western Hemisphere will be regarded as "dangerous to our peace and safety".

Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, as well as the President, has also been very active in forming the principles in Monroe's announcement. He wrote the "Non-colonization principle", perhaps the most important part of the policy.

The British charge, H. U. Addington reported to his superiors in the Foreign Office, "The message seems to have been received with acclamation throughout the United States". Monroe's announcement has indeed caught the fancy of the national spirit. not only does the message itself express the spirit of American nationalism, but it also evidences America's importance in world affairs.

The message also parallels British foreign policy, as we welcome The British themselves had offered to make a public declaration against the interference of the European powers in their Western Hemisphere colonies.

Editor's Corner

New Tariffs Good or Bad?
Cemre Adams
NY, April 1816

As we all know, Congress finally enacted the protective tariff last week. The news has been received with enthusiasm throughout New England. Of course, our manufactures will benefit most from the tariff. From now on, we Americans, instead of buying British goods, will be purchasing our own. This way, not only will our "infant industries" be protected, but also our economy will be strengthened.

However, there have been disagreements in Congress concerning this issue. Southern members were strictly against the tariff, while John C. Calhoun, representative of South Carolina, argued for it. He said the United States needed to build up its army, pay its national debt, and develop its new industries. He believed that only in this way would the US become truly independent.

Therefore, dear reader, it seems that our young nation, because of this tariff, will be given the opportunity to become self reliant in it manufacturing.

What a Corrupt Bargain?
Never!

Thomas Adams
1825

"I am out raged at President Adams appointment of Henry Clay to his cabinet, appointing one of your campaign rivals to a most important office?". This is what many republicans might say about this nomination to this very important office however if you take a closer look you can see just what happened. In the election of 1824 four candidates competed against each other from the same party. Republicans. Some National Republicans (a new name for the party with similar ideals as the "old" federalists). Henry Clay knew he was not going to win. So instead he supported his most admirable "opponent" Adams. Adams too supported Clay and his politics, but knew he would not win the election. Adams seeing the brilliance in Clay's politics knew his potential valuebility upon his cabinet so he appointed him Secretary of State. A wise choice.

Republicans, opponents of Adams find flaw with that!

were developed and distributed. Beyond that, since we wanted students to develop a critical eye for reading newspapers and historical documents as well as literature, we devised a critique sheet through which students voted for "Pulitzer Prizes" in various categories, thereby recognizing what they believed to be the outstanding performances of their classmates (students were not permitted to vote for their own work). Because we wanted to see work over time during this project, three deadlines were established for three different issues of the newspapers. This also "upped the stakes" for each group to win "Pulitzers," while giving them more than one opportunity to achieve outstanding results.

At this point the teachers' preparation work was done and the focus for the classroom work shifted to "coaching." Once the teachers had focused on outcomes and devised an exhibition to address those goals, clearly delineated how the students would pursue the exhibition, published and discussed the criteria for performances, all that remained was to help groups of students maximize their performances. In our case, with two teachers in the room for both periods (a total of about 90 minutes per day), we were able to closely monitor group progress and individual work, particularly as deadlines approached.

Exhibitions-in-the-making

What do classes look like as they prepare an exhibition like the one described here? First and foremost, they are busy places. Initially, groups must size up who can do what best and establish how they want to present their exhibition. In our case, the teams examined what content they had to present in their papers and divided up the research work — sometimes according to personal interests, sometimes by process of elimination. They also made decisions about the look of their publication: Would it have a flashy masthead? Would they include cartoons and advertising? If so, what would early 19th century advertising look like? Did someone have a computer program that could produce graphics or special effects (in one case, yes!)? The teams exercised a number of critical thinking skills: comparing and contrasting the value of stories (what the lead story should be, for example), classifying information ("That's an editorial." "That's cultural, not news."), problem solving and decision making. While some were back and forth to the library doing research, others used classroom materials to com-

pose their stories. All the while, the teachers would spend concentrated amounts of time with each group to coach and coax, encourage and clarify. Slowly, the newspapers took shape and the groups looked forward to seeing what others had produced. As far as skills work was concerned, students had to write and rewrite, edit one another's stories, determine lay-out, and put their own, distinctive stamp on their newspaper. There was a sense of friendly competitiveness between the groups and some expected internal tensions in groups where it was felt certain individuals were not pulling their weight. Teacher intervention in these instances was crucial, to allay the concerns of those hard at work and to motivate those not pushing themselves as hard as they might. In this case, all of the newspapers were published on deadline all three times and the voting for the "Pulitzers" and the discussions that followed were lively and informative. Groups used their regional perspective to respond to questions from teachers and their peers, and the activity culminated in students writing a reflective piece about regionalism, as well as group- and self-evaluations. An unanticipated bonus was the consistent connection between the historical events and current observations about America by the students.

The reflective practitioner

Once the project was completed and the exhibition had been presented, teachers took time to reflect. Even when a teacher is working alone on a project such as this, reflection on the event is crucial. Creating effective performance assessments requires continual "research and development" and should always be seen as an evolutionary process. Unlike standardized tests for "canned" lesson plans, one cannot create a performance assessment and then use it year in and year out. Upon completion of the family newspaper project my teaching partner and I considered what had worked best and what had been problematic. If we used this exercise in the future, what should we definitely keep and what needed revision or deletion? An idea that arose from this process was the creation of a "Family Feud" activity which would require the students to actively use their content knowledge in a game show format. Time also had to be taken throughout the exhibition's presentation to assess the student work based on the published criteria. The classroom teacher took on a variety of roles once the commitment to performance assessment had been made. This required a great deal of time and, initially, some very demanding

work. The results, the student exhibitions, clearly made the time and labor investment worthwhile.

Hints for developing performance assessments

For those who have not tried to prepare performance assessments, some advice. Start small. Consider doing a manageable performance, which will be short, in terms of time, and clear to the students. Remember, students are not always accustomed to this kind of work either. Pick one or two desired outcomes and build from there. Let the outcomes determine your vision and devise possible exhibitions that might clearly demonstrate what students know and can do in relation to those desired outcomes. Devise a criteria to assess the exhibition. Develop a number of guiding questions to direct students toward their end; let them know what "the call" for the exhibition is. Don't be afraid to fail. If we want our students to be lifelong learners, critical thinkers, and risk-takers, teachers must model that behavior in their classrooms. What better way than to venture out in the area of performance assessment? Beneath it all, the guiding premise is that schools are about students, about kids. We can no longer simply accept standardized testing, which rewards only the few who have the capacity for excellent memory recall. How many of those recalled facts are remembered a year later? And even if so, to what end? The philosophical cornerstone of performance assessment is "knowledge in use." It is a powerful way for students to learn, and that alone should motivate teachers to incorporate it in their practice.

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Note

1. See Sizer (1984, 1992) for background on the Coalition of Essential Schools and its principles.

2. The model was developed by Grant Wiggins and is one of the most effective I have used in creating performance assessments.

Family Business Assessment Criteria

To receive an A on this project, you must:

1. Write grammatically correct, correctly spelled articles which clearly represent the regional point of view of your family in a persuasive manner.

2. Research the historical events of each period with thoroughness, as evidenced in your written article and class discussions.

3. Used your time — in class and outside of class — effectively (as witnessed by the teacher(s) and as reflected in your work).

4. Worked cooperatively and responsibly in your group, meeting deadlines, helping others, offering constructive suggestions, and exerting leadership or team spirit throughout.

5. Be able to clearly explain and defend your articles in class discussions and debates, responding appropriately to questions and challenges.

To receive a B on this project you would:

1. Write a persuasive article identifiable as your region's point of view with few grammatical or spelling errors.

2. Research the historical events with detail but not complete thoroughness, missing some of the subtly of the issues.

3. Basically use your time effectively, seldom being asked to get back on task or seldom failing to have work ready when you arrive to class.

4. Work well with your "family" teammates, meeting most deadlines and accepting your role with energy.

5. Be able to explain and defend your article, clarifying misunderstandings or disputed points, if not always convincing opponents of your stance or accuracy.

To receive a C on this project, you would:

1. Write an article which presents the facts about an historical event but doesn't thoroughly or clearly identify the regional point of view related to it.

2. Research historical events, recording basic facts without probing for depth or insight.

3. Generally use your time effectively, but too often have to be "reminded" to get back on task; work brought to class would be satisfactory but not distinguished in its quantity or quality.

4. Work with your teammates to meet the paper's deadlines but you would not impress anyone with your "team spirit" or leadership within the group.

5. Be able to explain the bare facts of your articles(s) without totally, or clearly, convincing questioners or challengers of your accuracy or position.

To receive a D on this project, your would:

1. Write an article but seriously confuse facts or misrepresent issues.

2. Only minimally research your topics.

3. Misuse class time and resources more than half the time.

4. Barely work with your teammates; miss deadlines; grudgingly comply to team goals.

5. Only minimally be able to explain the facts of your story, without elaboration or accuracy.

To receive an F on this project, you would:

1. Not get your articles completed.

2. Fail to do any effective research.

3. Abuse class time designated for work and fail to do related homework.

From the Bottom Up and Inside Out

A Framework for Redesigning Education

Lynn Stoddard

This article describes a process for changing society's mindset about education. The process was developed over a 20-year period in two Utah schools where the principal, parents, teachers, and students challenged the top-down, curriculum-driven system, and invented a framework for redesigning education from the inside out and bottom up. The key features of the process are an unprecedented alliance with parents and a focus on helping students develop three dimensions of human greatness — identity, interaction, and inquiry.

Lynn Stoddard is a retired educator who now works as an author and consultant to initiate major changes in public education. He serves on the steering committee of the Global Alliance for Transforming Education. He lives with his wife, and three of his twelve children who are still at home, in Farmington, Utah.

At present there are two powerful forces pulling American education in opposite directions. The old familiar pressure, one that has grown increasingly intense since the *Nation at Risk*, is in the direction of making our present, factory-model system perform in a more efficient, effective way. A recent manifestation of this force is a political/economic call for students to meet world class standards in five core subjects and become first in the world in math and science as determined by national achievement tests. This force is in the direction of reforming, restructuring, and improving what we have. It is an effort to shore up and repair a crumbling system of education.

Pulling in the opposite direction from the pressure to improve the industrial model of student uniformity is an invitation to start over and completely redesign our system from the bottom up. Increasingly, teachers and other educators are saying that we need a new paradigm, a new set of rules, a change in mindset, with which to envision and totally change the character of American education (Deal, 1990).

So how do we go about changing a mindset that has been part of our cultural consciousness since the days of the "common school"? It would seem to be an impossible task. In this article I will share a process that offers hope for changing society's mental image of education so that our system can be transformed from the bottom up.

The process was developed over a 20-year period in two public elementary schools in Davis County, Utah, where I was fortunate to serve as principal. The first, Hill Field Elementary School, was one of 40 elementary schools of the Davis County School District. The school served over 600 students, grades K–6, 90% of whom were military dependents from Hill Air Force Base.

In order to help the reader understand how the process was conceived, I must first share some in-

sights that I acquired during 36 years of working as a teacher and administrator in the public school system.

Every call, within my memory, to reform our system of public education has been based on a content/test approach. Letter-grade report cards, achievement tests, and high school graduation requirements are firmly in place to insure that we all equate education with student accomplishment in various subjects of the curriculum. Our society

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*H*ow can education possibly be anything different from what we ourselves experienced? Habit makes it extremely difficult to envision any other way.

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places great value on high grade-point averages as symbols of quality education. How can education possibly be anything different from what we ourselves experienced? Habit makes it extremely difficult to envision any other way.

What has been the result of holding fast to the content/test approach? Many of our nation's brilliant, talented youth decide to drop out of school before graduation and often turn to drugs, irresponsible sex, violent crime, and suicide. This is compelling evidence that our curriculum-centered system of education fails to meet the needs of a great many students. In so doing it also fails to meet the needs of society as a whole. Whenever a person's need to develop personal gifts and talents are not met, we *all* are deprived of what that person could have contributed.

Reverse thinking

Without going into the history of how our society arrived at a content/test system of public education, I would like to point out that this is the system that best serves the needs of those who control and direct from the *top down* — those who have a need to hold subordinates accountable with tests, grades, credits, and requirements. Starting with the executive branch of government, down through legislatures, school boards and superintendents, the prescribed curriculum is imposed on students, from the top down and outside in, by teachers who endeavor to please those

who are in authority over them. Students, in turn, try to please teachers in order to get good grades. Everyone in a curriculum-driven system is there to serve those above them. This is how the system works — except for the students who drop out and decide not to play the game.

What would happen if we were to reverse the hierarchy and put students and their needs on top? With this arrangement, teachers (including parents) would serve the needs of students, superintendents and school boards would serve the needs of teachers and parents, and politicians would serve the needs of all of the above.

Is this a realistic model? Perhaps the biggest barrier to implementing a bottom-up system is the long-standing inability of our society to trust children to determine their own destinies. At the next level, our culture has for many years shown a lack of faith and trust in teachers; hence a curriculum-driven system with "teacher-proof" materials and all of the existing accountability paraphernalia. And so it goes, on up to the supreme authority who holds the ultimate knowledge and wisdom to decide the destiny of everyone else.

Looking inside for trust

While I was serving as principal of Hill Field Elementary School, the students, parents, teachers, and I found a way to free our brains to think differently about education. We discovered a way to look deep inside ourselves for trust. We discovered an *inside-out* approach for redesigning education from the *bottom up*.

We believe our discovery is significant in that it can serve as a pattern or model for others to use in developing a new paradigm or mindset for education. What we found is that individuals are born with three core drives, which give strong evidence of human "trustworthiness":

- a drive to be an important "somebody"
- a drive for warm human relationships and
- a drive for truth and knowledge.

These drives are deep spiritual needs that seem to regulate all human functioning. They are part of the great body of common knowledge. These needs ring true because we all have them.

The drive to be an important "somebody." This drive is much more than the need to merely survive or exist. It is an intense need of the human spirit to fulfill one's unique potential as a special contributor to the world. It is a need to count for something, to have a sense of self-worth. It is a drive to answer the questions, Who am I? Why am I here? and What is the purpose of my life? It is a never ending quest for *identity.*

The drive for warm human relationships. Our next discovery confirmed another positive, well-known characteristic of human nature — that we are all born with a need to love and be loved. Everyone feels a deep need to *belong* and have a sense of community with other human beings. We have a built-in drive for communication and warm relationships with others. This is the second most powerful motivating force of human nature. It is the deeply-felt need for *interaction.*

The drive for truth and knowledge. Our third trust-enhancing discovery is also common knowledge: Human beings are born curious. They are born with a strong drive to make sense of the world and to acquire personal knowledge and wisdom. This drive has sent people to the top of the highest mountains, to the bottom of the deepest oceans, and far out into space seeking understanding. Curiosity is the third most powerful motivating force of human nature. It is the force that we call *inquiry.*

These core human drives for identity, interaction, and inquiry provided us with strong evidence of the trustworthiness of children. They gave us our first clue that it would be safe to design a system of education around the deep spiritual needs of individual students.

The three *I*s gave us a new way of thinking about education — a different mindset. What would happen if we were to think of education as the process of helping students grow in identity, interaction, and inquiry?

Swimming against the mainstream

Some of the parents at Hill Field Elementary School were very vocal in expressing their need for the teachers to apply autocratic, military-style discipline — to keep students quiet, in their seats, and busily engaged in bookwork. They also placed great value on standardized achievement test scores as a reflection of student accomplishment. In this attitude they seemed to reflect what we were hearing from school district officials — from the board of education on down through the superintendent and curriculum supervisors. "Time-on-task" was the popular expression at the time, and teachers were expected to be loyal taskmasters.

When the pressure on teachers became very intense from all sides, I began to suspect the possibility that a vocal minority was imposing their will on a more silent majority. Was the school board reflecting what they were hearing from a few loud voices? Was there a body of cooler heads who held, but did not express, other feelings?

I decided to find out. I developed a survey that was sent to all parents asking them to describe, through a series of choices, the kind of school they wanted their children to attend and the kinds of experiences they wanted their children to have. When the results of the survey were compiled, my suspicions were confirmed. The vast majority of parents wanted a more relaxed, democratic style of management to prevail in classrooms; they wanted their children to be involved in many hands-on activities, including many field excursions, and they were not as obsessed with standardized achievement testing as we were led to believe. The feelings of a majority of the parents at Hill Field Elementary School seemed to be an anomaly in relation to what was happening throughout the school district, the state, and the country.

At about this time, we became involved in Catalyst, a project to encourage participatory management of schools. Through this project teachers discovered a way to get released from the bondage of a school district that was trying diligently to perfect the industrial, materialistic system of minimum competence and student uniformity. Instead of blindly following tradition and the narrow vision of some district leaders, staff members of Hill Field School decided to invite parents to have a voice and become genuinely involved in their children's education.

The partnership effort began when each child's parents were invited to meet with the teacher in a get-acquainted, goal-setting conference at the beginning of the school year. Parents were asked to come to the meeting prepared to discuss three questions:

1. What do you hope the school can help you accomplish for your child this school year?

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

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

To help answer the first question parents were also invited to fill out two priorities surveys. One of the surveys contained a column of goals to be priority rated and a column for parents to indicate where the responsibility for each goal should lie (see Figure 1).

When we compiled the results of the priority surveys and the partnership questionnaires, we found that what parents wanted for their children — their first priority — was a cluster of knowledge, attitudes, and skills that came to be known as "the first dimension of human greatness": *Identity*. It includes knowledge of human and individual potential; development of individual intelligences, talents, and gifts; and self-esteem, confidence, honesty, character, and physical fitness.

The second priority of the parents was another grouping of human attributes that we now call "the second dimension of greatness": *Interaction*, or love, respect, empathy, communication, and responsible world citizenship.

The third priority included the attitudes and skills needed for successful learning. It is "the third dimension of human greatness": *Inquiry*, which is zest for learning — the powers of seeking, acquiring, processing, and using information to solve problems and develop personal meaning.

This is the process that was used to reexamine education at Hill Field Elementary School. It was a process that resulted in three major outcomes. First, we discovered the three core drives that motivate all human beings, at least all of the ones we interviewed and surveyed.[1]

The second major outcome of the interviews and surveys was that the three Is triggered a mental shift which allowed us to begin throwing off the shackles of a curriculum-dominated system. The three *Is* enabled us to start placing the needs of individual students ahead of the needs of the bureaucracy.

The third significant outcome was an unprecedented alliance with parents. Nearly all of the parents expressed a belief that the three dimensions of human greatness could best be accomplished with parents, teachers, and students working together in full partnership.

The three dimensions of human greatness, *identity, interaction*, and *inquiry*, became the underground master goals of a school that was accountable to a district that was going in the opposite direction and pushing everyone to standardize students with a lock-step curriculum. It was an uphill struggle to go against district policy, but the teachers took heart

Figure 1. From *Redesigning Education* (Used with permission of Zephyr Press.

from the priority surveys and the strong support of parents that emerged in the partnership conferences.

As the teachers began to concentrate more on the needs of individual students, they received a confirmation that identity, interaction, and inquiry are primary human drives. Their covert rebellion was also

reinforced by evidence that those who have contributed most throughout history have possessed remarkable development in the dimensions of greatness: a strong sense of self-worth (identity), deep feelings of love and respect for all people (interaction), and an insatiable hunger for truth and knowledge (inquiry).

Strategies for fostering human greatness

As we began to concentrate on meeting the inner needs of students, Hill Field Elementary School entered a period of transformation. In partnership with parents, we did a number of unconventional things that were incongruent with district policies. We began to hold parent–teacher partnership conferences during school time, a practice that district leaders frowned upon but reluctantly agreed to, provided that it was kept low-profile so that other schools would not ask for the same privilege. We set up a library/inquiry center in two classrooms during summer recess and then informed the leaders of our rapidly growing school district that the school was full. We designed inquiry boxes for the library that contained interesting objects from nature for students to check out, examine, and generate questions to pursue. We organized an industrial arts shop where elementary-age children could work with tools. We surveyed the community for interesting inquiry sites within a two-mile walking radius of the school. We tore apart new science books and rebound them into individual inquiry units. We abandoned the district-sanctioned parent–teacher organization, and formed one that better met our needs.

With the discovery of the three dimensions of human greatness came a new awareness: *Identity, interaction,* and *inquiry* are all inside-out words. They call for a reversal of the traditional meaning of teaching. Instead of dispensing knowledge, from the outside in, those who would facilitate the optimum growth of children will attempt to draw forth, from within the student, the built-in talents, gifts, love, and questions — the dimensions of greatness, which lie dormant, like a sleeping giant, waiting to be activated. The human brain operates as an inside-out instrument that seeks truth naturally, effortlessly, and many times more efficiently when it is running on the internal power of self-initiated inquiry. Any attempt to short-circuit or inflict an outside power source, as in imposed instruction, causes anxiety and a shut-down of the process (Hart, 1983).

The staff at Hill Field Elementary School began exploratory attempts to nurture the three dimensions of greatness with the strategies mentioned earlier. Another strategy, designed to foster personal inquiry, is worth describing in more detail. One sixth-grade teacher, his students, and their parents hurriedly built in one evening, and without asking for district permission, a zoo/aviary in a large front entrance of the school. It was constructed with 2×4 studs and chicken wire in a place where the architect of the new building had originally placed a large bed of artificial plants. The zoo was divided into two sections. It went from floor to ceiling, measured approximately 8 by 16 feet, and was accessible for student observation from four sides. It housed, among other things, and on a rotating basis, a flock of parakeets and finches, a monkey and other creatures loaned from Hogle Zoo, baby goats, turkeys, and a mother hen that laid eggs and hatched them in full view of many spectators.

As you can imagine, the zoo became an instant hit with everyone except district leaders, who discovered the change at the front entrance of the school too late to do anything but go along with a project that students, teachers, and parents were enthusiastic about. The district director of buildings and grounds succumbed to the pressure and replaced the fir studs and chicken wire with birch paneling and heavy mesh wire, and installed a leaning rail on two sides of the zoo. The school ended up with an exciting inquiry area where there was always a crowd of students observing, sketching, and taking care of the animals and birds.

Two years after the zoo was built I became principal of E. M. Whitesides Elementary School, another public, K–6 school in the same district, but with a much different clientele. Whitesides Elementary School was one of six elementary schools in the town of Layton, Utah. Although many of the parents were civilian workers at Hill Air Force Base, very few of them were in military service. In contrast to Hill Field Elementary School, where most of the children lived in two-parent families, about one-third of the students at Whitesides came from families where divorce and hardship were common. Many lived with a single parent.

As I arrived at Whitesides to be the new principal, I found that the teachers were aware of what had been going on at Hill Field and immediately asked to inaugurate the same kind of partnerships with parents. In short, we essentially went through the same process at Whitesides as we had at Hill Field. We

initiated one-on-one meetings with parents, asked them to identify their top priorities for the education of their children, and invited them to help us accomplish their goals.

The Whitesides parents identified the same three priorities that had been the top needs of parents at Hill Field and the other schools in the Catalyst project. They also expressed a desire to become full partners with teachers in fostering student identity, interaction, and inquiry.

The parents at Whitesides Elementary School were delighted to be invited to become involved in their children's education. It soon was apparent that a united focus on helping students acquire the three dimensions of human greatness would allow a much deeper, more meaningful kind of parental involve-

Nearly all of the parents expressed a belief that the three dimensions of human greatness could best be accomplished with parents, teachers, and students working together in full partnership.

ment than had ever been possible in a curriculum-dominated system.

Almost from the beginning of this new kind of parent/teacher/student relationship the participants began to invent strategies for fostering the development of the three *Is*. This they did in spite of much pressure from school district leaders to standardize students with a common core curriculum. Many of these strategies were for individual students, but some were schoolwide (Stoddard, 1990, 1992). I will describe three only briefly:

The great brain project. The "Great Brain Project" is initiated when students are invited to study in great depth, over a period of several weeks or months, a topic that interests them, and to become "great brains" in the chosen topic. Students are invited to attain levels of understanding about a topic ranging from amateur, through specialist, expert, mastermind, and finally genius. Teachers and parents unite as partners to help each student develop a list of questions to guide the search for information, find resources, and ultimately prepare a "great brain" presentation using audio and visual aids to share

knowledge with classmates, relatives, and other invited guests. Students are then given recognition for their accomplishments through "great brain" badges and certificates, listing in the "Great Brain Hall of Fame," displays of their projects in "great brain" fairs, and public announcements and press releases.

This program was very successful. Students accomplished remarkable research on topics ranging from ants to trucks, whales, and zebras. Many students experienced attitudinal changes from apathy toward school to enthusiasm and joy in learning. When students found they could choose topics in which they were interested and learn without restraint, they accomplished some amazing things.

The school post office. This strategy involves having a school post office — an official-looking mailbox and a delivery system for letters written by students, teachers, and other staff members to other students, teachers, and staff. The mail is picked up at the end of each day and delivered the next. The staff at Whitesides Elementary School found the post office to be a most powerful tool in helping students learn to read and write without being "taught" in the customary teach-and-test way. The children did a prodigious amount of writing without being assigned, and looked forward to coming to school each day to read their mail. The "school post office" is an example of "whole language" in action.

New report card. Perhaps the most important strategy that we developed was an evaluation system to assess student growth in the three dimensions of greatness. The system was a big departure from the letter-grade report card sanctioned by the board of education. The main feature of our new evaluation instrument was that it fostered student self-evaluation from the inside out, just the opposite of the traditional system that attempts to assess student growth externally, from the outside in, and attach a grade value to it.

We formulated a new kind of report card that is marked by the child, the child's parents, and the teacher (inasmuch as all three are responsible for fostering growth in greatness), then used as the basis for discussion in partnership meetings. A few of the teachers had enough courage to use the new report card even though it pointed in a different direction from the one that was being imposed on us by district leaders. It was the ultimate symbol of our quiet

rebellion against a top-down, outside-in system. Shortly after the creation of the new report card I was transferred to another school, from which I resigned after one year to write part of this story in my book, *Redesigning Education: A Guide for Developing Human Greatness* (Stoddard, 1992).

After seeing what happens when students, teachers, and parents approach education with a different mindset, one that recognizes and respects human greatness and diversity, I am immensely optimistic about the future. At Hill Field and Whitesides we only scratched the surface of the unlimited possibilities that are available to those who are willing to challenge tradition. We found that an inside-out approach to education activates great human potential and creativity.

I will close this article with the framework for redesigning education that I put together from the exciting experiences that were mine while working with two wonderful groups of people who, with support, were willing to put their trust and belief in children on the line.

Numbers one and two of the framework set forth the purpose and direction — the mental image or vision that guides and shapes all decisions. Numbers three through seven outline five philosophical beliefs or attitudes that are activated through a focus on the vision. Number eight provides a place to collect and organize the results of everyone diligently concentrating on the vision — a place to list the successful strategies or means of building the three dimensions of human greatness. The framework is shown in Figure 2.

Through the process of concentrating on the personal development of students as individuals, parents, teachers, and staff members of two Davis County, Utah, schools started to redesign education. Many strategies were created to accomplish the goals. The framework became a new paradigm — a new vision, or mental image that allowed people to think differently and overcome a crippling mindset. It has been shown that this framework has the power to break the mental block that prevents a transformation of education. We recommend it as a pattern to follow for all those who are serious about redesigning education from the bottom up.

A Framework for Redesigning Education

1. MISSION — The purpose of education: *Develop great human beings who are valuable contributors to society.*
2. MASTER GOALS — The three dimensions of human greatness:
   IDENTITY * INTERACTION * INQUIRY
3. E. T. PARTNERSHIPS — Parents and teachers work *Equally* and *Together* as full partners to help students grow in the three dimensions of humane greatness.
4. AUTONOMY — Curriculum is viewed as means rather than ends, as servant instead of master.
5. EVALUATION — Assesses student growth in identity, interaction, and inquiry.
6. MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES — Each student is viewed as an individual with a unique set of "intelligences" to be developed, not as a person having a single IQ.
7. INQUIRY — Self-directed, personal inquiry is the primary mode of human learning and self-development.
8. STRATEGIES — The "how-to" steps that are created and discovered when students, parents, and teachers hold a clear vision of the mission and master goals constantly in mind.

Figure 2. Adapted from *Redesigning Education* (Zephyr Press, Tucson, AZ).

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Note

1. In the Catalyst project the same surveys were used in several elementary schools in four school districts with almost identical results. The top three priorities of parents in each school were the same: goals that could be classified under identity, interaction, and inquiry. This led us to assume that these drives are universal. It remains for further research to determine if this is true.

Excellence in Education
A Holistic Perspective

Lyn C. Forester

A reconsideration of the industrial/technological notion of excellence yields a new vision for education. This new perspective of excellence arises from the acceptance of the aesthetic domain as an integral part in the construction of knowledge. It offers an integration of rational and nonrational thought processes that brings a more holistic approach to our vision of reality. Thus, from the capacity to "know" through reason and the aesthetic domain, one gains insight into the important relationship between what we know and think, do and say.

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"Excellence" is the buzzword upon which the educational movement in the 1990s hangs its hat. Proponents believe that excellence promotes rationally guided action that delivers the highest form of skill in the teaching arena (Eisner, 1985b). Unfortunately, this narrow definition of excellence dismisses the speculative knowledge of aesthetic insights into the tacit foundation of knowledge. This domain, composed of the raw material of our intellect, our imaginative possibilities, feelings, emotions, and intuitions, contributes a qualitative dimension to experience that widens awareness. Alternatively, the limited notion of excellence characterized through accountability standards, quality control, time on task, and effective teaching methods does not bring about true superiority in the course of learning. The result of this interpretation in the educational process is the reification and reduction of curriculum into inert pieces of knowledge that hold little meaning or value.

This fragmented approach to curricular and assessment matters heavily influences not only what we teach but how we teach. Furthermore, it empathizes with quantification to the point where we mistake student test scores for accountability measures and academic requirements for the motivation that comes with the desire to learn. It is assumed that knowledge of what is "out there" is obtainable only through scientific means and that learning takes place through the transmission of information. Such assumptions pose challenging questions for our very existence that cannot be ignored.

A reconsideration of the industrial/technological notion of excellence presents solutions to these pressing questions. A new vision of education occurs when we consider the possibility that "understanding of reality lies beyond the capabilities of rational thought" (Zukav, 1979, p. 38). Our desire to observe and measure in an exclusively logical and linear fashion is an impossible task and no longer appropriate for today's world. The very nature of the universe

makes it infeasible to predict how an idea will unfold. As soon as we begin to question, to probe, the idea changes. "What we observe is not nature itself," Heisenburg states, "but nature exposed to our method of questioning" (in Saltz, 1990, p. 392). "There is no way of looking at the forest except by the light of our own reason, and this light determines the particular kind of forest seen" (Pearce, 1971, p. 133).

Logical methods by necessity make up a portion of our inquiry process, but it is the acceptance of the light of our own reason, found through the aesthetic domain and afforded equal stature in constructing knowledge, that permits a new, more meaningful vision of excellence to shine. The knowledge that emerges from the reappraisal of excellence promises the capacity for aesthetic insights to enrich our lives and counters the inability of positivistic scientism to go beyond strictly empirical information. Consequently, the demands we put on students and the opportunities we afford them often stifle rather than develop their abilities to "see" more deeply into the world and themselves. We limit the fulfillment of the native desire to inquire and the reflective critical responses that occur in search of an inner truth that harbors meaning. The union of logical and aesthetic dimensions is necessary to produce a wholeness that transcends a short-sighted, inadequate view of excellence, and instead promotes a search for what is real, true, and beautiful in life.

The integration of aesthetic and rational knowledge

Dewey (1929) wrote that the sources of education are any part of knowledge that renders the educational process more enlightened and humane. In pursuit of true excellence, education cannot afford to overlook any facet in the construction of knowledge that brings about this state.

Following this notion, the acceptance of the union of the aesthetic and rational realms becomes imperative. The relational process in the merging of these domains considers the construction of knowledge as more than external forces imposed upon the learner. Rather, the new vision considers the power of reason, coupled with experiences in the aesthetic domain as twin forces that together become a single powerful tool of thought. Personal knowledge emerges from this force and provides opportunities for dialogue, reflection, and flexibility in experience to occur.

When these conditions exist, objective considerations coupled with subjective understanding and personal knowledge become the true harbingers of excellence.

Personal knowledge is a relational process. This pluralistic, interactive perspective offers a heuristic opportunity that "sees" with far more width and depth than our current, unidimensional, scientific view. Maxine Greene calls the inward search the ability to "possibilize" (in Purpel, 1989), to open the doors of our minds to embrace intellectual break-

> *The knowledge that emerges from the reappraisal of excellence promises the capacity for aesthetic insights to enrich our lives and counters the inability of positivistic scientism to go beyond strictly empirical information.*

throughs. This enables one to create a vision of reality from which process becomes the key element, and the only constant the quest for knowledge. It is this ability to change and grow that enriches lives, that allows us to expand our metaphors, which bring meaning to our world in order that they may become more inclusive in nature.

Combs (1982), Yonemura (in Spodek, 1988), and Spodek (1988) have all written of the importance of personal knowledge in influencing our educational practices. Specifically, Combs believes that teachers' attitudes are crucial to the effectiveness of the acts of teaching because they influence the opportunities and learning experiences children have. Ultimately "they determine how teachers behave and how successful they are likely to be in carrying out their professional tasks" (p. 3).

Spodek (1988) surmises that teachers process information as they work with children and that their actions and classroom decisions reflect their perceptions, understandings, and beliefs about the nature of reality. He purports that teachers' implicit theories are rarely shared by all, and that theories which underlie professional practice are personal in nature.

Yonemura (in Spodek, 1988) found that a teacher's personal knowledge is as important to professional practice as teacher knowledge is. Through an aware-

ness of personal ideas, values, and beliefs an understanding of the underlying basis of competent teaching comes about; consequently, we become aware that it is personal rather than scientific constructs that frame the technical worldview and influence action.

In addition, Eisner's discussion (1985a) of cognition relates directly to the understanding that the aesthetic domain and the rational intellect operate as a whole and merge into a partnership. Eisner believes cognition to be a process through which organisms achieve awareness. To engage in cognitive awareness is not simply to think of the world in terms of products; instead, it is also to be aware of the qualities of which it is constituted. The senses provide the stuff from which concepts are born; however, once this sense data is recognized our subjective interpretations provide us contact with qualities of the world based not on "objective" knowledge, but on knowledge transformed from information provided by the aesthetic domain. Through this process, a worldview of depth, clarity, and dimension emerges.

From these examples it follows that if we approach the world from beliefs other than a reductive view that encourages control, a new system founded upon an epistemology immersed in the relational nature of the rational and aesthetic domains arises. Our knowledge, transformed from its unidimensional perspective, is created from the workings of this assemblage. The rational promotes consciousness; the nonrational, from the aesthetic domain, submits to consciousness our imaginative possibilities, feelings, and intuitions, and contributes an awareness of the nuances of the activity that previously was ignored. This new plurality fosters the intimate connection between knower and known. Excellence flows from this process and enables us to understand and appreciate the connections, complexities, and ramifications of the convergence of the rational and aesthetic basis of our knowledge. From this perspective we comprehend how we come to know and the implications inherent in this knowing.

This new conceptualization of excellence results in a transformational process. Reality emerges as a dynamic structure, a continuous synergistic unit that ultimately redefines the mission of education. Salient to this notion is the third image of Eric Jantsch's (in Haggerson, 1988) stream metaphor. The educational process in this sense involves the subject as "both the source of the stream and agent, the subject and object. This image is one of changing reality" (p. 87). Learning in this manner becomes an educational experience of heightened vitality (Dewey, 1958), as opposed to an act of reconstructed doing. Here, we enter into relationships where being is constituted by becoming (Oliver, 1989). Thus, a simple event touched by the conditions of its being opens paths of complexity in its becoming that reflect new vistas and evolve into patterns that mirror the complexities of reality. From this, curricular decisions, of both students and teachers, are concerned less with beginning and end, and emphasize instead the journey. The objective of learning becomes growth oriented and invites diversity and creativity. Work undertaken from a subjective perspective guided through an internal locus of control made up of insights, intuitions, and imaginative possibilities of the aesthetic domain results in decisions that reflect grounded values and dispositions. This educational strategy promotes what Purpel (1989) believes to be the "critical and creative consciousness that contributes to the creation and vitalization of a vision of meaning" (p. 28).

This transformed vision of excellence is about looking for evolving patterns and questioning absolute reality; it brings us to the realization that there is no "My Way" that is separate from the world around us (Zukav, 1979). Instead it fosters coming to know in the educational process through the emergence of personal feeling, knowing, and doing inherent in occasions that occur when the similar joins with the dissimilar and unites at a deeper emotional level. Jantsch calls this the evolutionary paradigm. The subject shapes in her image by virtue of feeling and being an agent of evolution, "of sharing the essence of universal motion" (Jantsch, in Haggerson, 1988, p. 87). Object and subject flow together in an evolutionary approach that empowers their unity.

Emergent aspects of reality

The purpose of any educational endeavor is the construction of knowledge. How we construct that knowledge is essential to the final form produced. When we look at the experience as a unification of logic and aesthetic, an active, spiritual, emotional and open-ended process, we emancipate the desire for knowledge. The new paradigm embraces this belief. It deals not with knowledge in the traditional sense, but with knowledge that begins as imagination, vague sensibilities, feelings, inarticulate thoughts (Oliver, 1990). This knowing is more than a

collection of inert facts; rather, based in Polanyi's (1966) tacit dimension, the process of indwelling born through logic and aesthetic, it grasps the parts and molds them into a comprehensive whole. From this emerges a three dimensional form that stores and later re-creates and evolves into a holographic image which perpetually reflects the kaleidoscopic process of becoming. Excellence in education requires that curriculum reflect an understanding of the interdependent, fluid relationships between these two essential parts of coming to know — the rational and nonrational that organize experiences into emerging aspects of reality.

Knowledge from this perspective is not passive; rather, it is an active process that promotes the activ-

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The new paradigm ... deals not with knowledge in the traditional sense, but with knowledge that begins as imagination, vague sensibilities, feelings, inarticulate thoughts.

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ity of thought Whitehead (1929) believed encompassed education: "What education has to impart is an intimate sense of the power of ideas for the beauty of ideas" (p. 18). Whitehead rejected the belief that the imposition of "inert facts" constituted education. By looking at knowledge not as inert fragments but as a means through which insights from the aesthetic and rational domains emerge and intertwine to color experience, one gains the ability to heighten sensitivity and encourage flexibility of thought in creation. This presents a broadened perspective that renders our understandings more enlightened. Thus, from the ability to "know," through reason and the aesthetic domain, separately and together, one gains deeper insight into the important relationship between what we know and think, do and say.

Plurality of perspective

The new paradigm's heightened sensitivity to new forms of reality brings about basic alterations in the manner in which we view truth. Aesthetic insights into the tacit foundation of knowledge are the base upon which human values arise. They are either explicitly or implicitly a map of the nature of reality and are what comprises our roles. Education is a conveyor of this truth and plays a vital part in what

we perceive to be of value. A shift in human views of reality and self forces change in our beliefs about truth. Thus, rational thought and observation alone can never construct truth in the new order. This assumption of truth mirrors the reductionist view of the world. Instead, a consideration of all systems and their interrelations as they flow together provides a coherent framework from which we may find more appropriate truths for mankind. As Bohm and Prigogine expressed, we must speak of an ecology of particles, where new forms transcend their components (in Schwartz & Ogilvy, 1979). In education, we must shift from the idea of one truth toward belief in the plurality of perspective, that there may be myriad truths, and alternative ways of knowing.

Truth from this relational perspective does not mean that educators "have relinquished their capacity to choose ... and succumbed to the bottomless pit of relativism" (Eisner, 1983, p. 13). Rather, the relational process that gives rise to plurality of perspective allows educators to assess the knowledge gained from the union of the rational and aesthetic domains, drawing conclusions, making judgements and determinations on coherence and value of beliefs, and looking for alternatives that better meet our needs (Eisner). Truth conceived in this manner will not be explored through the strictly empirical grounds of positivistic science, but offers a wider perspective in which to gain knowledge about the world. Consequently, truth is no longer tied to a particular context that offers sanctions for the reprehensible deeds of humanity or to the limited domain of "that which works." Instead, relational perspectives of truth extend far beyond to the realm of unlimited potential, where it promises to bring greater understanding, congruence, and symmetry to our construction of knowledge.

Speculative and practical knowledge

Two types of knowledge frame the multiplicity of approaches to truth. Schools pursue the factual, verified by logic, and scientific methods, but disregard the knowledge of understanding, the intuitive feeling aroused when we contemplate some distant event or try to empathize with another human being. Maritain (1953) speaks of these as speculative and practical knowledge. Practical knowledge acquired through rational processes offers clarification and

enlightenment of purpose. It directs thought toward an immediate method of action for attainment of an end. Speculative knowledge is demand for freedom of thought that seeks complete understanding. Born of the aesthetic domain, it is knowing through inclination, inspiration, or imagination; it is looking at and relying on inner bents or emotions in the creation of reality.

> Emotion raised to the level of intellect through which reality is grasped becomes a determining means, an instrumental vehicle through which the things which have impressed this emotion on the soul, and the deeper invisible things that are contained in them or connected with them, and which have ineffable correspondence or coaptation with the soul thus affected and which resound in it are grasped and known. (Maritain, 1953, p. 123)

Thus, the quest for truth in an educational system characterized by the transformative process involves that which is emergent from an interconnected reality, based in the aesthetic domain, influenced by values, and defined through participation and direct experience. From this creativity of spirit forms a subjective–objective ontology. "The essential need for the individual is to create, but he cannot do so without passing through the door of knowing of his own subjectivity. This is inseparable from the grasping of objective reality of outer and inner world" (Maritain, 1953, p. 115). Truth derived from knowledge formed in this manner is reborn in our imagination and projects into life our emotions and perceptions that are integral parts of human experience; consequently, we gain greater awareness and ability to understand the totality of the universe and ourselves as part of that entity.

Ecological perspectives

The regard we hold for the totality of the universe mirrors our aesthetic insights. It reflects the manner in which we embrace an ecological spirit, resulting in participation in dynamic relationships. This process called "worldmaking" involves "learning in the widest sense" and culminates in the understanding that reality, organized around the concept of self and nature as relational aspects, has a common formative purpose (Cobb, 1977, p. 66). In education as an evolutionary process, we come to understand that the learner is also an open system, interacting with the environment, integrating, reordering his worldview, to incorporate the new.

The creation of a world image is ultimately a search for form. To produce form, a product of one's own inventiveness, is the central aim of personal knowledge construction (Eisner, 1985c). The adherence to a transformational philosophy for education ensures that the form created is not an ends-in-view, single-minded proposition, but rather a mind's eye view held as an image (Eisner, 1985b). The holographic figure is an appropriate metaphor for producing such a form because it adds a dynamic quality to the process. The information that resides in all parts of the image creates a vast network of patterns characterized by complexity and mutual causality. With these conditions exist the ingredients for qualitative change, where new structures arise out of the old. Form seen as a multidimensional structure, produced through knowledge derived from the conjunction of rational processes and the aesthetic elevates the creation to the status of true excellence.

The acknowledgment of the unified plurality in the construction of knowledge and our knowing is central to the commitment of true change in education. The traditional unidimensional view of knowledge is no longer appropriate to measure excellence and success. This obsolete viewpoint diminishes the learning process and thwarts excellence through prescriptions that shackle our efforts to use our innate logical and intuitive abilities in the construction of our world. A shift in humanity's image of reality and self demands the acknowledgment of the aesthetic domain with the logical process in knowledge construction. This dimension acts as an "inner ear and eye" and makes available the vast reservoir of our tacit understandings (Noddings & Shore, 1984). It also presents the moral dimension that implies responsibility for the consequences of action. These insights from the aesthetic domain offer a new perspective, what Pearce (1971) calls an "autistic process", Eisner (1985b) believes is the "educational imagination," and Dewey labeled "flexible purposing" (in Eisner, 1985b), that acts on all possibilities. It is lateral thinking intertwined with the horizontal or logical in the construction of knowledge that inspires new ideas and ultimately offers a transformed reality. It is here that we meet with excellence.

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Book Review

The Educational Messiah Complex: American Faith in the Culturally Redemptive Power of Schooling

by Sanford W. Reitman

Published by Caddo Gap Press (3145 Geary Blvd., Suite 275, San Francisco, CA 94118), 1992. 224 pp., paperback. $19.95.

Reviewed by Ron Miller

I am placing *The Educational Messiah Complex* on my list of essential readings in the social and historical foundations of American education. Author Sanford Reitman (who unfortunately died soon after completing the book) has provided a great deal of useful historical information and presented a thoughtful and illuminating reflection on the role of schooling in our culture. In particular, a section in which he has classified nine distinct educational ideologies from reactionary to radical (pp. 63–98) gives a very useful theoretical framework for understanding the social and political context of American schooling. *The Educational Messiah Complex* is a balanced, well researched, and reasoned critique of the diverse ideological purposes to which children's learning is perpetually sacrificed.

The book's major argument is that Americans tend to assign education a "narrowly utilitarian ... commodity value": Aside from educating young people, we expect schools to produce tangible social and economic benefits. Reitman correctly points out that public education has historically been used as a panacea for the nation's problems — a way of avoiding the concerted community and political engagement that is really needed to address our social ills. From the problems of mass immigration and industrialization in the nineteenth century to issues of racial desegregation, poverty, crime, drugs, and AIDS in recent times, Americans have habitually substituted school reform for social reform. Reitman explains that this faith in the deterministic efficacy of schooling has become especiall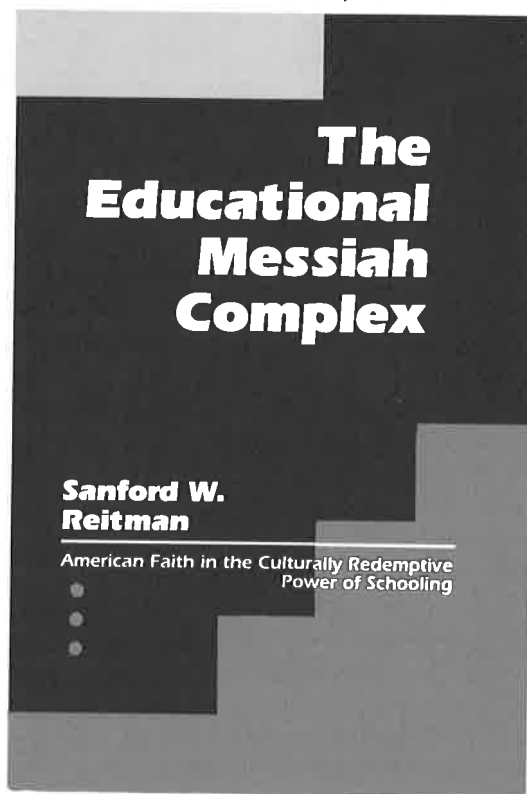y pronounced in recent decades, until it has attained the obsessive quality of a cultural "messiah complex." Americans, he says, look to their schools to bring about "collective salvation and cultural redemption" (p. 47).

Reitman observes that the expectations loaded on schooling are unreasonable and have placed undue pressure on both students and educators. He comments: "Americans constantly attempt to impose a necessarily distorted urgency and artificial rhythm on their schools and classrooms in the seemingly irrational fear that, otherwise, they will fail to 'reach' every last student." (pp. 23–24). Clearly the corporate/government agenda of educational "excellence" for increasing economic productivity continues to harness the educational process to narrowly utilitarian social ends, and subjects students and teachers alike to the impersonal, relentless demand for "accountability." Reitman compares the stress experienced in American schools with the far more relaxed atmosphere he observed in schools in Israel. (He does not, however, consider Japanese education, which is even more stressful than ours.)

Through much of the book, Reitman adopts a cool, clinical, and sometimes cynical perspective on the various educational ideologies he considers. At times his analysis is too clinical, as in his explanation (pp. 103–119) that educational messianism is a psychological "displacement syndrome," and particularly in his attempt to portray educational theorists as "rootless and marginal men and women with a mission in life" (p. 114). But at least he is not a partisan and is able to give each viewpoint a fair hearing. Indeed, he demonstrates that radicals and conservatives are equally guilty of promoting the "educational messiah complex": "The left imagines that the institution's redemptive role is to foster one or another version of social democracy, while the right wants the schools to bring back the economic, political and social norms of the eighteenth or nineteenth century, dressed up in the cosmopolitan style of the computerized late twentieth century" (p. 59). The key point here is that education is conceived in purely social terms, accord-

ing to the prevailing ideology of the moment, rather than being understood as a meaningful process of engagement between learner and world. Reitman points out that education-as-social-panacea shifts responsibility for learning from the student to the system, and he laments that today's students are increasingly passive and dependent.

While his critique of the "educational messiah complex" transcends the ideological spectrum, Reitman's personal orientation toward Deweyan democratic liberalism does come through in a few pointed observations; he states, for example, that "many Americans are outspokenly conservative to reactionary in their thinking about education" (p. 2) and labels the dominant American educational ideology "Human Engineering" (p. 63). He clearly wants schools to be humane, person-centered places that play their proper, limited role in achieving a decent, caring, democratic society. He speaks of the teacher as a creative artist and schools as "centers of artistic activity" (p. 176). So in a broad sense he is on the side of holistic educators, opposed to the authoritarian, technocratic tendencies of modern schooling.

In his chapter on four possible future scenarios if educational messianism continues to supplant purposeful community activity, the author makes it clear that the stakes are high — a decline into fascism is a real possibility. "History informs us," he says, "that without a central purpose in life to live for on a sustained basis ... people cannot long endure as vital and compassionate human beings. Few Americans today do, in fact, possess such a central purpose to organize their lives.... In short, the fabric of American culture is already disintegrating" (pp. 149, 150). This chapter presents a blunt critique of the greed and the denial of social and community responsibility that characterize American society in the 1980s and 1990s. The closing chapter of the book lays out the author's largely Deweyan vision of a democratic problem-solving community. There are some fine passages here about the nature of an inclusive, interdependent community life.

Holistic educators have much to learn from this book. Reitman's approach is holistic in its recognition that schooling takes place in a larger community ecology, and he warns us that schools cannot take the place of a healthy community life. Our desire to transform schools must take account of the social, political, and economic context of education; it is doubtful that we can meaningfully revitalize the educational system so long as the larger culture continues to rot. To the extent that holistic educators attempt to solve complex cultural, social, political, and economic problems through education, we, too, are guilty of a messianic educational agenda.

But ultimately I think Reitman's conception of education's role in culture is too limited. Reitman's view of education — "to help receptive students learn whatever it is that schools determine is normatively appropriate and pragmatically feasible to incorporate in specialized curricula — no more, no less" (p. 128) — is severely minimalist. It is hard to imagine education being anything less, and holistic educators, even steering clear of a messianic urge to save society through schooling, believe that the pressing cultural, moral, and existential questions of our age require a great deal more from the learning process.

Because he completely overlooks the global/ecological/spiritual worldview that is emerging in response to post-Newtonian science, the environmental crisis, global communications, and advanced technology, Reitman can only caricature holistic education as a romantic — and messianic — effort to produce "creative self-reliance." His ideological categories of "Therapeutic Interaction" and "Education as Anarchy" are useful for describing some of the elements of holistic education, but fail to fathom its philosophical depth. Holistic theorists and educators argue that the present planetary crisis requires new, deeper understandings of the educational process which address emotions, imagination, spirituality, and the human being's organic connection to Nature. It is simply asking too little of education to be concerned only with "seeking and transmitting knowledge and knowledge-acquiring skills" and developing abilities "to speak, listen, argue and discuss" (p. 171).

In the book's conclusion, Reitman proposes that a system of vouchers or tuition tax credits would dispel the educational messiah complex because parental choice would break up the public school monopoly, restore educational responsibility to citizens, and enable teachers to practice the artistry of their profession rather than serve narrow ideological agendas. There is much merit in this prescription, but I found this conclusion to be somewhat anticlimactic; after such a thorough (and in many ways passionate) description of the cultural disintegration that is at the root of American education's malaise, proposing a voucher plan seems like a tepid response, reflecting Reitman's minimalist conception of education. Instead, I propose a moral and cultural vision that can call forth our highest values — justice, peace, respect for diversity and personhood, and reverence for all life. Reitman probably would have considered this holistic vision to be yet another ideological agenda, but I am convinced that the crisis of our age calls for a radical reconceptualization of both education and the culture at large.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I thank Ron Miller for the generous words of praise in the review of my book *Dumbing Us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling* and at the same time am sending along some brief comments, in the spirit of the dialectic, about the "fundamental issue" (Ron's characterization) he finds at stake in my perspective.

To begin, some amendments are necessary. Ron says I hold and defend a libertarian social philosophy. While I have an approximate idea what he means by that, I live in horror of any labels (including, to be frank, "holistic") that box people in. My own observation of reality is that classification systems should not be taken seriously — they interfere with clear thought and virtually prevent discovery when they go beyond casual convenience. Having said that, let me classify myself more accurately than Ron did: The social philosophy I hold is a hybrid of Scotch-Irish folkways, Italian *Presbyterian* iconoclasm, some aristocratic seasoning (we were Lords of the Straits of Messina in the 13th century), a certain amount of classical training, a year spent with the Jesuits, a spell as altar boy for a wonderful priest who drank sacramental wine and played baseball (the Catholic strain through my Irish/German grandmother), and three decades of constant experimentation as a junior high teacher of both the near-rich and the dirt poor. Those are the external influences of substance, internally I've tried to push beyond the conditioned circuitry to discover the perimeter of my own singularity. Still finding things out at 57. Calling me a libertarian would eventually mislead you. On the other hand I *like* most libertarians I know of (Robert Ringer being one exception, Ayn Rand another), but I could say the same of most capital "C" conservatives, too.

In an understandable urge to establish the poles of dialectic, Ron accidentally sets me up as inhabiting a location I don't live in, and misstates some of my positions. I understand the realities of book reviewing and

take no offense (in his position I would hardly have done as well) but in a contest of ideas it's crucial that all parties agree what ideas are actually being contested.

In his first assertion, that I argue common social good arises *only* out of free interaction of individuals and intimate communities he's about 95% accurate but the premise is an exceedingly complicated one requiring years of Jesuitical reflection to comes to terms with. I *expect* argument, of course, but in its nature it isn't a *debating* point but a tool designed to help people challenge their own assumptions. Challenge, that is, not necessarily discard. In the coda of this assertion Ron makes — that I believe individuals and families are the primary human reality — he is only a bit better than half right. The largest omission is the importance of nature and location. I regard the fabric of the natural world, *unaltered,* as a central part of sanity. Not a minor part, not a dismissable part, not an exchangeable part, not an amenity, but one of the few primary *essences.* In my codebook people without places are incompletely human, to move frequently is to display derangement. That accounts for the essay, "The Green Monongahela." It's in my book to demonstrate the role of place as a teacher. I am who I am because of Monongahela. If my place had been Erie I would not be who I am. I won't belabor what must seem to most "well-schooled" Americans an eccentricity, but most of human history including the best part honored this very conservative idea and lived it. The tale of Jews in history is inexplicable unless it is seen in some important part as the story of a people deprived of their place; the tale of America and its strangely Procrustean institutions is another story from the same genre.

However if Ron had said individual and families and rocks/trees/water/air/places are the primary human reality, he'd have been nearly right. If he'd have added our mortality and relation to the mystery we call God, completely right. But in his leap to a guess I think something he calls

"social forces" are a "distressing nuisance," he falls far short of where I really am. It's my turn now to guess, and if I guess correctly what he means by *social forces,* then "nuisance" doesn't begin to describe the distaste I feel. Substitute "horrifying psychopathology" and we'll be closer to the truth. People who mind other people's business, materially, in any arbitrary way are always bad news. It's the movers and shakers, I mean, the "great" names of history. It would be impossible for me, in a short compass, to explain adequately how damaging the Pasteurs, the Copernicuses, the Columbus's, the Newtons, the Horace Manns and all the rest of the Egyptian hierarchy has really been, but the mechanism is not hard to see — each of these men (and of course they are all men, mostly childless men) short circuits the human dialectic, arrogating to themselves a false and morally corrosive authority that *creates* the dependent human mass it then "illuminates." I would follow Paul Valery's M. le Teste in throwing the mass of prominent men in the ocean. The brilliant, and as yet largely unseen, American homeschooling movement is brilliant precisely because it is leaderless, lacking canonical texts, experts, and laws. At the moment true leadership emerges — which I pray will not happen — it will be co-opted, and the movement regimented, routinized, drained of its life.

I despair in the short time I have with you of explaining adequately these contentions but let me go at least a part of the distance: Short of preserving your immediate world the only justification possible, moral justification, that is, for interfering in someone else's life is that *you* know more than the other fellow does and are "intervening" (that's the "helping profession" jargon, isn't it?) "for his own good."

I reject that view in the overwhelming percentage of cases, believing with cause that the mathematical bell curve in human intelligence is a bald lie, albeit an exceedingly profitable one. What is good or bad is either a religious ques-

tion or a philosophical one and not easily addressed — never by creating a demonology that relegates any individual into a *mass* than is managed for its own good. It might shed some light on that last conclusion by confessing I was deeply depressed by Jonathan Kozol's contention that money would improve the schools of the poor. It would *not*, any more than money has improved the schools of the middle class. What money has done is to dehumanize *most* of the lives it touches, not least those in the sinecures of academia; nor could it be expected to do better in the hands of any other group than the present government gang. What Kozol accomplished is truly depressing — by transmuting his wonderful rage into a nasty, envious petulance, he has called attention away from his hard-won, and well-deserved role as a biographer of human Justice. All synthetic mobilizations must similarly be exercise in pen and pencil abstraction, or cynical exercises in manipulation, or display a fatal gulf between fecund natural reality and the reductionism inherent in collectivizing it.

This is a subtle thing to consider: on one hand, the best way is hands-off anything outside a local reach (the architects of "global community," who date back before Plato, are the single great manifestation of Evil in human affairs), but not minds-off. I think we have an absolute obligation to preach to each other, chide each other, praise and condemn each other, take hold of hands held out for help — in Vonnegut's words, if you are no use you must be useless. I believe that, I taught that, and as a toll for associating with my classes through much of my teaching career I demanded a full day's community service work each week. If kids freely chose to associate with me, the price of our association was community service (which I encouraged kids to self-design). I hope you can see the difference between this kind of compulsion and the kind that social engineers effect.

The immense danger which inevitably comes to pass when you set up social machinery compelling people to be "better" is that that machinery will be inherited by people whose "better" is your own "worse." Jefferson saw that in imploring our original legislators to give us a weak central government. Were it not for the unholy and largely unexamined close relationships between Germany (especially the synthetic state of Prussia) and the colonial and federal leadership classes, we might have followed Jefferson's prescription. Certainly it was the overwhelming choice of the common people here. But the curious company of Deists and Unitarians who pulled (pull?) the national strings were too enchanted with Adam Weishaupt's vision, and too intoxicated with victory and prosperity; too vicariously identified with the lessons of Frederick the Great, Prussian compulsion schools, research universities, and ultimately the deadly worldview of Wilhelm Wundt to allow the nascent urges of freedom and democracy to develop. By 1850 both were stone cold dead. We have only a memory of our stillborn democracy.

There is no way to avoid the passage of effective social machinery into dirty hands, that is what history teaches to anyone with eyes. The only way to avoid this, the best defense, is to strike down ambitious organization before it grows (Cassius was right) or once grown, to combat it through relentless sabotage. That is what I did on a daily basis as a government schoolteacher, I broke the machine, I threw sand in the gears, I falsified papers, spread dissension among new recruits so subtly it was undetectable, broke laws regularly, destroyed records, undermined the confidence of the young in the institution and replaced it with confidence in self, in friends, in family, in neighborhood. I taught kids how to cheat their destiny so successfully that they created an astonishing record of successes; it is this latter course of silent warfare that much of our country's population has unconsciously chosen. It explains why few things work very well here, least of all schools. Nothing that John Gardner or Ted Sizer or (so far) Chris Whittle has done will change that need to sabotage the web that is strangling us. They ask the wrong questions and in any case would be unwilling to accept their own large contribution to the persistence of schooling problems. All sane solutions would eliminate them!

The only acceptable way to make people "better," your own children or strangers, is by your own personal living example to make a better way. The only curricular arrangements worth arranging are those that help an individual, not a class: (1) to know himself, (2) to love responsibility, (3) to feel obligation as a joy, (4) to need very little in a material sense, (5) to express love, (6) to love truth, (7) to hate tyranny, (8) to gain useful knowledge, (9) to be involved in loving families at work, (10) to be involved in communities at work, and (11) to be humble in the face of the great mysteries, and to keep them constantly in mind because *only* from that wellhead does the meaning of life flow.

As a schoolteacher/saboteur I was able to help poor kids come to see such things just as easily as I was able to help prosperous ones; with a modest income I was able to finance all my classroom enterprises without assistance from foundations, universities, the business community, or the school administration — and so could anyone else so disposed.

Now to turn to a charge Ron makes honestly, but upon examination dissolves into smoke:

> Gatto throws the baby out with the bathwater by categorically defining "school" as an impersonal network and virtually equating educators and activists with social engineers.

There's a lot of slipperiness here: Does "educator" mean schoolteacher? Do the activists Ron refers to have an agenda to eventually gain control of our compulsion-schools? If both guesses are correct, then he is right, I do believe they are social engineers of the worst stripe. But perhaps he means something different.

How in the name of Heaven can "school," in any of the varieties of definition possible *for mass employment by a central government,* NOT be an impersonal network? Can you *school* anything "personally?" I know you can fake it, most "good" schools do, but I find the really dangerous places to be the ones that preempt the family role, pretending to be families instead of networks; that's the horrible lesson I try to read in the chapter "We Need Less School, Not More." We're all dying of networks. Networks are *not* families. Pseudo-fam-

ily schools confuse the rising gorge of their student prisoners for a long time (although never permanently, the disguise wears through). If you find my "prisoner" to be infamous rhetoric, then you're going to have to explain to me the social logic that allows you to use the police power of the state to command children's presence and respect, to preempt their daylight hours, to prescribe what they will think about, to judge them constantly and rank them.

It makes no sense to me to drain children from a living community and confine them with strangers for all of their natural youth. No sense from a human community perspective, that is. It seems to make great sense, of course, to minds that wallow in dreams of human life as an anthill or a beehive, the great world society crowd. And of course, too, though we seldom talk about it be-
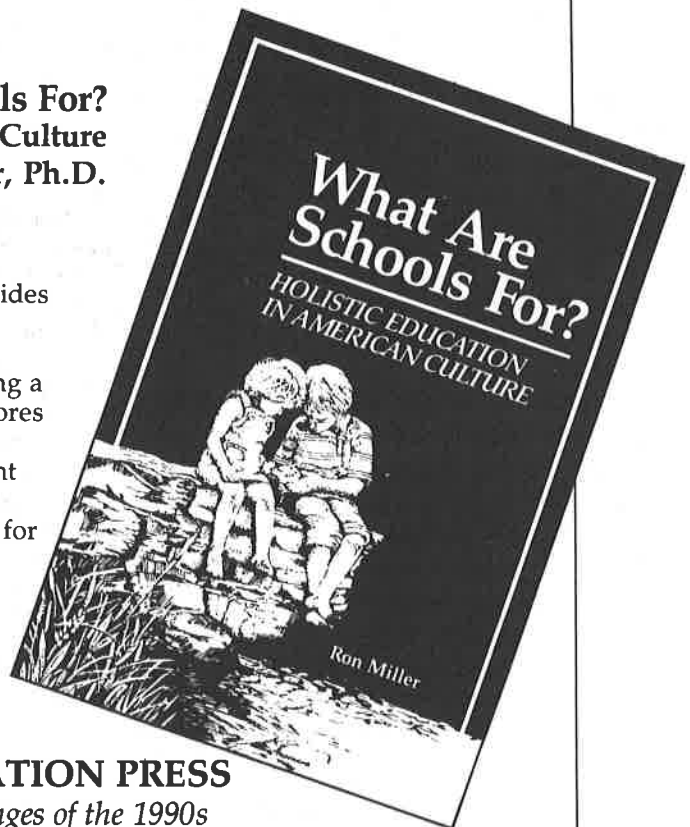
cause the prospect leaves us dumbfounded, it makes great sense to those still-free, if mean-spirited, minds who benefit substantially from the docile, confused population that central planning leaves in its wake. That great, timeless families, who follow a different directive than the progressive one, have taken advantage of — indeed are imperfectly in charge of — the movement toward the nightmare of a global society seems to me not only beyond question, but the only conservative explanation of a crescendo of anomalies. For those who read these words who might be intrigued by this admission of madness, a little research into the utterly central role of family foundations in giving us the schools we have — a role curiously overlooked by school histories, or dealt with *en passant* — will, I guarantee, reward the time spent with numerous marvels.

Back to business. Once you claim for your cause the sweeping power of compelling mass behavior, you have forfeited any claim at all to moral ground in my book. This is the rock on which all holistic ships founder, Rousseau's, Froebel's, Fichte,'s *et al.* You are practicing religion, then, and you are engaged in a holy war. I would imagine that nobody in 1992 is so naive not to recognize that the religion of our schools, since their inception, has been the Unitarian faith, but I am constantly disappointed. I may be misreading the conclusion of Ron's review: if you publicly disavow any right to assume control of the compulsion machinery, Ron, including those exquisite controls Jacques Ellul discusses in his wonderful book, *Propaganda*, I hope God smiles on your undertakings; but keep compulsion and it's hard for me not to regard cynically *any* justifica-

tion which might be offered. Convincing me to accept your religion is legitimate and dialectical, forcing me to do so or tricking me into it is so vile that disdain or violence is the proper response.

There's much more at stake here than a little old-fashioned coercion — one-party systems are always corrupt, that is a fundamental truth of human nature. Eric Hoffer's *True Believer* was a turning point in my own life, however invested I seem to be here in my screed. In my view the only consensus ever valid is that consensus that arises slowly, painfully, naturally from millennial combats. Such consensus at its heart is a challenge to the premises of rationality, it cannot be hurried, cannot be hastened by Mind or Directives, by the Associations that John Dewey so loved. It contradicts the premises of the academic life as Francis Bacon conceived it, in service to the Central State. Such a belief calls for the destruction of Salomon's House as an unsurpassed agency of harm. Again, if you regard this as airy rhetoric, look about you at the cities and the natural world that Salomon's House, the haunt of the social engineers, has given us. I don't need to recite the dreary catalogue, use your own eyes and ears. What got us into the mess won't get us out in the immortal words of Nixon's "Checkers" speech.

Such consensus assumes a timeless wisdom that realizes a scale of historical process much vaster than the scale of human life. One of the instrumental advantages of a belief in Family, God and Immortality is that it allows such a stepping back from the social arena that spans one's life. It's not hard for me to understand that Ron — or any other activist interested in collective action — wants to see substantial change in the span of his own years. But from my view, all such forced changes are doomed to cause harm, regardless of how beneficentally they are conceived.

Such consensus at its heart is sui generis, exclusionary in the early part of the going, relatively local, slow spreading. The revolution that produced the Chinese peasantry or American native cultures is an example of the historical process in action at its finest — the human solutions in both cases are transcendentally brilliant, inspiring, funny, wonderful. Neither was fully worked out when they were destroyed by the demon of Western homelessness which sent European pirates and their slaves intervening in every laboratory of human life on the planet. That thousand-year destructive swath, currently managed by an academic service class, a secular priesthood, and protected by compulsion schooling, is what I write about in *Dumbing Us Down*, however indirectly. To dispossess the magical human possibilities underlying the appearance of Indians and Chinese, Queeg-Queeg and Dagoo, and replace these infinitely complex processes with a monochrome utopia is the act of a lunatic or a desperate man. All remote assignments of children's time and attention must, as I've said, be grounded in a vision of the good life, by its nature unprovable, by its nature religious at the core.

To the extent Puritan vision was that of a world order, it was diseased and murderous, but genius implicit in the Congregational *mechanism,* by a wonderful irony (which unfortunately became obvious over time to Unitarians) is so relentlessly *local,* so unmistakably *personal,* it sabotaged the global vision of Calvinism right from the beginning. It is a fascinating paradox never examined to my knowledge by academic scholarship and it is the real point I explore in "The Congregational Principle" (first published in *Maine Scholar*).

It wasn't "something mysterious" inside the structure of Congregationalism in any sense like Adam Smith's "magic hand" to use Ron's phrases in the area where he goes farthest astray, it was one of the great fundamental discoveries of human social genius. What *is* mysterious is how it ever came into being — and sustained itself until the Unitarians destroyed it — right under the noses of the very social engineers who were giving New England its global economic mission. In Marx's felicitous locution, it illustrates strikingly the ignorant perfection of ordinary people, a perfection which is really the guiding inspiration of my teaching, my book, and my life. I learned the lesson from Monongahela, a town of ordinary people who perfected a community and the secret of meaning.

I was not "asserting" that colonists enjoyed nearly unconditional local choice, in point of fact that *truth* is built right into the structure of Congregationalism which *demands* that no two communities be alike, that all be rigorously tuned to that single congregation. *Mirabile dictu,* I grow weak with the joy of merely *saying* it! You have choice because there are choices to have under a Congregational system — under a Unitarian system there are none. The confusion here arose, I would guess, because Ron misread individual choice where specifically I meant *local* choice. Choice by local consensus. However, it isn't too long a reach to argue that individual choice had to be there, too, because of the boundless dark woods, the many different states available, (each independent in its culture), and always, too, the frontier. The sarcastic among you will say, "Some choice if I have to move out!" but consider first that even that option isn't available today in the Theocracy of Unitarianism, and consider, too, that moving out is as just a choice as human affairs offers: would that we still had it. If the global people get their way we're not even going to be able to move abroad — every place will be here. Then we will have arrived at the Utopia of social engineering, where everyone has to be "adjusted" to fit the pre-conceived model. Naturally a liberal interpretation will allow a 10% deviation either way from True North to accommodate human error economically.

For a wonderful example of human courage in just such a rigidly moralistic society as Ron characterizes New England to be, and what individual human courage can accomplish, see Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* where the elders plan to take little Pearl from her mother, the letter-bearer, and she — alone and friendless, poor and ignorant — says starkly, "... over my dead body!" So much for that batch of social engineers with the power of the state behind them.

My point is that *only* by trusting ordinary people thoroughly and *only* by emphasizing the individual, the family, the neighborhood, the local economy, can we slowly win through

to a better life. All synthetic schemes radically distort the only *slightly* plastic material of humanity, all of them are impious, all rob the future in many ways, none *work* for very long — see official human history for evidence. All leave the world worse at their dissolution than before they found it. The Progressives are right, there *has* been a progression through recorded history, but it has been a progression *backwards* — just as Plato said it had been. We might mark the decline symbolically from the time the invisible labor engine was fabricated to build the Great Pyramid, an event strangely commemorated on the back of our dollar bill, though no one can produce an adequate explanation why. Disraeli knew, I think, but he spoke about it in riddles.

So what to do with the strong human impulse to meedle, to tinker, to dominate, to improve, to not accept destiny? Well, my own answer is to do what you personally can, and suffer what you personally must. Accept the punishment of Prometheus if you want to play the part. And do I think you *should* play the part? Yes, of course, I've tried to myself all my adult life, but the other side of that dialectic is that I also believe that brilliant and beautiful lives are possible everywhere, under any duress or deprivation, as long as you see clearly what really matters.

Now what scares me a little about Ron's conclusion is that he, toward the end, seems to be calling some sort of invisible army together for mass social engineering projects. He says, "we simply do not have 200 years to wait for some "invisible hand" to begin addressing these tremendous issues, "to lead" individuals and families and "self-satisfied" little communities, etc. OK, there seem to be two lines leading out from that: one, that we act locally with like-minded people and try to convince the rest, and two, that we seize control of the apparatus and do it differently. I'd be with him on number one, and I'd cheer him on on number two if he led a *small guerilla band* in some boldly suicidal stroke. But change one master for another? Nope. Ron asks how the free market would provide educational opportunity for poor children, and the answer is that that is the wrong question. Of course the "market" can't do anything but act as a field for action, its a necessary pre-condition for solutions but in and of itself it's neutral. But government action is never neutral and cannot be — it must impose one or another religious view of the good life on everybody. And that is a pre-condition for bad things to happen, most often immediately, but also frequently when the second generation of zealots inherit the compulsion machinery and the police force. And even zealots are preferable to bureaucrats, who are the likeliest heirs.

This response has been a quick, spontaneous draft. I wish there were time to spend on creating a careful answer to some of the points Ron raises but there isn't, so this is the best I can do. I'd ask him and all your readers to carefully examine one huge unstated assumption that deeply disturbs me, namely that government schools have *ever* merited the term "public," implying a service to the commonality. This is based on such specious reasoning, and such a peculiar definition of what the public is, that it won't bear scrutiny. These are *not* public schools we are talking about, they are government schools — as much different from public as flowers are from weeds.

Indeed, that there is a "public" at all except in the bizarre fantasy of utopians and Deweyists and positivists of all stripes is something that merits careful consideration before reflexively accepting its existence. As a western Pennsylvanian I find the term more than mildly insulting. A cartoon of reality. The forces that oppress the public, to borrow some of Ron's language, are the forces that rob it of its right of self-determination — without which people cannot be principals, but only agents (or "educators").

Anyway, the dishes aren't washed, the shirts aren't ironed, a colony of ants has taken up residence in my bedroom, and I've got to fly to Spokane tomorrow morning to tell people why I think a schooling, any flavor, can't be an education. Deconstruct these synthetic institutions, the machinery is a constant temptation to the worst people on the planet to scheme for its control. As I read history they always win in the long run. But ah, if we broke the machinery...?

Sign me,
John Taylor Gatto

Dear Jeffrey Kane:
Welcome to your new position as editor of the *Review*. You have my good wishes for success in this important task.

In a spirit of friendly challenge, and to encourage you in the right direction, I ask that you increase the number of contributions by female authors. Your first two issues (Spring and Summer 1992) carried a total of 25 articles and book reviews, by my count. Two of these were authored by women. This low proportion is unconscionable when one considers the large percentage of females in U.S. education, to say nothing of the importance to holistic education of women's ways of knowing.

A quick look at the articles in the *Review* in 1991 (the last volume edited by Ron Miller) reveals that almost one-third were authored by women. That was not enough, in my judgment, but better than your batting average to date.

Please give us, your readers, an assurance of your commitment to encouraging the female voice.

Sincerely,
Dr. John Broomfield

Response from the Editor:
Thank you for your letter regarding *Holistic Education Review*.

In response to your concern about the low number of contributing female authors, I must say that I share your concern. I have been disappointed with how few women have either submitted articles for review or agreed, upon request, to write an article.

In my capacity as Editor, I have begun to increase my efforts to find female authors. However, it is essential to keep in mind that the *Review* has instituted a blind peer-evaluation process wherein the sex of the author is not an appropriate consideration.