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Can Schools Help Create a Post-Capitalist World?

Gregory A. Smith

A traditional curriculum predicated on contemporary ways of thinking about people and the planet offers little guidance for the kinds of challenges and uncertainties that are coming to characterize our everyday lives.

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We live in an era in which the educational system in the United States seems increasingly removed from the drift of global events. Educational leaders from the Department of Education and the Council of Chief State School Officers to district superintendents and building principals are preoccupied with accountability and a drive to raise scores on standardized tests that have little to do with the varied economic, socio-political, or environmental challenges currently facing humanity. In a rush to maintain U.S. economic pre-eminence, little attention in educational circles is directed toward the way that corporate leaders have been hollowing out our economy for decades through a combined process of automation and outsourcing that is leaving fewer and fewer family wage jobs for American citizens. Nor are most educational policymakers or scholars attending to the impact that climate change, resource exhaustion, including water scarcity and soil erosion, or the growing disparity between the rich and the poor could have — singly or collectively — on the stability of current economic and political institutions. Schools are seen as little more than the institution most responsible for preparing young people to be successful participants in an increasingly competitive global market. Yet the world that schools are supposed to be preparing young people for is precarious, something the near collapse of the economy in late 2008 and 2009 should have made clear to everyone.

It is easy to understand why this happens. Contemplating changes as vast as those needed to address present-day dilemmas threatens belief in the trajectory of progress that has motivated much human activity for the past five centuries, something few people in the West or the East are willing to consider. What confronts us now is the possibility that the assumptions undergirding modernity and the

capitalist world system, played out on a planetary scale, have become unsustainable and life-threatening. At base, the conditions for human existence have changed, primarily through our own agency, something that is calling into question the economic practices that have supported the remarkable and unprecedented growth since the 1500s. In the past, changing conditions have necessitated profound shifts in the way that human beings have provided for their basic needs. The invention of agriculture and then industrial production arose partly in response to climate change, resource exhaustion, or population pressure. Our current era could well require social, cultural, and economic transformations that are equally far-reaching.

It is time for educational policymakers and leaders to recognize that there is a fundamental mismatch between what schools are providing for young people and the future the young are likely to inhabit. Even now, the link between education and jobs has become tenuous. With the globalization of the economy as well as the educational practices that gave the United States an advantage in the decades immediately following World War II, this post-2008 trend seems only likely to continue and become more pronounced. As climate change, soil erosion, and diminished water supplies disrupt agriculture, the need to direct human intelligence and energy to even more fundamental shifts in the way human beings provide for themselves will become evident. One of the central educational necessities of this era is to prepare young people to participate in the shaping of new practices and organizations better suited to our rapidly changing circumstances.

Fortunately, millions of people across the planet are currently engaged in such activities. Their efforts, however, are rarely given much attention in schools. Paul Hawken, in his 2007 volume *Blessed Unrest*, describes their work as the largest social movement in the history of our species, but a social movement that so far has been only minimally acknowledged by the media, most governments, or the public. It is this movement that is experimenting with the alternative practices and understandings that could well be the foundation for the new institutions required to replace the increasingly moribund institutions of modernity. Rather than preparing children solely to participate in a system that is daily proving its inability to provide for the needs of most human beings while at the same time eroding the ecological foundations for life as we know it, would it not make more sense to prepare the young to become the shapers of new systems better able to meet the needs of people and the planet?

Schools as they are currently constituted, however, provide little opportunity for children and youth to gain the experiences required to take on this kind of innovative problem-solving or leadership. A traditional curriculum predicated on contemporary ways of thinking about people and the planet offers little guidance for the kinds of challenges and uncertainties that are coming to characterize our everyday lives. This is especially true when learning has been reduced to a sustained form of test preparation that focuses on decontextualized skills and knowledge generally unrelated to children's lives or experience. An education aimed at preparing people to take orders from others, complete often meaningless tasks, and consume is not likely to cultivate the forms of intelligence, responsibility, and activism demanded by the future.

However, in a small but growing number of schools in North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, educators are experimenting with approaches to teaching and learning that are preparing the young for a different kind of interaction with their society, an interaction premised on thoughtful problem-solving and participation. Grounding learning in knowledge and issues central to the health of the human and natural communities surrounding the school, these educators are finding ways to induct their students into an understanding of the interconnections that link different disciplines and phenomena, and the role citizens can play in preserving, maintaining, and restoring the integrity and stability of these communities. In doing so, they are contributing to the sustainability, resilience, and self-renewal of the social and ecological systems that undergird human welfare and security. Called place- and community-based education, this approach to education for sustainability offers young people an opportunity to gain some of the skills and understandings needed to preserve and restore these systems, to resist people, policies, and practices that threaten them, and to invent new ways of interacting with one another

and the earth that promise to be less exploitive and destructive than the policies and practices that have come to characterize modernity and capitalism in most developed and developing countries.

In what follows I will explore in more detail the assertion that industrial civilizations are in the midst of a crisis that will bring with it significant threats to human welfare but at the same time opportunities for innovation as previously stable institutions become less able to meet fundamental human needs. Next, I will discuss the wide range of innovative activities that are beginning to emerge across the planet, activities which suggest that unlike Margaret Thatcher's assertion that there is no alternative to monopoly capitalism, people everywhere are inventing new ways to restore and preserve the health of human and natural systems that hold out the promise of a more equitable and earth-friendly future. Finally, I will describe how place- and community-based education is demonstrating ways children and youth can participate in problem-solving strategies and activities that take into consideration natural limits but at the same time are committed to assuring that all planetary citizens are able to live meaningful and secure lives.

Facing the Possible End of a Growth Economy

We live within a system that is daily proving its dysfunctionality for the great majority of the planet's human residents. Eighty percent of the world's population subsists on less than ten dollars a day (Chen & Ravallion 2009); and 80% reside in countries where the division between the rich and the poor is growing (United Nations Development Program 2007). Rather than improving the welfare of human beings, what has become a globalized capitalist system is making things worse for humanity rather than better. This runs counter to the assumption first put forward by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* that the pursuit of individual self-interest would eventually improve the welfare of all. Although this assumption has time and again proven its inadequacy, during years of economic expansion like those that for many people in the developed world characterized the second half of the 20th century, it seems inarguable, an article of faith whose questioning seems nearly heretical.

Studying the operation of this system has been the lifework of Immanuel Wallerstein, a senior scholar now based at Yale University. His four-volume *The Modern World System* describes the rise of capitalism, the recurring patterns that have characterized its development, and factors that now suggest that its perspectives and processes are no longer capable of meeting human needs. For Wallerstein, one of the central characteristics of all systems is that they come into being, grow to maturity, decline, and then die. According to him, capitalism is approaching this end point.

Three conditions are now precipitating this crisis by inhibiting the achievement of the capitalist world system's primary goal: the production of a growing amount of surplus wealth that can then be reinvested in ways that result in more wealth *ad infinitum* (Li 2008; Wallerstein 2011). First, the creation of ever-increasing profits requires owners and investors to seek ways to reduce production costs by resorting to automation and the relocation of factories to regions or countries where former agricultural workers or trades people have only recently become wage earners. Although this strategy decreases production costs, consumption levels in countries that had once supported a well-paid working- or middle-class are constrained. While it is true that new markets then open up in the developing world, low-wage consumers do not have the resources needed to support the levels of consumption required to generate the profits sought by investors looking for higher amounts of return.

In an effort to sidestep this contradiction, capitalists turn their attention to the financial system where it is possible to make money without making anything at all. Despite the risks this alternative poses for the stability of the entire system because of its relationship to speculative bubbles, it became especially attractive in the early part of the 21st century when the total global money pool increased from $36 trillion in 2000 to over $70 trillion in 2006. This rapid increase in investments dollars occurred largely because of the entry of formerly underdeveloped countries like China, India, and Abu Dhabi into the global market (Blumberg & Davidson 2008). Money managers seeking safe but productive investments believed that mortgage loans promised the best returns. This resulted in more capital available than there were low-

risk people to lend to, followed by a dramatic increase in housing prices as more people gained access to the funds necessary to become homeowners. Rising home values further encouraged people who were already homeowners to take out larger loans to continue patterns of consumption no longer supportable by employment earnings. Growing indebtedness coupled with financial speculation led to the subprime lending debacle and the most serious economic collapse since the Great Depression.

This dilemma then contributes to the second contradiction, a contradiction that underlies the current stalled economic recovery. Given the absence of sufficient safe investment opportunities in the real economy in the aftermath of the 2007 crash, banks and investors are sitting on their resources, waiting for promising but safe ventures that hold out the promise of higher returns. Governments become one of the few entities capable of stimulating economic activity, but because lower production results in lower tax revenues, government investment becomes dependent on further borrowing or higher taxes, which owners and investors resist because of the impact on their already reduced profits. One of the main stimulants for the economy and accumulation of profits during downturns is thus no longer able to play the role it once did.

The third contradiction facing the capitalist world system is even more fundamental. Capitalism depends on the planet for an ongoing supply of natural resources as well as sites where wastes (including discarded products) can be deposited. The rapid expansion of humanity's productive capacity and the seven-fold increase in human population since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution are resulting in the depletion of the renewable and non-renewable resources required for industrial and agricultural production. The disposal of wastes and products linked to this production is furthermore leading to the degradation of terrestrial and marine habitats, widespread water and air pollution, and the steady buildup of carbon dioxide, methane, and other gases in the atmosphere that is resulting in climate change and ocean acidification. Resource depletion and the ecological side effects of production are thus placing additional and seemingly terminal limits on continued growth and profit-generation.

Combined, the diminished purchasing power of former well-off income earners, the diminished availability of desirable investment opportunities coupled with the reduced availability of capital for new developments, and the ecological implications of unchecked economic expansion all call into question the longevity of the capitalist world system. The answers this system once provided to economic and political decisionmakers and the general public about what is required to meet basic human needs are no longer working. During a panel discussion with Detroit-based civil rights and social justice activist Grace Lee Boggs at the US Social Forum in June 2010, Wallerstein suggested that Spain became caught in this dilemma earlier that year when its parliament voted to make draconian budget cuts in an effort to improve its credit rating. Despite this effort, Spain's rating was downgraded because the budget cuts threatened continued economic growth. As Wallerstein (2010, 18) observed,

> …what do you do if you're a government? There isn't any good thing to do, and that's what all the governments of all the world today, virtually, are facing. They don't have a good choice.

Although the absence of effective and desirable choices is not good for governments, factory owners, workers, or households, it does open up the possibility for change, especially if the fluctuations are so great that the integrity of the world system is jeopardized. Viewing our current circumstances as a structural crisis, Wallerstein predicts that the next 20 to 40 years will be a period of deep turbulence during which no one will know what to do. Both at the US Social Forum panel discussion and in the March 2011 issue of *The Monthly Review*, he spells out two trends he believes could influence whatever the future outcome may be. He associates the first with the trade ministers, corporate leaders, and economists represented by those who attend the yearly economic meetings held in Davos, Switzerland. Interested in maintaining their power and privilege, this group seems likely to reform the current system in ways that will strengthen their control over people and the production process and be tied to increased exploitation and polarization (Wallerstein 2011, 37). In his volume entitled *Sce-*

narios for the 21st Century, futurist Allen Hammond (1998) describes this possibility as "fortress world" where a smaller and smaller number of well-off people guard themselves against the vast majority of the planet's impoverished residents in the manner of self-serving medieval aristocrats.

Wallerstein associates the second of these alternatives with the activists who have been attending the meetings of the World Social Forum in places like Porto Alegre, Brazil and most recently in Dakar, Senegal. These gatherings have attracted tens of thousands of people in the aftermath of the 1999 demonstrations against the World Trade Organization in Seattle. The system they envision is characterized by democracy; egalitarianism; local self-sufficiency; an end to social inequities tied to race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation; reduced military expenditures and adventurism; and the widespread adoption of a sense of global interconnectedness and responsibility. Hammond (1998) calls this possibility the new sustainability paradigm.

During a structural crisis, it becomes impossible to determine what new system will arise. This provides the opportunities for deep structural changes that under normal circumstances would be prevented by those with the power to do so. For this reason, Wallerstein urged his listeners at the US Social Forum in Detroit to believe that each of them had the capacity in some way to influence the shape of whatever system arises after capitalism. Wallerstein compared present circumstances to the assertion by chaos theorists that something as miniscule as the flapping of a butterfly's wings can set into motion patterns of air circulation that on the other side of the world can become a hurricane. This means that regardless of their limited scope and apparent insignificance, creative initiatives enacted now may have impacts none of us can predict. In other words, all people alive today and in the coming decades have the potential of being players in the creation of a more just and ecologically sustainable future.

Inventing Alternatives

One of the most comprehensive descriptions of these emerging initiatives can be found in the 2007 volume by Paul Hawken, *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Social Movement in History is Restoring Grace, Justice, and Beauty to the World*. It includes a taxonomy of groups addressing issues that range from agriculture and farming to the greening of industry, from conservation to poverty eradication, from forestry to sustainable cities and design. Hawken's list includes forty-four broad categories often with four to six subcategories beneath each of these. When Hawken and his team began their research, they imagined there might be 35,000 to 40,000 of these organizations. When they finished, they projected a number closer to one million and possibly even two million — enough to support Hawken's claim that what is transpiring now is bigger and more widespread than any other social movement known to humankind.

Not only is this social movement large and located across the planet, it is characterized by three elements that make it unique. First, it does not possess a common ideology. Its participants are primarily motivated by a desire to restore the health of local human communities or ecosystems, but they subscribe to no single belief system. Second, this is a movement without leaders. There are individuals associated with the movement who have achieved global prominence, people like the late Wangari Maathai, Vandana Shiva, or Wendell Berry, but none of them exercises the power and authority generally associated with movement leaders. Third, members of the movement are often unaware of the fact that they are part of a movement, but instead see themselves acting in isolation as they attempt to constrain what they perceive to be nearly implacable national or global forces. Given the global reach of the Occupy Wall Street Movement that arose in the fall of 2011, the isolation of local groups addressing the need for a fundamental shift away from the capitalist world system now appears to be changing.

Hawken compares the emergence of these grassroots but now globally linked initiatives to a body's response to a disease organism. The immune system is not activated as a result of conscious intention but instead by the intelligence of the body itself. Hawken imagines that something similar may be happening with our species that at a subliminal level is aware of the way human activities threaten our current and future well-being. He observes, for example, that

> The movement offers a solution-creating methodology from below that is inclusive, a process

> that mimics biological adaptation and evolution. Every physical activity the human body sustains is part of a cyclical, biological system with a self-correcting bias. The same should be true of every social activity, with a system called democracy. (Hawken 2007, 179)

This kind of response parallels the adaptive characteristics of nature, itself, a kind of biomimicry that matches on a global scale processes that people like Janine Benyus (1997) are encouraging designers and manufacturers to imitate at the level of product, architectural, and even organizational design.

Building from the bottom up rather than the top down would of necessity reverse the process of colonialism and centralization that are the hallmarks of both capitalist and pre-capitalist civilizations. It would privilege people on the periphery rather than the center and allow for a restoration of the long-standing human practice of shaping cultures and communities closely connected to the unique requirements and possibilities of particular places. It could replace the monoculture of a global consumer society with a pluriverse of unique regional communities of communities.

Moving in this direction will require decision-making strategies that mirror life's preference for webs rather than pyramids and to organize our affairs on the basis of information and patterns rather than power. Since the irrigation-driven agricultural civilizations arose five to six millennia ago, more and more human beings have been drawn into hierarchically organized and controlled societies. This organizational option significantly diminished the well-being of the vast majority of people while providing extraordinary privileges to small groups of elites. As Marshall Sahlins (1974) discovered more than four decades ago in his study of prehistoric hunting and gathering societies, a greater proportion of human beings ate better and had more leisure during the Stone Age than at any later time. Social hierarchies do not serve the majority of people well, despite smokescreen platitudes like "a rising tide lifts all boats." What does serve people well are collections of smaller and more autonomous communities where people have the ability to control multiple dimensions of their own lives.

Shaping earth- and people-friendly societies that seek to mimic biological principles will also require setting aside capitalism's preoccupation with growth or maximization and recognizing that innovations need to conform to the few themes from which life generates its variations (Hawken 2007, 177). Amish societies appear to work in this way. These self-supporting and secure farming communities are among the most productive in the United States. They achieve this by practicing a form of agriculture that is integrated, cooperative, and focused more on value-added products than simple commodities. And while participating in the market, an emphasis on regional self-reliance encourages a level of reciprocity that strengthens not only individual farming families but the community as a whole (Rossett 1999).

Humanity does not need to rely upon contemporary elites to shape the world system that must emerge in coming decades to replace capitalism. People across the planet are embracing this task right now in ways that seem to reflect our collective capacity to recognize how the development model that currently drives economic and political decision making is leading us to a social and environmental dead-end. The challenge for educators at this critical moment lies in finding ways to encourage more students to join in in this process. The future will demand a level of creativity and action from people born in this era unknown during previous generations. In the past, the responsibility of human beings had regional boundaries. Now that responsibility is both regional and global with consequences that extend far beyond the limits of our own perception. And no one knows which ideas or actions will be those that will create a path to the future.

Educating Children and Youth to Participate in the Shaping of a New World System

Given the degree to which schools have tended to confirm rather than challenge the nature of surrounding social, economic, cultural, and economic systems, it seems at the outset as though there is probably little educators can do to prepare their students to become involved in a fundamental transformation of those systems. This seems especially true during a period when new technologies and perspectives have allowed for a tightening of control

over the curriculum and the teachers who deliver it. The freedom to shut one's classroom door and shape learning experiences that lie outside district and state mandates has been significantly constrained during the past three decades. At the same time, the failure of schools to help all students achieve higher levels of academic performance has allowed for a level of experimentation that occasionally engages young people in an exploration of concerns similar to those that motivate the activists described in *Blessed Unrest*. National and international interest in education for sustainable development, green schools, and civic education has also given legitimacy to the work of some teachers who have found ways to address contemporary social and environmental challenges.

An approach to teaching and learning related to these concerns that has gained growing attention over the past decade is place- and community-based education. Teachers who are moving in this direction often seek to link aspects of the curriculum to phenomena and issues directly related to the health and well-being of their communities. In doing so, they fulfill their responsibility to address district and state mandates but do so in ways that create authentic and potentially powerful learning experiences for their students. Recently, teachers in West Virginia have been encouraged to incorporate authentic cross-disciplinary projects into their work with students modeled on the use of project-centered learning encountered in successful Finnish schools (Frysh 2011). With this practice in mind, a middle school teacher invited her students to redesign the school parking lot following an accident that took place there involving two teachers. Completing this task required determining the perimeter and area of the current lot — which was not rectangular but included a number of nooks and crannies. Students also needed to visit with their town's city manager to make sure their designs matched local regulations. Once they had come up with designs, students presented their plans to their peers, teachers, and community members. This assignment required the development of skills in the academic areas of geometry, public speaking, engineering, law, and civics. Although this specific project did not address community well-being, it engaged young people in a process that required inquiry, problem solving, collaboration, and interaction with public agencies — activities closely related to the kinds of innovation and activism seen among people participating in the movement described by Hawken. A subsequent project was even more related to this movement and involved the development of a plan to reduce poverty in their region. When their plan was not accepted by decision makers, the students were upset, which demonstrated how invested they had become invested in this work. Their teacher observed that she "would never go back to the old way of teaching, because it was that valuable" (in Frysh 2011, para. 60).

Teachers in other parts of the United States are having their students investigate the status of homeless people in their community or the health impacts of an abandoned chemical plant, conduct community surveys about cancer clusters or what proportion of people's purchases are made from local merchants, and restore riparian zones along cattle-degraded streams. They have mapped and removed invasive species, painted and mounted murals celebrating the health of local social and natural environments or collected oral histories from older residents of neighborhoods close to the school in an effort to reweave the social fabric. Colleagues David Greenwood or David Sobel and I have collected scores of stories about similar projects in two recent volumes: *Place-based Education in the Global Age: Local Diversity* (2008) and *Place- and Community-based Education in Schools* (2010). In the remaining pages of this article, I will describe three schools where place- and community-based education has become well established to suggest how this approach could contribute to the nurturing of citizens able to participate in the cultural and economic transformation called for by Immanuel Wallerstein or described by Paul Hawken.

Aka'ula School

Teachers Vicki Newberry and Dara Lukonen at the Aka'ula School on the island of Molokai in Hawaii have for more than a decade been involved in an effort to engage their upper elementary and middle school students in issues linked to the environmental and social health of their home place. Called Promoting Resolutions with Integrity for a Sustainable Molokai (PRISM), Newberry, Lukonen, and their students have investigated a range of issues including

solid waste disposal at their school and on the island, the impact of ecotourism developments on habitat, bilge water releases, the effect of grazing ungulates on native species, the environmental consequences of disposable diapers, and the restoration of traditional Hawaiian fishponds. After choosing a topic, students individually or in teams spend several months gathering data from research reports or resource professionals, making sure that they have identified all of the stakeholders associated with a particular issue. They then strive to fairly represent these different perspectives and values. Once they have established a good understanding of the issue and the potential controversies surrounding it, students then develop an action proposal, half of which are generally enacted. In the spring, students then hold a one- or two-day long symposium during which they present their findings to their fellow students, their families, and interested community members.

Their work on solid waste disposal led to the writing of a bottle bill aimed at encouraging the recycling of glass, metal, and plastic containers that was passed by the Hawaii State Assembly. A few years ago, one team's suggestions for fishpond restoration were so finely crafted that an audience member said he wished he had come to them before paying several thousand dollars to consultants he'd hired to deal with the same issue. Other projects have led to the elimination of polystyrene at the school and the development of a plan at three local businesses to retail alternative products. Student work has also resulted in the donation of 90,000 CFL lightbulbs by the Blue Planet Foundation. These will be distributed for free at seven Molokai schools, potentially leading to energy savings of up to $18 million over the next 10 years (*Molokai News* 2010).

In 2010, the theme for the March symposium was "Learn from the Past — Act for the Future." In addition to student presentations, the two-day event included field trips to wetlands, a wastewater treatment plant, a traditional fishpond, and a farm that incorporates sustainable agriculture and energy. During the 2011-2012 academic year, students researched "coastal area issues including mangrove invasion, wetlands, sand erosion, or any issue occurring within the main high tide line and the outer edge reef" (*Aka'ula School Newsletter* 2011).

All of these projects incorporate elements of a process called Investigating and Evaluating Environmental Issues and Actions (Ramsey, Hungerford, & Volk 1989) that requires students to develop research questions, collect data, make inferences, draw conclusions, offer recommendations, and develop an action plan. In doing so, students model a form of citizen science and decisionmaking that has acquainted adults on the island with a process that is demonstrating how controversial issues can be dealt with in a way that can lead to positive change. In an article published in *Yes! Magazine* in the fall of 2009, Vicki Newberry described how a student investigation of plans to reintroduce the endangered Hawaiian Nene geese at an ancestral burial ground initially elicited serious concerns on the part of members of the group committed to the reintroduction of these birds. After students' research was presented, one of the people most involved with this project thanked Newberry for what the students accomplished, indicating she had realized that the original site was inappropriate and that she was looking for alternatives.

Parents have made similar observations about the broader social consequences of PRISM. A mother observed that "other parents I know who have kids in PRISM, it's not only their children who have learned or that have had their eyes opened to what is going on, but it is as if their whole families went through the PRISM process" (Cheak, Volk & Hungerford 2002, 37). Student engagement with learning and activities can even motivate their parents to become active citizens and stewards. One woman described the shift she saw in her niece's mother:

> We would come down and listen to how the research turned out and stuff like that…. Her mom — who never got involved in community things — is now one of the Enterprise Community Board and volunteered to be on the waste management project (in Cheak, Volk, & Hungerford 2002, 3).

A recent conversation with Vicki Newberry (personal communication 2011) suggested that this kind of shift in adult participation in civic and environmental affairs is not as widespread as she would like; at the same time, she acknowledges that her work at the school is contributing to the willingness of some

families to invest much more energy in community issues and is certainly making a contribution to the education of both younger and older citizens often disregarded by decisionmakers.

This transformation is especially striking in a community primarily composed of Native Hawaiian and Polynesians who have had to endure the experience of colonized peoples across the planet. PRISM is contributing to the reclamation of their voice in public affairs and in its own small way parallels movements in South America, Australia, New Zealand, and among First Nations peoples in North America to reassert their authority over decisions affecting their communities and land. It is this reassertion of the voices of the marginalized that can be seen in the activities of groups associated with the World Social Forum and its regional spin-offs. PRISM is modeling what educators elsewhere could do to induct young people into a vision of themselves as informed and politically savvy social actors, capable of joining with colleagues in similar communities elsewhere.

Greater Egleston Community High School

For a number of years, students at the Greater Egleston Community High School in Boston were provided with similar opportunities to affect public policy on environmental and social issues in their own community. Although the school's focus has shifted during the past six or seven years, for more than a decade teachers there sought to prepare its primarily Black and Latino students to become community leaders committed to enhancing the health and livability of Roxbury, one of Boston's less affluent neighborhoods. Started with a Department of Labor grant in the early 1990s to a group of parents concerned about the attractions of street and gang life for their children, the school quickly became one of Boston's pilot schools, the equivalent of within-district charter schools given more flexibility with hiring, and curricular and budgetary matters than their conventional counterparts. When a science teacher named Elaine Senechal came to the school in the mid-1990s, she investigated ways to link her own program to its social concerns. After attending meetings of a number of neighborhood nonprofit environmental organizations, she created a course on environmental justice, making use of the offer of two women from Alternatives for Community and the Environment to come in on Fridays to teach her students how to be community organizers.

At this time, the local environmental nonprofits were exploring ways to deal with rising asthma rates in Roxbury, a health problem they associated with the high levels of diesel traffic in this section of Boston. With this in mind, Senechal had her students count the number of buses and trucks that passed their school on Washington Street in an hour; they tallied more than 100 vehicles. They next began to work with adults in the community to raise funds to purchase air monitoring equipment for local public health organizations so that it would be possible to determine actual pollution levels; they also composed, distributed, and collected a survey about community knowledge about asthma and its relation to vehicle exhaust. When the air quality monitoring equipment was in operation, students developed a signaling system at the school to inform the public of changes in air quality from day to day.

Around the same time, the environmental nonprofits discovered a local statute that was supposed to prevent vehicles from idling at a single location for more than five minutes. The statute, however, was unenforced. This led to a six-year anti-idling campaign aimed at getting the City of Boston to administer its own laws. Given the fact that the bus lot for the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) is located in Roxbury, just a half dozen blocks from the Greater Egleston Community High School, a successful outcome of this campaign promised significant health benefits for the neighborhood. Each morning, over two hundred buses would often idle for more than a half hour, leaving in their wake a toxic mix of carbon monoxide, particulates, and other air contaminants. During these years, students organized anti-idling demonstrations, wrote press releases, conducted interviews with the media, and presented testimony before the Boston City Council. In 2004, a court case brought by the U.S. Department of Justice led to a $1.4 million settlement that required the MBTA to reduce idling times of buses to five minutes and to run cleaner trains (Environmental Compliance News 2004).

Although students at the Greater Egleston High School are no longer involved in these efforts, organizers at Alternatives for Community and Environment continue working with youth in the Boston area to address air quality and other environmental justice issues. Most recently, middle and high school students have been working to pressure construction companies that use heavy equipment to retrofit their vehicles with pollution-reducing devices. In the summer of 2011, students from the Mission Hill School and other programs developed presentations and skits they shared with representatives from the Brigham and Women's Hospital and Northeastern University aimed at persuading these institutions to work only with construction firms with low-polluting vehicles. Brigham and Women's Hospital agreed to follow through on their suggestions (Towey 2011); officials at Northeastern University had not yet committed themselves to this option. The impact of engaging in significant local inquiry and action projects like these can be transformative. A young woman who was part of Senechal's environmental course described the way her experiences had altered her sense of her own involvement in this kind of work as follows.

> I am proud of my accomplishments in environmental justice this trimester. Most importantly, I have been able to gain confidence to speak in front of larger groups of people. Before a presentation to the City Council I was very nervous. But after watching them and my classmates somewhat debate I realized they are regular people just like my family, my teachers, and my friends, and I should not be nervous when it comes to speaking my mind. (Senechal 2008, 100)

The opportunity to participate in organizing efforts that result in changes like these can do much to encourage young people to believe that their efforts can result in positive benefits for their families, neighbors, and communities. It does not seem far-fetched to believe that grounded in such experiences, they could well take their place among those activists who are working to preserve and restore the health of local natural and social systems described by Hawken and seen by Wallerstein as essential to the creation the alternatives needed to replace capitalism.

Al Kennedy High School

In her new book, *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the 21st Century* (2010), longtime civil rights activist Grace Lee Boggs argues that in addition to resisting oppressive practices that threaten community well being, it is also critical for young people to acquire the skills and understandings needed to create new ways of doing things that are better for people and the planet, or as her late husband Jimmy Boggs would say, "to build a way where there is no way." The Al Kennedy High School in Cottage Grove, Oregon, is a place where this is beginning to happen. Like both the Aka'ula School and the Greater Egleston Community High School, the Kennedy School primarily serves low-income white students who often find themselves marginalized in conventional classrooms. The majority of students who find their way to Kennedy are seriously credit deficient and in need of both personal and academic support to graduate.

Five years ago the school was floundering when a new principal, Tom Horn, was persuaded by the South Lane School District's superintendent to take on the challenge of turning it around. Within his first month, Horn had to deal with four drug overdoses and found himself wondering what he had gotten himself into. A risk taker by nature (he had been a professional surfer in his youth) and a special educator by training, he shook off his concerns and began envisioning what the school could be. One of his first tasks involved visiting the homes of all of the students at the school. In addition to winning him the support of their parents, these visits also acquainted him with the depth of their poverty. He became determined to find ways not only to help his students graduate but to prepare them to become leaders capable of making Cottage Grove a better place for themselves and their families over the long term.

With this in mind, he and his faculty decided to develop a school program that focuses on environmental and social sustainability and started writing grants and working with local partners to bring it into being. At the center of the school's current program are activities aimed at acquainting students with innovative practices in the fields of agriculture, forestry, architecture, energy, and water quality management that could bring human activities more

into balance with the requirements of natural systems. The school, for example, has created a sizeable vegetable garden that generates enough produce to supplement the diets of the families of Kennedy students and make regular donations to the local food bank. Kennedy students have taken the lead in creating school/community gardens at three of the district's elementary schools. In addition, students work with the city, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Army Corps of Engineers to map the location of invasive species and remove them. Students have also become involved with wetlands mitigation and tree planting projects. A grant from the Weyerhaueser Foundation is supporting a multi-year study of forest soils.

After visiting the three trailer parks where many of the school's students live, Horn embarked on a long-term project aimed at addressing the theme of architecture by creating a small business that would produce affordable housing kits that incorporate a variety of green features such as photovoltaic panels, solar water heaters, rainwater catchment systems, wind power, high efficiency insulation, and heating systems. A local architect and teams of students from the University of Oregon who have become involved with the project have developed a prototype while Horn has been holding conversations with planners and city and county officials to make it possible to implement some of these ideas at one of the trailer parks or other sites in the county in need of low-cost housing. Finally, students from Kennedy regularly gather water quality data from the Coast Fork Willamette River and submit their findings to the local watershed council. Their work compares favorably to data collected by professionals. All of these activities have contributed to a dramatic shift in the public's attitude toward the school and its students.

These efforts have resulted in higher school attendance and graduation rates for Kennedy students. They are also leading to the development of students who believe they have a responsibility to act when they see problems. Their response to the Haiti earthquake in 2010 is emblematic of the shift in awareness and self-efficacy students encounter when they come to the school. After learning about the earthquake, students in the social studies class of Stefan Aumack decided they needed to do something. They initially embarked on an inquiry project to learn more about why the earthquake's impact was so devastating. This involved studying the history of Haiti, its relation to France, the slave rebellion of the early 19th century, and the country's rocky political history over the past half century. They then took what they had learned and created a video to share with others. In addition, students organized a plant-a-thon to raise money to send to Haiti and at the same time help restore a degraded riparian area close to town. To determine who should receive the dollars they collected, they investigated six different aid organizations with an eye to learning which seemed most effective in supporting disadvantaged Haitians. They decided that activist physician Paul Farmer's Partners in Health and a local organization called Trees, Water, & People that provides low-cost high efficiency stoves to families in the developing world should be the recipients of their donations. Their film urged other people to make similar contributions. Aumack observed that this project represents what often happens with students exposed to what he calls "solution-based sustainability." When confronted with a challenge, wherever it may be, students take it upon themselves to discover a way to help solve it.

Linking Resistance and Restoration

If Immanuel Wallerstein is correct about our having entered a structural crisis of the capitalist world system, humanity will need hundreds of thousands if not millions of youth and young adults who believe they have the capacity to address and overcome challenges that will accompany the shift in economic, social, and cultural relations associated with this transition. Students at the Aka'ula School, the Greater Egleston Community High School, and the Al Kennedy High School have encountered educational experiences that are preparing them to participate in this process. What they are learning in school, however, is fundamentally different from the experiences of most young people growing up in the developed and developing world. Instead of being taught a curriculum that directs their attention away from where they are and an educational process that rewards compliance more than innovation and action, they are being drawn into learning opportunities that deepen their relationships to specific communities and that affirm their capacity to solve problems

and become social actors. They are furthermore being encouraged to engage in a way of thinking about the world that fosters critique and resistance as well as the willingness and skills needed to restore degraded social and natural environments.

David Gruenewald (2003) has written about the importance of embracing two orientations to our current circumstances: decolonization and reinhabitation. In this he draws upon the work of the proponents of critical pedagogy such as Paulo Freire, Peter McClaren, and Henry Giroux as well as the thinking of bioregionalists like Peter Berg, Kirkpatrick Sale, and Raymond Dassman. Decolonization involves a careful examination of the way that the assumptions undergirding industrial civilizations are predicated on structures of power that privilege the few and oppress the many. These assumptions also lead decision makers to act as though planetary resources and sinks are unlimited. One of the primary responsibilities of educators during our current era must be to unpack and challenge these assumptions in ways that lead young people to understand the flaws in ways of thinking and acting that are generally unquestioned. Students in each of the schools described above are being given the chance to participate in this process as they examine local environmental and social issues.

Critique, however, will not be enough. It is imperative that people alive today and in coming decades have the wherewithal to begin the process of creating new institutions better able to meet human needs and return to health natural systems disrupted by human activities during the last two centuries. This will involve learning how to reinhabit for the long term the places where we live. By becoming sensitive to the impact of human decisions and behaviors on particular regions, young people will become better prepared to join in this process. If throughout their years in school they have also been provided with many opportunities to participate in projects that result in observable benefits to their communities and places, they will come to perceive themselves as people capable of making a positive difference, a belief that is the foundation of involved citizenship and activism.

Transitioning from one world system to another is fraught with both peril and opportunity. Even acknowledging that humanity is faced with this situation can be terrifying; when confronted with this possibility, people's most common responses are often denial or despair (Macy 1995). Neither is appropriate. What is required is the willingness to roll up one's shirtsleeves and get to work in whatever way is locally possible. It will be through myriad small moves that alternatives to capitalism and all of its accompanying institutions will be created, exactly the small moves that have resulted in the diversity of life forms that currently exist on the planet. Those of us alive today cannot know what the outcome will be, but if no action is taken or if the actions that are taken are primarily informed by outdated ways of thinking, increasing environmental and social disruption seems likely. By acquainting students with what Hawken has called the world's largest social movement and providing them with the understandings and tools needed to participate in it, educators could make their own vital contribution to the process by which a more just and ecologically resilient world can come into being.

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Affect and Adolescents with Severe Reading Disabilities

Andrew P. Johnson

Putting ourselves in the shoes of our "learning disabled" students is the only way we can begin to appreciate how they feel and why they might occasionally act out.

Welcome to school, Billy! Are you ready for another day of failing? Excellent!! At 9:00 you'll fail at reading. At 10:30 you'll fail at language arts. At 11:00 you'll fail at social studies, and at noon you'll hit a kid on the playground who teases you about failing and then spent the afternoon in the principal's office.

Motivation and emotion are perhaps the most important aspects of working with students with moderate to severe reading disabilities (especially adolescents), yet they seem to be given the least amount of attention. Motivation is related to the desire to read and the emotional components related to success and failure. This article describes the impact of affect and delineates fourteen strategies that can be used to help adolescents with severe reading disabilities.

Emotions

We think, learn, and emote with the same brain. Thus, it's silly to think that emotions would not be a factor in students' ability to learn. Positive emotional experiences can enhance and promote learning, while negative emotions can disrupt and prevent learning (Hinton, Miyamota, & Dell-Chiese 2008; Machazo & Motz 2005; Sousa 2011).

Understanding

Try to understand what it must feel like to be an adolescent with a reading disability. These students have no choice but to go to school where they experience failure, frustration, and humiliation every day. Since they were in first grade they have failed in a very public way. Every class for their last six to ten school years that had a required reading assignment was a reminder of what they were *not* able to do.

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Students with severe reading disabilities are often given the not-too-subtle message that they were not very smart or that they were unable to learn. This is certainly not the case. All humans can learn. Learning is part of the human condition. This is what helped our species evolve. Without the ability to learn we would still be walking around trying to poke woolly mammoths with pointy sticks. Students with severe reading disabilities *can* read; they just can't read very well. Their brains have more difficulty processing certain types of information; in this case it is the squiggly symbols on the page. In the same way it is very difficult for some people to sing in tune or match pitches. Their brains also do not process certain types of information, in this case sounds.

We all have trouble processing certain types of information. (In my case it would be my wife's nonverbal cues.) This does not mean we are not smart or capable of learning. In fact, I am uncomfortable with the term, "learning disability" because it's not at all accurate. All humans can learn. Human brains naturally try to make sense out of the data presented to it. A more accurate term would be, "learning-certain-kinds-of-things disability" or "learning-the-way-schools-want-you-to-learn disability" or "learning-school-things disability," or in this case, reading disability.

Try to imagine what it must feel like to have a reading disability. Think of a time in your life when you were a less able learner, where you just could not learn something. It may have been a sport, music or a musical instrument, tap dancing, algebra, statistics, physics, a foreign language, philosophy, or art. What did it feel like when everybody else seemed to catch on and learn easily while you did not? Were you motivated to come to class? Did you want to continue? Were you inspired to practice outside the teaching session? Did you enjoy doing what you could not do? Only by putting yourself in this situation can you begin to understand what students with reading disabilities feel like and why they might occasionally act out in class.

What do you do when you are frustrated? Image a time when you tried to do something but could not. Now try to imagine not being able to do that every day with people watching and recording how much you could *not* do what you were trying to do. You can begin to understand why it is that students with reading disabilities shut down and sometimes put forth minimal effort and why they sometimes hate school. Who wouldn't? It is called *downshifting* and it is done for the protection of one's emotional stability. It's not that these students don't want to learn; rather, it's that they don't want to fail. And when failure is the only option available to them, they will do everything possible to avoid the activity or show you how stupid the activity was in the first place.

Before You Do Anything Else

In my work with adolescents with reading disabilities I have found that addressing the emotional component of reading and failing is essential before you can make any progress. And it should be reinforced every session. You need to say very directly to the student, "You have trouble reading. Not a big deal. It doesn't mean that you are dumb or cannot learn. It just means that you have trouble reading. Lots of people have trouble reading. We're going to see what we can do to make it better." This takes some of the pressure off.

Students also need to trust you. That means you have to establish some sort of relationship with them. Establishing supportive trusting relationships between teachers and learners has been shown to enhance all learning, including learning to read (Johannessen & McCann 2009; Roger, Peck & Nasir 2006; Van Ryzin 2011). Writing and sharing your own stories with your students is one way to begin to establish such a relationship. Relationships are also formed by listening. Pay attention to your students' interests so that you can create literacy activities that have meaning to them.

Value-Expectancy Theory

Theories do not predict behavior; rather, they help us understand behavior. The Value-Expectancy theory is one that can help us understand student behavior in terms of motivation (Anderman & Wolters 2006). This theory posits that students' motivation and achievement behavior is a result of their assessment of the value of the activity and their expectation of success. Put this theory in a mathematical equation and it looks like this: value x expectancy = motivation. And just as in any

multiplication equation, if one of the factors is zero, the product will be zero.

Value

Is the activity or skill perceived to have value by the students? Do they find it worthwhile? Do they see themselves as using the skill in their everyday life? Is it enjoyable? Is it meaningful? Are we doing anything to de-value the skill? There are four dimensions to value: attainment value, intrinsic value, utility value, and cost (Schunk & Zimmerman 2006).

Attainment Value

Attainment value looks at the importance of doing well with the task. What is the value of attaining this skill? For example, students most likely have a sense of the utilitarian value of reading. They would like to be able to read and understand things. They also have a strong desire to use email, texting, and other forms of social media to interact and socialize using the printed word. This is of high importance to adolescents. We can enhance learning by aligning our curriculum to students' natural inclinations, curiosities, and developmental tendencies. For example, since communicating with their peers is very important, it would make sense to use this as the basis for adolescent literacy instruction.

Intrinsic Value

Intrinsic value is the amount of enjoyment derived from the task or skill. Do students find reading class interesting? Is reading enjoyable? It is very hard to value something that is meaningless, boring, and repetitive. Take a look at what often goes in the reading instruction of students with reading disabilities. It seems as if we do everything possible to make it uninteresting and painful. Reading instruction for students with reading disabilities is often a series of meaningless drills on reading sub-skills. This makes reading abstract and disconnected from the human experience — and incredibly boring.

In addition, it is hard to expect students to be motivated to read if they do not have something enjoyable and interesting to read. In working with adolescents with severe reading disabilities I have found that comic books and graphic novels make excellent texts. The pictures make it interesting and help to carry the story. There is a lot of action, and there is minimal text to read on each page. And they can be downloaded to a computer, Kindle, iPad, or other devices. You can find these online for minimal costs; however, make sure you preview comics or graphic novels first, as many are not kid-appropriate.

Students enjoy hearing what other students have to say. Student writing can be a good source of reading material. Students with severe reading disabilities often have trouble writing as well. You can use a language experience approach where students dictate their stories to you. Print these off or create a computer document that leaves room for students to illustrate each page. As well, there are many speech-to-print programs in which students speak into a computer to get written text. Save these stories. After a year you will have a library of interesting reading material for other students to read.

Utility Value

Utility value is the perceived usefulness of the tasks for other goals. Do students need to use the skill? Is it useful in any way? This is why in literacy classes we need to have students engaged in authentic literacy experiences in which students read and write for real purposes, just like we do in the real world. Authentic literacy experiences include reading for enjoyment or to get specific information or writing to record, organize, or convey one's thoughts and have real conversations about the books students have read and stories they've written. This is what we do as adults. We very rarely complete comprehension worksheets.

Cost

Cost is the negative aspects of engaging in the task. For students with reading disabilities, cost includes the inordinate amount of time it takes to read, the frustration of not being able to read, and the possible humiliation associated with failure.

Expectancy

What do you think adolescents with severe reading disabilities have learned after six to eight years of reading instruction? I will tell you: Too often they have learned to fail. They have learned this lesson so well that they fail in most things related to literacy. Failure is not a great motivator. Nobody wants to do what they cannot do. Very few people want to be

frustrated or embarrassed. Can you imagine a coach telling his or her team before a big game, "Okay team, let's go out there and fail miserably! Let's really embarrass ourselves in front of everybody this time! We can do it!"

So in terms of reading, do students with reading disabilities expect to ultimately succeed? We have a special term for this: self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the belief that you can accomplish what you set out to do. It is like the little train who said, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can…" before going up the big hill. Research supports the notion that self-efficacy is strongly related to achievement (Schunk & Zimmerman 2006; Sternberg & Williams 2009; Wigfield, Byrnes, & Eccles 2006).

Frustrating students is a sure way to extinguish any remaining motivation they may once have had to read. The theory of classical conditioning helps us understand why this is so. Pavlov's dog was conditioned to associate a bell with meat powder. Thereafter, every time the dog heard the bell it salivated whether or not the meat powder was present. In the same way, students learn to associate reading with frustration, failure, and humiliation. Thereafter, every time they encounter reading, they react negatively. Thus, you must keep instruction proximal, help students experience success, and make reading instruction as enjoyable as possible.

Strategies

Described below are fourteen simple strategies that can be used at home, in a general education classroom, or in a special education setting.

Teach Students about Reading Disabilities

A learning disability is not a thinking disability. Let students know from the start that having trouble learning to read does mean that they're dumb or cannot learn. There are many ways to be smart. (This is a good place to refer to Gardner's multiple intelligence theory.) They just have trouble reading. It's no big deal. This should be reinforced often.

Engage in Proximal Instruction

Too often, students with reading disabilities get frustrated by instruction that is too difficult for them. The result is that learned helplessness sets in like rigor mortis. Instead, instruction should be proximal. This means it should be in close proximity to their ability to do it independently. This instructional area, called the zone of proximal development, is just ahead of students' independent level, where they can accomplish a task with a teacher's help. However, in order to be proximal you have to first get a sense of students' independent reading level. The San Diego Quick Assessment of Reading Ability[1] is a simple and pragmatic way to do this. This individually administered assessment is in the public domain. It will provide a very general sense of students' reading level.

Experience Success

Every student needs to experience success. Experiencing success is a research-based strategy that serves to promote self-efficacy which is linked with student achievement. One way to do this is through various repeated reading activities (Johnson 2008). For example, find a short paragraph that is close to the students' independent reading levels. Students read the paragraph through three times. Their time is recorded after each attempt. Students are able to see their times improve with each successive reading.

Language Experience Approach (LEA)

The language experience approach is one of the best strategies to use for early readers and students with reading disabilities. Here the students uses the students' existing language and prior experiences to develop reading, writing and listening skills. You use their dictated work to practice reading. This enables students to practice reading using words, concepts, and experiences with which they are very familiar. Because it is built directly on their own personal experiences, LEA helps students make personal connections to what they read.

LEA can be used individually, in small groups, or as a class. Ideally, students should be able to see the words as you write. In a small group you may want to use a front board, overhead, chart, or a word processor with a projector. The last one is ideal because you can save these stories. For example, you might have a student tell you about what he or she did over the weekend. You write down what they tell you using words that are as close as what they actually say as possible.

Do you correct for grammar? Yes, in a very subtle and positive way. For example if Johnny said, "Yesterday we seen three deer in the backyard," you'd say, "Yesterday we saw three deer in the backyard." You can also explain your use of grammar and punctuation as you write. For example, "This is the end of the idea. I need to tell the reader to stop. I better put in the period to use as a stop sign."

In the beginning stories should be from two to three sentences to a short paragraph in length. Again, you do not want to frustrate students. Students then read their LEA story through until they can do it fluently. It usually takes two to three attempts. This is a also good time to teach or reinforce letter sounds. For example, "I see a word with the *buh* sound at the beginning. Who can come up and point to that word?" Or, "Find the Long A word in the first sentence." (Instruction doesn't have to be complicated to be effective.)

You can create books to practice reading by collecting these LEA stories over time. Save them from year to year, or put them on a Powerpoint presentation. Students love to read the stories written by others their same age.

Choice

In the real world, when you and I go to a library or a bookstore nobody tells us what book we have to read. We get to choose. Why would we not want to offer students this same opportunity? Think about it: If a librarian or bookstore manager were to assign us the books we had to read, do you really think we would come back? Just like you and me, adolescents should be able to choose the books they want to read. In the classroom, this does not mean total choice all the time, but neither does it mean no choice any of the time. The goal is to provide as much choice as possible while still maintaining academic and curricular goals.

Choice also means enabling students to choose to stop reading a book that doesn't hold their interest. We do not force ourselves to read a book that we find boring, irrelevant, or too hard to read. If we really don't like a book, we go find another that we do like. This is what keeps us coming back. If we were forced to read what we did not like to read, very few of us would ever read. This also means that you must have high quality reading material available for students to read. For adolescents reading at the first or second grade level, this becomes something of a challenge. High/low books[2] can be used with these students. These are books that are high interest with a low reading level. These books are usually written at the second or third grade level but with topics that might interest somebody in 6th through 12th grade .

Scaffolded Oral Reading

Scaffolded oral reading (ScOR) enables students to access books that may be too advanced for them. This strategy helps students develop reading fluency and word recognition skills. First, find an interesting book. Always ask students after the first page or so, "Do you want to keep reading this one, or should we find another?" This empowers the student and helps you get a sense of the types of books students like.

If the book has illustrations or pictures (comic books and graphic novels) ask the students to look at these first. This provides a sense of context and makes reading easier. If you are working with one student, watch their eyeballs as they scan the page to see when they're ready to start reading.

Then, both you and the student (or students) should read aloud. You should strive to push the pace slightly. Do not worry if a student mispronounces a word or demonstrates other reading miscues. The goal here is to enjoy the book, develop neural pathways, and enhance word identification skills using the three cueing systems (phonological, semantics, and syntax).

Finally, pause occasionally and engage the student in conversation related to the book. Ask appropriate questions and try to make personal connections to the student's life or experience.

Reading Comic Strips

Look for comic strips that can be used to practice reading. The advantage of comic strips is that they are short (look for three to four panels), visual (students can use the pictures to help them recognize words), and they tend to be entertaining. Look for an ongoing series in the newspaper. You can also find comics online to read on an iPad or computer. I use a lot of Beetle Bailey, Garfield, Wizard of Id, and Family Circus. We use ScOR for these. At the end students are asked, "Why do you think this is funny?" This is a very quick way to informally assess compre-

hension. It also allows you to explain the joke if they do not get it. Finally, I have students numerically rate the humor value of the comic strip. This is a simple way to extend the conversation around the comic strip and it empowers students to be able to not like something. You'll know you are having success when students start reading comics on their own.

Dear Abby

Dear Abby or other advice columns can be good for reading practice and motivating students. These are generally short and deal with real life issues. Use ScOR with these and always ask students what they think before reading Dear Abby's reply.

Goal Setting

Set some goals that are small and attainable at first. You can extend these later, but students need to experience success early on. They need to see that their effort has some sort of results. Some examples of initial goals you might use for students with severe reading disabilities might include the following:

- Ask students to send two weekly emails.
- Do five timed reading activities during the week with a parent or friend.
- Practice sight words with a parent or friend five times during the week.
- Find one interesting comic strip to share each day.
- Find one interesting website to share each week.
- Listen to a recorded book while following the printed text for ten minutes at least five times a week.

Practice

You learn to play the piano well only by daily practice. This is the way you develop those neural pathways and create new neural networks. You get better at playing tennis, baseball, dance, or whatever by daily practice. Let students know that it is the same with reading. However, keep reading practice short. It is much better to have a 10-minute practice five times a week than a 30-minute practice twice a week. Keeping it short makes it more likely students will come back. Home practice sessions could involve LEA, ScOR, practice on sight words, or a scaffolded writing activity.

Scaffolded Writing Activity

Reading helps you write better. Writing helps you read better. Students are motivated to write when they can select writing topics and express their ideas. Scaffolded writing activities (SWA) are short easy ways for students to express their ideas that can be used as part of home reading practice. First, talk with students about what they might want to talk or write about. Initially students often have trouble selecting topics, so you may need to help them. Ask something like, "What do you want to tell me about what you did this weekend?" When they say something, respond with something like, "Great. Let's get that down on paper."

Next, ask students to say out loud the first sentence they will write. This reinforces a sense of syntax. Then ask them to write the first sentence in a notebook. Have them skip every other line. Tell them not to worry about spelling as they write, just get the ideas down.

When they complete the sentence, ask them if there are any words that do not look right. Here you are reinforcing spelling and letter patterns. Students usually have a pretty good idea which words aren't spelled correctly. As you identify the words, write the correct spelling on top of the word. Ask students to then write the correct spelling underneath the word. Cross out the misspelled word.

Finally, when their paragraph or series of sentences is complete, ask students to read what they have written. Use your finger to help guide them. They should read their paragraph or sentences through until they can do so fairly fluently. Students usually need between two and three attempts here.

SWA enhances phonological awareness, awareness of letter patterns, syntax, writing skills, and word recognition. Keep it simple. Initial paragraphs should be two to three sentences long. Gradually expand the length when students are ready.

More Short and Less Long Readings

Keep individual reading activities short and briskly paced. You are more likely to keep students

motivated and engaged if you do a series of short activities rather than one long one. Remember that, like athletes and physical stamina, students also need to build their cognitive stamina. For home practice sessions, have parents use one or two activities for ten minutes a day four or five times a week. This can be expanded slightly as the student's stamina increases.

The same is true for in-school practice or tutoring sessions. Instruction should be brief and quickly paced. A series of shorter activities is better than one or two longer ones. When I work individually with adolescents, my weekly sessions last from 40 and 50 minutes. If improvement is to occur, there must be practice and reinforcement during the week at home or as part of that student's wider curriculum.

Social Interaction

Students, especially adolescents, are motivated when they can work in groups, communicate with each other, or have some sort of social interaction as part of instruction. Instead of doing everything we can to keep students silent, isolated, and passive, our students would be better served to step into the energy. Adolescents naturally want to talk, interact, and push boundaries. Teaching is much easier and learning is greatly enhanced when we plan learning experiences that are aligned with students' natural tendencies and interests. Use text messaging, Facebook, and email to reinforce reading and writing. Create cooperative learning activities in which readers who are struggling can still be successful.

Try to create conversations around books and writing. A quick and simple way to create a conversation is to evaluate a book, story, comic strip, or comic book. You can have students simply provide an overall rating. Doing this in a small group and then also having students explain their ratings further expands the conversation. You might also identify three or four criterion and ask the students to rate the story by each criterion. With adolescents who are struggling readers I find it helpful to start with movies and then move on to text.

Harmony

Learning is effortless when we are able to create experiences that align with students' natural desires and inclinations. First, adolescents want to communicate. Go with the flow. Encourage emails, tweets, text messaging, and other forms of social media that use writing. Even if students spell the words incorrectly, they are practicing listening for letter-sound associations as they write and they are reading and responding to the messages of others. Second, look for games and videos that have small amounts of text in them. And finally, practice reading using online comic books. These can be very effective resources to entice adolescent students with reading disabilities to read. They usually have very interesting illustrations, lots of action, and minimal dialogue. (Make sure you preview comic books before you use them with students.) And even if students are not able to recognize all the words, they can use the sequence of pictures to help them carry the story along. Eventually they will begin to use more letter- and word cues than picture cues.

Final Thoughts

Research has shown that there is no single program that works best for all students who are struggling to learn to read (Allington 2012; Wharton-McDonald 2011). However, all programs or approaches must attend to the affective element for students to achieve their highest levels of success.

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Notes

1. The San Diego Quick Reading Assessment is available online at www.senia.asia/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/San-Diego-Quick-Reading-Assessment.pdf.

2. High/low books are available online at www.capstonepub.com/category/LIB_PUBLISHER_CAP.

The Caring Teacher-Student Relationship in Public Education

Shilpi Sinha and Devin Thornburg

Teachers often struggle with competing imperatives: the need to be responsive to their students' real needs and vulnerabilities while fulfilling the requirements of their institutional, professional and cultural codes.

What is needed for the cultivation of authentic caring teacher-student relationships in the classroom? Educational discourse on caring teacher-student relations is often framed as teachers "doing something to" students, where teachers teach students to behave in appropriate ways, where what is appropriate is framed as the internalization of a neutral and universal set of behavioral and cognitive skills. Here, teachers circumscribe their understanding of behavior to the terms of rational choice and individual accountability.[1] As Diane Hoffman (2009, 545-546) has noted, in the descriptions and recommendations of actual classroom management

> the language of caring ideals often devolves to a discourse about control, rules, contracts, choices, activities, and organizational structures, [where] substance is replaced by structure [and] feeling is replaced by form.

The understanding of the cultivation and nurturance of caring teacher-student relations can thus be seen to be dominated by an individualist, technocratic, and instrumentalist discourse (Hoffman 2009; Boler 1999; Noddings 2006). Consequently, one can say that there is a disconnect between the ideal of care, which promotes emotional responsiveness, supportive relationships, and social warmth, and its practice (Hoffman 2009, 545-546). Such a disconnect can be seen to arise in part because what is of value is assumed to be measureable. The cultivation of caring

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relationships is delineated primarily through quantifiable aspects that can be measured for their effectiveness.[2] However, what is jettisoned is the importance of teachers attending to the orientation that *they* bring to their encounters with students as they attempt to cultivate caring and positive relationships with them, as well as the importance of teachers attending to the *quality* of that relation. Neither of these lend themselves to being easily quantified or measured, yet, we will argue, are essential for the actualization of caring teacher-student relations.

We will frame our discussion of what is needed for the cultivation and nurturance of caring teacher-student relationships through vignettes of conversations one of the authors of this article had with middle and high school teachers and students from eight New York State school districts in which he served as a consultant and which were facing challenges of equity while serving increasingly diverse student populations. We will analyze these vignettes through the lens of Nel Noddings' phenomenology of caring, as well as the insights of other philosophers of education, and explore the idea that if educators are to cultivate caring relations with their students, the focus needs to shift from educators doing something *to their students* to educators doing something *to themselves*.

Vulnerability, Struggle, and Guilt

> You know, I really try, you know? I try to talk to the kids when I think there's stuff going on. I don't try to be their friend but I want them to respond to me in an open, honest, but grown up way. And it just doesn't happen, you know. They are babied at home or they are ignored at home. Or beaten at home. So what am I supposed to do? I can't give more but they don't meet me halfway….
> [*Male African-American physical education teacher in a middle school, with twelve years of experience*.]

> It's like they speak a different language. And some of them do, actually. I am thinking of a couple of students in my pre-calculus class who are very bright but simply do not care about learning. I try to talk to them, to speak a little of their language, but to also be clear in communicating my expectations of them. I might do better if I just grunted at them [laughs]… I don't know….
> [*Caucasian female high school mathematics teacher with six years of experience*.]

> I know that I am supposed to know more about these kids than I do. I took courses in cultural diversity in my graduate program but it's different when you are teaching them. They seem to have a different perspective on life, let alone art, and there isn't much that I have been successful with. Their parents aren't interested in contact with me, either. I mean I could use another session with someone on broadening my cultural horizons. [laughs] There is a student who I think is very talented in one of my classes, and I would like to see him go further with his education. But he just is unreachable to me and I could stand on my head … it wouldn't matter a bit!
> [*Male Asian high school art teacher with five years of experience*.]

What these vignettes poignantly highlight is the sense that although the teachers want to genuinely care about their students, they do not know how to connect with them. In fact, their very desire for and attempt at caring relationships is linked to narratives of internal struggle and discomfort. Noddings' phenomenology of caring — that is, her analysis of how we are when we care and are cared for — helps us draw out the significance of what is expressed in these narratives. On one level, the narratives illustrate what Noddings terms natural caring, which indicates one's vulnerability, openness, and receptivity to the other's concrete and particular needs or appeals in ways that transcend any knowledge or understanding one has of another person. In natural caring we do not comprehend the other with our minds and thus make claims to knowledge, but "we receive what is there as nearly as possible without evaluation or assessment" (Noddings 1984, 34) through an immediately felt contact, where we are moved by what Noddings calls the "initial vibrations of the cared-for" (Noddings 2002b, 14): "Our apprehension of happiness or misery in others comes through immediately" (Noddings 1984, 51). Such affective connection is not a psychological "feeling with," or that which is generated from within oneself, as is the case with empathy (Nod-

dings 1984, 30); it does not involve projection of "one's own personality into the personality of another in order to understand him better" (Noddings 2002b, 13), but rather, reception (Noddings 1984, 30). Noddings terms this receptivity, "engrossment," which indicates "a nonselective form of attention that allows the other to establish a frame of reference and invite us to enter it" (Noddings 1998, 191). Here one's motive energy begins to flow toward the other and his/her projects.

The teachers' language in the vignettes can be seen to be indicative of a nascent mode of engrossment, where being moved by the initial vibrations of the cared-for is linked to what Noddings describes as a "direct and primitive" arising of an internal "I must" (Noddings 1984, 40). As Noddings explains, an initial overwhelming "I must" do something to assuage the pain of the other, to help the other, comes as obligation and arises "prior to the consideration of what it is that I must do"(Noddings 1998, 82). The teachers' language attests to the arising of this initial, internal "I must."

However, what the narratives also clearly illuminate is that the "I must" comes to them conflicted. The teachers are at a loss in knowing how to respond to their students' appeal in a way that it will be accepted instead of rebuffed or ignored. Consequently, the teachers express frustration and potential resistance to heeding the felt imperative of the "I must," since to do so may place them on the path of emotional risk or danger.

Yet, at the same time, the teachers' language also points to their recognition of a sense that something is being asked of them that they cannot easily ignore. Their language is punctuated by a hesitation, ambiguity, and sense of bewilderment ("I might do better if I just grunted at them …. I don't know …." I can't give more but they don't meet me halfway…." "There is a student who I think is very talented in one of my classes, … but he just is unreachable to me and I could stand on my head … it wouldn't matter a bit!), which can be seen to indicate a gnawing sense of discomfort and guilt. As Noddings has explained, when "I feel I ought to behave as though I care but I do not want to do this"(Noddings 1984, 38), the very "awareness of this ambiguity is the feeling of guilt"(Noddings 1984, 38). Most significantly, Noddings helps us understand that such guilt is existential and ontological. Contrary to a psychological view, it is a constant threat in caring from which one cannot be free. Guilt, for Noddings, is predicated on the self being fundamentally embedded in a metaphysical dimension, where one is embedded in an infinite one cannot entirely grasp (Noddings 1984, 39).[3] To better understand what Noddings means here, it is instructive to juxtapose her description of guilt with Sharon Todd's (2003) reading of guilt as found in the thought of philosopher Emmanuel Levinas.

As Todd (2003, 111) explains, for Levinas, guilt is predicated on one's primordial susceptibility to the Other's accusation and freedom. As marked by an "enjoying and suffering by the Other" (Levinas 1998, 90), that is, an immediately felt contact that we originally have in our interaction with the Other (Levinas 1998, 82), the self can never fully provide for the Other's freedom. The self can never take care of or fix once and for all the Other's pain, needs, demand or appeal, which Levinas highlights as that which comes to the self as an unbidden nagging sense of concern or discomfort. The self can only bear the Other. Consequently, for Levinas, the self *is* guilty, rather than merely feeling guilty. In many ways what Levinas is pointing to is reflective of the significance of the affective response which Noddings describes as being moved by the initial vibrations of the cared-for. To be embedded in a metaphysical dimension thus indicates, for Noddings, the very mystery of the other where I cannot assimilate the other into my conceptual schemes and structures; where his/her need or appeal can never be fully calculated and thus once and for all addressed by me. The other person exceeds my grasp and his/her unforeseeable need or appeal can rise up behind any response or codification I may offer. While Noddings does not explicitly frame guilt through a robustly structural delineation like Levinas, her thought can nevertheless be seen to intimate that one can feel guilty because fundamentally one *is* guilty. Accordingly, the teachers' language in the vignettes can be seen to attest to their experiencing the rising up of their students' appeals, be it framed through resistance or indifference, behind any responses they offer and thus their impotence in addressing the appeals once and for all, all of which leads to the teachers' sense of dis-

comfort and guilt. The teachers can be understood to feel guilty because fundamentally they *are* guilty: they can only endure, not account once and for all, their students' needs and demands that arise due to the students' very freedom.

What Noddings helps us understand is that such existential and ontological guilt indicates that I am fundamentally open to and in relation with other human beings and thus potentially open to hearing the singular (that which cannot have been calculated by me beforehand) call of the other person. Guilt points us to our potential to hear and stay connected to the unbidden challenge, need, or appeal of the concrete, particular person, and thus can be seen to serve as that which opens us toward the space of hope for teaching that strives to cultivate and nurture caring and responsive relations with one's students. Yet, how do teachers commonly respond to the guilt and discomfort borne by the resistance and ambiguity they feel toward the felt "I must," as they encounter and interact with their students? A turn to a second set of narratives helps to illuminate an answer.

The Flight from Guilt

> When I was at the high school, there were state tests that they had to pass, but they would still graduate with a failing score in some cases. I knew these kids' college prospects were affected by … the outcome but now, its even a greater challenge. I have more of a chance here to get them to the levels of proficiency that are expected in high school. But I don't have the luxury of stopping to worry about their home lives or their self-esteem. I think they would be better served by passing the exams in raising their self-esteem, anyway. Don't you? Well, they need to know that it's the content that matters, not whether or not I think they need counseling or outside help. I don't have the skills to do counseling anyway….
> [*Caucasian male middle school social studies teacher with twenty years of experience (eight at the high school level*.]

> The district is under the gun with their accountability status and we all feel it as teachers. I … or we … have to get the students through the material that is on the state test each year with very little time for anything else. For me to do this..., I have to largely ignore what goes on for the students — whatever that might be — and just concentrate on the curriculum. In the long run, its better for them, too.
> [*Male Hispanic high school chemistry teacher with eight years of experience*.]

> Whatever language barriers there might be in my class, having command of the skills they need on the five-paragraph essay on the exam is paramount. So I think in some ways I have to jam the grammatical rules down their throats and I hope they realize the stakes involved…. They won't graduate otherwise and the problems they may have in their lives will just become worse. At least that's how I see it. My colleagues may have a different perspective.
> [*Caucasian male high school English teacher with thirteen years of experience.*]

> These kids' problems are beyond me. As I said, many of their parents seem absent … well … at least unavailable to them. When they clearly need help, I'll refer them to the counselor or social worker if it seems more severe. I certainly wouldn't know what to do and that's not why I'm there anyway. Teachers should teach.
> [*African-American female elective high school economics teacher with three years experience*.]

As teachers' vulnerability to their students' appeals comes up against institutional, professional, cultural and moral codes [i.e., the felt demands of established ways of being and interacting, which highlight obedience to certain traditions, principles, or rules] teachers can be seen to be struggling with competing imperatives. As the vignettes clearly highlight, institutions such as schools whose focus rests on ensuring that students meet state standards and that teachers conform to accountability measures, often precipitate teachers' pull towards affixing themselves to the realm of the universal and abstract, that is, where one responds to the other through the mediation of a moral, legal, or political community (Derrida 1988, 640), at the expense of the concrete and particular other. It is not that traditions, principles, or rules should, or even can be ignored, but rather, as Noddings has emphasized, that ethical

and caring interaction requires the fluidity of movement from the universal or abstract to the concrete and personal (Noddings 1984, 34-36). However, this movement can be very easily stunted by the demands of institutional and organizational life, and the coping mechanisms one employs to meet such demands. The vignettes above underscore how teachers' ability to intuit what is happening in the moment can be shortchanged since the boundaries of their own experience has to be measured by their sense of protocol, by that which maintains the institution's integrity, rather than their own moral compass.[4] What has been narrowed is the very space that could engender teachers' ability to seriously consider questions that could arise from their openness to the appeal of the concrete, particular person, questions such as: How is what I am doing and being asked to do really affecting both me and my students? What are the effects of my actions, beliefs and values on my students? What is it that is genuinely felt by me to be a good? Does it cohere with what my students feel to be a good? Whose good am I structuring my pedagogy to reflect?

The Misrecognition of the Caring Relation

A final set of narratives show that fleeing the call or appeal of the concrete individual also manifests itself through teachers viewing the caring relation to be primarily dependent upon how faithfully they carry out the intention to care according to their own or some ideal view. Such flight takes the form of teachers' lack of attunement to their students' responses to the caring directed toward them.

> We sit in the classes and fall asleep. Yeah, telling us that we should pay attention for the tests coming up is just stupid. It's a waste of time. It's like they don't get it. They've been teaching all this time and don't get it. There is nothing that they teach that helps us. Whatever … I was in English yesterday and counted 4 kids sleeping and 3 kids texting. And the teacher did nothing but just blow out words … shee-it. Maybe if they taught something important to us, like what's goin'on in the world, it would be different. But it's like they don't know who we are. And it's hard to relax around somebody — black or white — who does that. You have to wonder if they really care. I mean, they care but not in the right way, you know?
>
> [*14-year-old black male in a suburban "first ring" high school, in a special education, inclusion class. Referred for in-house suspension.*]

> You might think that I would have an easier time with language and culture with the students, given that I teach Spanish. But I am shocked by the students' lack of interest, lack of background knowledge, and their complete lack of respectful behavior in my classes. They are rude, often indifferent, and seem to be more interested in the noise outside in the hallway than in the class. I blame the parents, honestly, for allowing them to be so poorly educated about school and expectations.
>
> [*Caucasian female high school Spanish teacher, teaching for three years.*]

> I treat all of the kids the same, I really do. I mean I don't see any color of skin or background when I am working with them. One of the smartest students in my (math) class this past year was a black boy who was polite and seemed to know what he wanted out of life. I was proud to be his teacher.
>
> There are other kids who are harder to reach but I think that's because of the parenting they get at home. I'm not suggesting that they get bad parenting so much as they aren't there to support their kids' learning. Some of that may be due to poverty. I read an article by Ruby Paine about this and it seems to fit. Anyway, they are harder to reach and to be frank, there are some who do not seem to belong in my class: need help that I can't give with so many other students in the room….
>
> I would love to be able to help them but I think they may need special education help. I'm thinking of one black girl this year who is very withdrawn and kind of angry-looking. When I have her show me her work, it's never done. And every time I suggest that I help her with it, she just won't. It makes me wonder if she can't and doesn't want to admit it.
>
> I called her parent's house and never got an answer. I sent a note home once as well. She isn't a

> second language student, so I don't think that it's a language barrier. But there is something going on, I think….
> [*Caucasian female high school teacher, mid-40's with thirteen years of experience.*]

The implicit assumption that often undergirds educators' attempts at caring is that those towards whom the care is directed need to act or behave in certain ways if they are to be considered as thinking or acting appropriately in relation to the attempts and enactments of care. If educators follow and uphold certain curricular and behavioral scripts that they view to be indicative of care, for example, as the vignettes illustrate, if they provide students with the information needed to do well on tests, if they try to institute and uphold rules for respectful classroom interactions, if they try to reach out to students' parents and offer their extra time and help to struggling students, and students still rebuff, ignore, or resist such attempts, then educators often easily slip into the language of student pathology, where students are viewed as exhibiting a deficit of some sort, be it of culture or intelligence, or attribute the failure of their attempts to external factors such as poverty or deficient parenting. The vignettes can thus be seen to illustrate educators attending to their students' responses to attempts of caring through what Roger T. Ames calls an "appeal to a pre-assigned pattern of relatedness" (Bai 1998, 99), where the individual is considered to be acting rightly when his/her conduct conforms to some preexisting social, cultural or political pattern or blueprint (Bai 1998, 100-101).

However, as Heesoon Bai (1998) and other theorists (Young 1990; Ellsworth 1989) have noted, the problem with appealing to such preexisting patterns is that they often operate through a form of violence that subdues, silences, and dominates otherness. Noddings (1984) helps us understand that caring, as an attribute of a relationship, indicates that completion of the caring relation is not just dependent upon how faithfully the "carer carries out the intention [to care] according to his/her own ideal view" (Noddings 2002b, 19), but also upon the cared-for's recognition of the caring. Caring requires a form of non-identical reciprocity, where the cared-for does not receive the one-caring as he/she receives him/her, but nevertheless responds in some form. The cared-for's acknowledgement does not have to be a propositional one, but one where he/she receives and responds to the caring, be it through "direct response, personal delight or happy growth" (Noddings 1984, 74).[5] Noddings describes the nature of the cared-for's acknowledgement of the caring as one where he/she is free to unselfconsciously reveal him/herself spontaneously, to be more fully [her]/himself, where he/she is free to create and follow "his[/her] interests without unnecessary fear and anxiety" (Noddings 1984, 72). Consequently, the educator needs to mindfully attend to how the cared-for is receiving the care that is directed towards him/her. What the vignettes illustrate is that it is the educator's recognition of the need for the cared-for's acknowledgement of the care that is directed towards him/her, as described above, as well as the educator's attunement, the sense of which we will clarify below, to the cared-for's response to the caring that is often missing in enactments of care.

The Call to Embrace Emotional Risk And the Call for Attunement

What conclusions can we draw from our analysis of the narratives for what is needed for the cultivation of caring teacher-student relations? First, since Noddings' thought has allowed us to understand the discomfort and guilt that educators may feel in their interactions with their students as pointing to their primordial connection to the other's call or appeal, in order to help resist institutional flattening or sanitizing of such receptivity, and for receptivity to be sustained, Noddings can be seen to point educators towards a shift that needs to take place in their orientation to emotional risk if caring relations with students are to be cultivated. Rather than viewing our discomfort and guilt as something from which we need to flee, Noddings helps us understand it as something with which we may need to tarry, as that from which we as educators may learn, since it is that which primordially connects us to what the other person asks and may need of us.[6] Admittedly, to remain connected to the unbidden "initial vibration" of the other human being is no easy task, especially when those around us or the institutions within which our livelihoods are invested, direct us otherwise. However, Noddings highlights this task as

something we have to actively and consciously choose to honor and help enable others to do so as well (Noddings 1984, 102-103).

Second, Noddings highlighted the need for the cared-for's acknowledgement of the care directed towards him/her if the relation is to truly be a caring one. This helps educators understand that they need to be aware of how students are actually responding to enactments of care and to adjust them accordingly. Educators are thus pointed to the understanding that they need to attend to students' responses to attempts of caring through an orientation of attunement which interprets the self and other not through preexisting social and cultural blueprints, but through an openness to "environing conditions" (Bai 1998, 100), which does not neglect the social reality within which the educator and student are situated. As Hesoon Bai explains, attunement indicates "the effort of judiciously and creatively interpret[ing] the self and others in the concrete particular context so as to achieve a coherent sense of harmony" (Bai 1998, 99). Attunement does not try to control a situation or fit what is encountered into pre-assigned patterns. Instead, what is key is an interpretive effort that has aesthetic sensitivity to possibilities of interaction that mutually enhance the individuals, pointing towards a harmony that could not have been planned for or predicted.

For example, in the last vignette mentioned above, the teacher echoes the often heard sentiment that race or color should not matter in how one treats or interacts with one's students, and presumes her interactions with her students to be color-blind, pointing to her recognition of the smartest student in her class who happens to be black. Concomitantly, she acknowledges her inability to reach a "black girl" (as well as others), framing the student's resistance as a problem of poverty, parenting, or perhaps an individual deficit of some sort. In contrast, an attuned attending to the student's reactions might have pointed to the teacher reflecting upon, or showing an awareness of how her own raced or classed positioning might be affecting how she understands her students and how her students react to her.

Drawing upon philosopher Merleau Ponty, Frank Margonis (2004, 46) noted that the world of human activity is one in "which human bodies relate to one another at a level of which we are not consciously aware." According to Margonis, our bodies enter an unspoken social dynamic which shapes both students' and teachers' expressions. Such a dynamic indicates our acting from the structurally slotted roles that we inhabit and thus indicates not only face-to-face relationships, but also structural relationships, that is, "the historical influences of [our] respective groups and [our] groups' relationships"(Ibid., 48). This teacher thus could have benefitted from viewing the resistance she faced from some of her minority students not in terms of individual or cultural deficits, but in part, through the terms of the cultural implications of her "whiteness," which would have required a sustained reflection on, and a more honest dialogue about the lived experience of racial differences and the discursive as well as institutional forms within which they are embedded and sanctioned.[7] Through such a reflection by the teacher, new modes of interaction which went against the grain of structurally sanctioned modes could have been opened up, leading to a lessening of resistance on the part of some of her minority students. Thus it would be through the relational conditions of attunement, which did not neglect social realities, that the cared-for's acknowledgement, in the way described by Noddings, might have been given the chance to be actualized.

Such a shift in the educator's orientation in which he/she tarries with guilt or discomfort and attends to his/her students' responses through the mode of attunement rather than control is not something that can be easily measured or operationalized. However, through our discussion and analysis of the narratives, we hope to have underscored that to neglect the importance of educators' taking on such shifts is to continue to contribute to the disconnect between the theory and ideal of care and its practice.

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Notes

1. The discourse of social and emotional learning (SEL), which has been gaining prominence in American education, configures caring relations in the manner described above. See Diane Hoffman (2009).

2. For example, within the discourse of social and emotional learning, caring relations are often linked to teachers doing the following things: helping students to use breathing exercises or using tactile and visual aids to help teach them emotional control; using techniques to help children relax their muscles to cope with tension; teaching students to accurately identify and label emotions; and teaching students to use "I messages" in talking about their feelings (Hoffman, 2009).

3. In her later work, *Starting at Home*, Noddings (2002b, 216-218) speaks of healthy and unhealthy guilt, and pathologies of guilt. However, I would argue that this discussion misses the force of the metaphysical and ethical dimension that was intimated in her earlier work of *Caring*.

4. See Jonathan Kozol's (2005) *The Shame of the Nation*, chapters 3 and 4, for illustration of this idea.

5. By happy growth, Noddings (1984, 60-74) is pointing to not just the absorption of information and skills, but also to the actualization of the physical and ethical self, where the child's receptive capacity to people, objects and ideas is increased.

6. Noddings (1984, 51-58) acknowledges possibility of conflict between the cared-for's needs or desires and what one might think is best for the other person. Noddings is not advocating a mere acceding to the cared-for's appeal or request, regardless of the appeal's content and the situation within which it arises, but she is emphasizing that a basic respect is to be accorded to the appeal of the other person prior to our interpretation of it, and an openness to it after.

7. For a discussion of the cultural implications of "whiteness," how it is often rendered invisible, and the modes of interaction it can call out of white educators and students of color, see Hytten and Adkins (2001), and Blaise (2006).

State Science Standards In a Progressive School

Susan M. Slate

The depth and breadth of the learning at this progressive school often matches — and often exceeds — prescribed state standards.

Note: The author would like to acknowledge the assistance and guidance she received from her professor, Kristan Morrison, throughout the research and writing phases of this article. In addition to proofing and writing advice, Kristan was instrumental in inspiring this research project, securing a school to research, and encouraging the author to pursue publication.

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During my second semester as a graduate student of education, Kristan (one of my professors) introduced me to progressive education and free schools. The progressive education philosophy, as practiced in free schools, allows students to exercise their own voices in their education. Students decide which classes they want to attend, if they choose any at all. Within these classes, they also maintain control of material covered, which creates an environment in which individual students have complete responsibility for their own education.

At first I could not understand how students would learn. This form of learning was completely foreign to me, and I began thinking it could never work. I assumed that students would never go to class, would never learn to add and subtract, let alone move on to calculus. I also assumed that days would be spent playing on the playground with little to no traditional learning happening. However, intrigue quickly replaced these assumptions, and I began to question everything about these and similar alternative schools. What happens if a student never chooses to attend classes? How do colleges view free and alternative school pupils? How does society view these schools and the students and teachers there? Question after question swirled in my head, and I began to consider a brand new (for me, at least) area of education. Under Kristan's guidance, I read a great deal of literature about educational alternatives, such as progressivism, critical pedagogy, freedom-based education, and critiques of conventional education. While somewhat convinced of the validity of these forms of education, I was still curious and wanted to see these alternatives in "real-life."

My Questions

Since I was pursuing a license to teach secondary school biology, I was especially curious about how science was taught in non-traditional schools: Would the students graduate with much science content and skills? My experiences as a public school student as well as my preparation to become a public school science teacher had immersed me in the seeming importance of following the state-mandated science curriculum (in Virginia, called the Science Standards of Learning, or SOLs). I wanted to understand not only how science was taught at a progressive school, but also whether such a school could argue it was accomplishing what the state required of public school teachers in teaching specific content. To answer these questions, I felt I needed to see for myself what a science education was like at an actual progressive school.

The School

Luckily for me, the Blue Mountain School was located close to my university. The school was founded in 1982 in the small, southwestern Virginia town of Floyd. The school educates around 50 students and employs ten teachers, a director, and an office manager. According to the Blue Mountain School website, the school is a "contemplative, progressive" school. Teachers at this alternative school educate students from preschool through middle school with four major age groups: early childhood, early elementary, older elementary, and middle school. Each group is not divided by a set age or even grade; rather, students graduate to the next level based upon their maturity and educational factors. Classes take place from 9 a.m. to 3 p. m. Monday through Thursday from September to May. Older students (older elementary and middle school) participate in core classes including math, science, English, and history. Students also attend courses in such areas as service learning, music, art, and contemplative learning.

Blue Mountain School uses a slightly more regimented learning approach than free schools, but is still extremely flexible compared to most public schools (Miller 2004). Because it is a private school, Blue Mountain is exempt from the state-mandated curriculum; rather, teachers are free to create a unique curriculum for their students. For example, the science teacher, Miranda, planned to begin her lessons for the year with a unit on cosmology, the creation of the universe. Depending on student interest, Miranda can spend as much time as needed on this topic. Furthermore, should students express an interest in a topic unrelated to the current topic, the teacher is allowed to deviate from his or her initial curriculum.

According to the school's website, teachers in elementary and middle school "work to balance their students' need for structure with their increasing need for freedom and choice as they grow." As a result, classes ordinarily start with a discussion that serves as an informal assessment of what the students already know to engage them in the material, increase their confidence and curiosity, and allow teachers and students to realize what students might be struggling with from past lessons and what should be focused on in the current lesson. Questions play a central role in the teaching that takes place at Blue Mountain. In fact, the school website has this to say about questioning.

> As students explore new topics and skills, teachers encourage questions like: What did we expect to learn? What did we observe? Did we answer our questions or learn all that we wanted to about this topic? Do we need to spend more time trying to answer our questions or exploring what we've learned? Questions like these help students reflect on what they are learning, making new connections and finding meaning in each lesson and activity.

Study Approach

I spent five weeks observing the only classroom at Blue Mountain School explicitly focused on science. Occasionally I had the opportunity to study other groups of students or teachers in the school during recesses, lunches, special events, and presentations, but this was not my main research focus. Miranda instructs two classes with fewer than ten students in each. Each class lasted about two hours with a ten to fifteen-minute snack in the middle of the period. Often classes would extend beyond the set time or begin late for the school neither uses bells or adheres strictly to the schedule. The youngest science class Miranda teaches is the upper elementary class ranging from second to fifth grade. The older class ranges from fifth

to eighth grade. Because Miranda teaches science on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, I observed her classroom only on those days during my five weeks of observation. In addition to classroom instruction, I observed Miranda's planning time and lunch on Tuesdays. If any out-of-the-ordinary science instruction took place on the days I was scheduled to be at Blue Mountain, such as the Valentine's Day Special Tea, I remained in the classroom and observed these as well. Conversations with Miranda, the director, and other teachers were also recorded in my field notes.

Because Miranda is the school's only science teacher and the only teacher with whom I had a great deal of contact, she was the only person interviewed using pre-written questions. Others involved at Blue Mountain were asked many questions about the school and its practices during conversations throughout the study and these answers were recorded thoroughly in my notes. During my interview with Miranda, we discussed her science teaching methods, classroom setup, teaching theories utilized in her classroom, curricula and resources she may incorporate, Virginia science SOLs and their impact on her teaching, scientific concepts she believes are important, assessment of student learning, her experiences in public education and the effect that had on her teaching at Blue Mountain, traditional teaching methodology, and student voice/choice.

To further enrich the data gathered from the observations and the semi-structured interviews, I examined other documents about science education and Blue Mountain School. In order to gain a better understanding of the science curriculum and its relationship to the Virginia science SOLs, I collected any handouts Miranda distributed to her pupils during the study. These consisted of worksheets, note sheets, and stories. To study the school itself, its philosophies, and how it operates, I obtained the school handbook and also read their website and newsletters available online. Lastly, I accessed the Virginia science SOLs from the Virginia Department of Education website for comparative analysis.

My Findings

After spending time with Miranda at the school, I discovered that the development of specific science skills and the understanding of scientific information (content) were very important to her. Her teaching thus seemed to be similar to my own experiences of the goals of science teachers in public schools; however, within this teaching of scientific skills and content, Blue Mountain seemed to also teach students in a way that would develop certain attitudes, such as independence, an understanding of oneself and others as social and emotional beings, and the value of inclusiveness and interconnectedness. Blue Mountain also practiced different pedagogical approaches in its teaching of science, with specific focus on activity-based learning and assessing students in non-conventional ways. I found these differences of attitude development and pedagogy most interesting, for I felt Blue Mountain was essentially going above and beyond state requirements for teaching science. This is intriguing since many people might believe that private schools of this type are not "up to par" with the rigor and content focus of conventional public schools.

Science Content and Skills

Blue Mountain School emphasizes content in science. To some extent, I would argue that the science content at Blue Mountain School goes into much greater depth than in public schools. For example, under the study of cosmology, the SOLs only require that students know the phases of the moon. However, Miranda taught her students theories on how the moon was formed and myths surrounding its formation and phases. Doing so provided students with an historical background and historical connections to the science behind the moon's phases. It may well be, though, that Blue Mountain School does not cover the breadth of information mandated in the SOLs every year simply because of how much time teachers spend on specific topics. However, my own experience tells me that "covering" a lot of information does not necessarily lead to the permanent retention of the information, nor does it lead to significant levels of engagement with the content.

Science content information was certainly important at the Blue Mountain School and science skills were clearly paramount. These skills aligned well with the Virginia SOLs, which would seem to indicate that the school went above and beyond the requirements in its teaching of science skills.

The 2010 Virginia science SOLs emphasize the scientific skills students must be able to master, such as making observations, creating hypotheses, utilizing the scientific method for experiments, creating experiments, correctly using the metric system for measurements, questioning, formulating inferences, collecting and analyzing data, recording observations, classifying objects and organisms, building and using models to further understanding or for explaining connections. Students at Blue Mountain School certainly demonstrated most of these abilities during this study.

Occasionally students had an opportunity to select activities from science shelves within the classroom. Often these activities contained an experimental element, which students of all ages were required to write up in their sketchbooks.

Miranda routinely requested students to formulate hypotheses and inferences. In addition to hypotheses associated with the experiments recorded within their sketchbooks, students received other opportunities to cultivate this skill. When the class was discussing a science problem, Miranda asked students either to individually or as a whole class make predictions based on previous knowledge. Similarly, during activities incorporated into lessons (though not full fledged experiments) Miranda asked her students to create hypotheses as to what may occur or to infer what scientific principles might be at work.

Observations and data of formal experiments were recorded in sketchbooks and often involved worksheets for lesson activities. For the younger grades, observations and data were often depicted exclusively through pictures; however, older students, especially middle school students, were encouraged to include as many written, narrative details as possible, in addition to any relevant drawings. Whenever measurements were taken as part of the observations, students used the metric system. Miranda would often remind students that scientists all over the world use this system and since they were in science class, they should as well.

While the school, in my opinion, does a great job teaching these skills, it cannot fulfill some of the skills standards as completely as perhaps some public schools. Because it is a private rather than public school, Blue Mountain operates with a limited budget. Equipment readily available to most students in public schools may be missing entirely or may be in limited supply. For example, I only observed one microscope at Blue Mountain, and laboratory equipment and computers appeared to be in short supply. Blue Mountain does not maintain a computer lab like the schools I have been involved with and only has one computer in each classroom, which limits virtual learning. Since the Virginia science SOLs dictate that students be proficient using microscopes and lab equipment, Blue Mountain does not have the financial resources to achieve these standards.

Attitudes Developed through Science Teaching

In addition to the scientific content and skills addressed in the Virginia science SOLs, students at Blue Mountain were encouraged to acquire certain attitudes. While the SOLs do not specifically address desired scientific or educational attitudes, the introductory statement included at the beginning of all the elementary grade 2010 SOLs alludes to attitudes the state of Virginia wishes to cultivate within science students. Occasionally, the attitudes encouraged at Blue Mountain had a direct correlation to the state standards, but the attitudes I determined to be routinely promoted were independence, an understanding of oneself and others as social and emotional beings, and the value of inclusiveness and interconnectedness.

Independence through Freedom

Students at Blue Mountain do not exercise total freedom. While Miranda decides which broad scientific topics are covered within her classroom, the students ultimately determine the specifics of the material and the amount of time spent covering them. For example, when I first began observing, Miranda revealed they had been covering cosmology for almost four months since the beginning of the school year. One might assume these students were having difficulties learning the material. Instead, the students as a whole were extremely interested in the topic and wanted to learn more and more about cosmology. Rather than move on to another topic, Miranda allowed her students to more deeply explore the subject. As a result, the students truly know an enormous amount about the creation of the universe and

the major bodies making up the universe (galaxies, stars, planets, black holes, etc.). It was not uncommon to hear students converse in grand detail about the nuances in cosmology, things they had learned four months before. Deep learning appeared to be taking place.

In an interview Miranda talked about her students requesting to learn about new topics. Her response to these requests is usually positive as long as they are feasible and relevant to the topic at hand.

Students are encouraged to express their individuality and independence as much as possible in every assignment. Moving beyond rigidity, Miranda assigns projects with options built in. During my observation period, Miranda assigned a functional geography project. A sheet specifying the information students were required to include in their project was distributed. However, the format was not specified, which allowed students to present the material any way they chose. Miranda noted that the projects were like mirrors of the students who created them. Each student chose a different way to convey the information that reflected their individuality and their freedom within the established parameters.

Ideally, Miranda would like her classes to be freer and more and independent. She envisions a future in which the students at Blue Mountain are almost exclusively self-directed in the science classroom. Miranda describes her vision this way:

> They [the students] would be completely self-directed where each individual child would have their own index card and [I would] say do five of these by the end of class. They could research something; they could be doing some of the activities on the shelves; they could be working with a partner on something; they could be working in workbooks. It could be anything…. So it would really be me … going around to each individual child at different times to see how they are doing or [asking] if they needed any help from me.

But she is not quite there yet. Instead, her students do a lot of groupwork and activities together because Miranda does not feel they are ready for such extreme independence.

Regardless of how far from Miranda's ideal the students are currently, she still allows them as much independence as possible. When students ask her a question, she often directs them to sources where they can answer the question for themselves. For example, students often wanted to know more about a subject related to what they were learning or to something going on in the world around them. Most of the time, Miranda explored the question a bit with them and then encouraged them to research it on the computer or in other classroom materials.

For example, Miranda introduced the concept of the phases of the moon in a variety of ways. She asked her students to construct a flipbook containing pictures and labels of the phases. While some students were still involved in a demonstration with Miranda, others discovered a chart book containing the phases of the moon. Utilizing this tool, this group of students began trying to label their flipbook with the correct phases on their own, without Miranda's assistance or prompting. Their independent thinking was not prompted by Miranda but was encouraged once she noticed their self-direction.

Though the Virginia SOLs do not cite specifically freedom and independence as goals for public school students, the introductory piece of the science SOLs does require students to "develop scientific dispositions and habits of mind including curiosity" and to "make informed decisions regarding contemporary issues, taking into account … personal responsibility" (Virginia Department of Education 2010). The instructional practices at Blue Mountain School that foster freedom and independence also serve to instill curiosity and personal responsibility within its pupils. By giving students more freedom to pursue topics of their own interest, Miranda required students to tap into their own curiosity and, by encouraging independence, Miranda has also instilled the disposition of personal responsibility. Each student must take charge of his or her individual education and be responsible for it.

Understanding Oneself and Others as Social and Emotional Beings

I often witnessed students being taught more holistically than the children I had observed in public schools. Social and emotional issues were brought to

the forefront of learning at Blue Mountain. Often students would comment negatively on their work or themselves. Whenever Miranda heard negative comments from students, she would immediately have them say two or three positive things about themselves or their products. In this way, students begin to recognize they must treat themselves as positively as they would others at the school.

Miranda and I often discussed problems she continued to encounter with her elementary students, such as name calling and being unkind to one another. The result was the implementation of a system to encourage these children to become more aware of their actions. Students received a gem for every pleasant thing a teacher heard them say or do. However, for every negative comment or action, the students would lose a gem. Once three gems were lost, the student received a stone. When I questioned Miranda about the gem and stone system, she was not quite sure if the system would be effective. She said that the teachers and the director had decided to try this approach for a week and then decide whether it should be continued. Miranda opposed using the gems and stones for rewards or punishments. She said that she believes that being a good person should be a reward in and of itself and that students should not be bribed to follow rules and expectations. Miranda also believes that engaging in nasty behavior introduces its own set of natural consequences in the form of losing friends and having a more difficult time navigating through life. When I later arrived in Miranda's classroom, her students were engaged in creating "finger labyrinths" decorated with the gems and stones from the behavior experiment. Miranda explained to the children the gems and stones would no longer be employed for discipline and said that the point had been to make them more aware of how their words and actions have an impact on themselves and those around them. Rather than simply abandon the stones and gems without explanation or closure, Miranda decided to create a lesson surrounding them to debrief the students about this experience and reiterate their purpose, thus furthering the students' social development.

Recognizing that the gems and stones project did not fully serve its intended purpose, the school brought in guest speakers to discuss bullying and the impact of their actions with the students and to engage in team-building exercises. As a result of one such visit, Miranda began engaging students in compassion meditation at the end of each class period. The meditation focused on perceiving everyone as human, just like oneself and to connect the inner goodness within oneself to the inner goodness within all humanity. Once again, this was viewed as an important application of classroom time, because it served the purpose of creating a whole-minded student, not solely one focused on facts, figures, and test scores.

Emotions are recognized and brought to the surface in the science classroom at Blue Mountain. One afternoon one student was having a particularly difficult time obeying Miranda and maintaining her composure in the classroom. Eventually, the youngster's anger bubbled to the surface and she stormed out of the room after a private discussion with Miranda. Rather than pretend that the emotional level had not risen, an adult volunteer returned and thanked the class for remaining patient with the student who had stormed out. After this acknowledgement, class resumed without whispers about the emotionally charged event.

In addition to service learning courses, yoga, and meditation, recess and various other forms of free time are important for holistic learning. Every day each student participates in at least 30 minutes of recess, is allowed two 15-minute snacks, and a 30-minute lunch period. These breaks promote informal learning about life in general, engaging with others in further discussion of classroom material or creativity.

It became clear to me that Blue Mountain is focused on cultivating students who are both socially and emotionally aware. By employing positive practices and encouraging personal responsibility for actions and inclusiveness, Blue Mountain fosters these behaviors. While these lessons appear to have very little connection with teaching science, they do occupy a significant portion of time set aside for learning the subject. Blue Mountain has set a precedent for educating the entire pupil even in the science classroom. According to Haynes, Ben-Avie, and Ensign (2003) this method permits students to approach learning science with an entirely different outlook

and with respect. Incorporating social and emotional elements into the science curriculum provides students with a basis for creating important connections from science to their lives outside of the classroom. Haynes, Ben-Avie, and Ensign (2003, 125) have argued that

> emphasis … on the history of science and personal and social perspectives opens the way to a fuller appreciation of science as a human activity — one that implies responsibility to the human community.

Blue Mountain's emphasis on the whole student does not align with any specific SOL, but is addressed in the introduction to the science SOLs. The standards state that science students should "apply scientific concepts, skills, and processes to everyday experiences" and that students should have a respect for living things (Virginia Department of Education 2010). While respect for living things quite possibly refers to respect for living scientific specimens and not specifically other human beings, it seems logical that if students have respect for themselves and their fellow students this respect will be extended to other living organisms more readily than if this social and emotional learning had not occurred.

Valuing Inclusiveness and Interconnectedness

Inclusiveness is engrained in the students at Blue Mountain School, and the students sought to include me in the day-to-day activities of the classroom and larger school. They frequently approached me with questions, comments, and invitations. Having an observer simply be a mere presence in the classroom is not sufficient for these children. They genuinely desire contact with everyone involved in any capacity at Blue Mountain. This extended beyond occasionally requesting assistance from me if Miranda was occupied with another student. Students in the upper elementary class repeatedly asked about my teaching notes and what I was writing. Sometimes, if I failed to jot down something they felt was important, they would call it to my attention. When I entered the classroom on Valentine's Day, one of the students left without a word, and returned with a valentine addressed to "Science Lady."

Blue Mountain's emphasis on inclusiveness is readily apparent. First, it is stated explicitly in their Family Handbook (2011) that

> [w]e celebrate diversity in our membership and in the world. We explore wisdom traditions and cultural celebrations, engage in service learning, and work to contribute positively to both our local community and the larger global community.

In the February 2012 newsletter a new teacher wrote about Blue Mountain and his feelings toward their inclusiveness:

> Since my family's move to Floyd late last summer, the local community has been very welcoming, and this is especially true with Blue Mountain School. The staff, teachers and parents at Blue Mountain are always kind and warm to us, whether it's sharing a humorous story about something our son did in class or the school's sincerity in accepting my wife and I into the community. (Blue Mountain School, "Indigo Messenger" 2012).

In addition to valuing and teaching about human interconnectedness, connections between all the subject areas were apparent throughout my visit. When studying moon phases, Miranda repeatedly connected the science behind the changing phases to math and often brought in history as well. Indeed, one lesson was so linked to math one of the students commented, "We're actually doing math today." Miranda taught the phases of the moon in terms of fractions and money. And to assist in further understanding, Miranda took down the clock on her wall and drew the various phases of the moon on the face. Story after story about the moon and its phases incorporated aspects of history. Her goal is to help her students see how it relates to everything.

> Science is a way of knowing, and I want them to know that. It's a way of knowing all their different subjects, how everything is connected, all the different kinds of science, even down to social science.

Interconnectedness is certainly addressed in the introduction to the science SOLs. The standards re-

quire students to explore the natural world through collaboration and with an understanding of historical contributions to science. Furthermore, the document calls for students to "develop an understanding of the interrelationship of science and technology, engineering, and mathematics" (Virginia Department of Education 2010).

Activity-Based Learning and Learning through Stories

Most of the instruction taking place in Miranda's classroom involved activity. When learning about moon phases, students constructed their own clay moons placed on top of a pencil or stick. These props were then utilized in further instruction about the movement of the moon around both the sun and the earth. A lamp placed in the center of the table represented the sun and the student's head represented earth. Students were then able to orbit their clay moon around their head and the sun to visualize the phases of the moon. For homework, students were assigned to teach someone the phases of the moon and to take their sketchbooks home every night for about a month to sketch and label the moon phase for the evening. To wrap up the lessons on the phases of the moon, Miranda asked her students to find various bits of nature to represent the different moon phases. Students picked up leaves, grass, and rocks from around the grounds of Blue Mountain and used them to construct all the phases of the moon. Some of the children supplemented items from nature by incorporating man-made materials scavenged from around the play area. A partnership of students used a hula-hoop, their bodies, and the sun to cast shadows on the ground to represent the phases of the moon from new moon to full moon.

Miranda also employs stories as a primary form of teaching. Trained in Montessori education, Miranda teaches the Five Great Lessons from Montessori schools. The Five Great Lessons consist of "Coming of the Universe and Earth," Coming of Life," "Coming of Human Beings," "Communications in Signs," and "The Story of Numbers" (Lillard 2005). These lessons are broken down into stories. Told dramatically and often with demonstrations accompanying them, these stories create a framework for students to recall information.

Assessments

At the Blue Mountain School one of the first things one notices is there are no tests or grades. So how does a teacher know if his or her students are truly learning the material in an ungraded atmosphere?

I explored this fundamental question in my interview with Miranda. She reported giving the middle school students one "review" a year. Essentially, the review is a test without that name. Miranda spoke about the anxiety of middle school students over tests and grading. One of the students began talking about how much she disliked tests or "reviews" and the amount of worry and concern this caused her. However, Miranda administers a few formal test assessments with the middle school children, because she recognizes they need to be prepared to endure tests later in their educational careers. Miranda described her approach to tests as follows:

> I know what I'm covering is more than they need to know for public schools. So I think it's fine. The best [way] that I've found for me to assess is to just talk about the material with them and see what kind of information they are getting. That way they are not stressed out over a test….

While Miranda may not test her students frequently, she assesses their progress and knowledge every day. Content, whether related to the SOLs or not, is not often formally tested at Blue Mountain; instead, Miranda relies on other forms of informal assessment to ensure the students are learning the information presented or gained through activities, experiments, research, or stories.

Conclusion

My observations at Blue Mountain were vastly different than my experiences with public education. Students at Blue Mountain certainly learned a great deal of science, but this was accomplished differently than what I have observed in public schools. The information, skills, and attitudes studied and encouraged at Blue Mountain often aligned with the Virginia SOLs. The gathering of content-related information is at a much slower pace. This allows for deeper exploration and understanding of scientific topics rather than a shallow scratching of the surface. Furthermore, Blue Mountain seeks to move students

beyond simply learning information to pass a test. In short, the school seeks to feed the students' social and emotional well being by emphasizing it throughout the school and the curriculum.

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Curriculum Without Fear

Faye Stanley

True education must focus on cultivating human potential, the need for each of us to find the "thing" that excites us and feeds our deepest hunger.

Curriculum is ever-changing, a seemingly endlessly moving target. We can never seem to agree on what it should be or how it should be taught. Schools have state standards, district standards, sometimes county standards, and now national standards. The current push toward a national curriculum represents a major effort to move to some level of agreement about curriculum, making this a particularly critical time to stop and examine what constitutes a strong curriculum. Sir Ken Robinson, an international authority on creativity and education, in his most recent book, *The Element*, brings a different perspective to the curriculum question:

> The future for education is not in standardizing but in customizing; not in promoting groupthink and "deindividuation" but in cultivating the real depth and dynamism of human abilities of every sort.

His belief that risk-taking (and failure) are integral to a good education has much to offer us as we consider our options for creating the most powerful curriculum possible.

We all know that we can't educate for tomorrow, in the sense that we don't have a clue about the actual information that will be needed in the next 100 years, or even the next twenty. To truly educate, we must cultivate human potential, the need for each of us to find the "thing" that excites us and feeds our deepest hunger. It is at that point that creativity blooms. This is the very same creativity that is touted as essential in 21st Century Learning Skills. Despite this goal, the driving forces that are really behind what is taught in schools and the fears just beneath the surface are producing the opposite results.

It is interesting that we have assumed that the best way to provide workers for our economy is to have

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schools "look" like factories or corporations. We have divided curriculum up in the same way that we divide labor on the factory floor or departmental functions in a corporation. We even provide a quality control station (benchmarks), or customer satisfaction component to examine our creations (the students) to see if they have met design expectations. We are afraid to divert from this path, because we are concerned that our end-product will be missing something essential.

It is important to note that while this idea of the student as product, and curriculum as an essential body of knowledge is heavily represented in many of the politically driven mandates for education, it is not fully accepted either in the U.S. educational community (past or present) or in the world at large. In *Culture Counts: Changing Power Relations in Education*, Bishop and Glynn remind us that even our most basic approach to curriculum design may differ radically within cultural contexts. They tell of an occasion in the 1980s when the indigenous people of New Zealand, the Maori, were included in discussions with the Curriculum Division of the New Zealand Department of Education about the fundamentals of curriculum. The Maori began their planning with a listing of the principles that guide people's lives, principles such as tapu (the sacred), mana (authority or power), and mauri (the life principle). This stood in stark contrast to the Pakeha (New Zealanders of British descent), who began their process of deliberation by asking what sort of knowledge needed to be included, listing events such as the Industrial Revolution.

Our approach, grounded in Western European history and processes, largely reflects the Pakeha approach; still, there is a real possibility that we can make curriculum more reflective of what really matters to us, rather than restricting it to facts and skills. Educators are coming to understand that processes are the key to real learning, but they often feel throttled by the mandates and assessments that have developed out of our fear that if there is no structure in place to monitor what goes on in schools, teachers won't teach, and students won't learn. Could it be that our primary goal should be greater than merely creating a productive workforce? Maybe we should simply cultivate potential in whatever form it may take, consistent with the principles that reflect our best selves. By emphasizing individual and societal potential, we could more firmly meet the 21st Century Skills call for collaboration, creativity and critical thinking, and better equip students to flexibly respond to the unknowable demands of the future.

When Jim Kelly opened a new school in the Chatham, New Jersey, school district in 1995, he had to pull together a new school community that was coming from four different schools in the district. After many meetings with PTO groups, the Board of Education, and the new staff, Jim could see that they all shared one major common theme: they all cared deeply about kids. To convey this central principle, a banner was created for the school's entry: "Whenever you enter this building, you are loved first and taught second." Jim knew that the deepest principles that guide our lives could provide grounding and substance to more traditional curricular goals. He chose to lead his faculty, students, and the school community based on that premise. Jim remained in a leadership role at the school for twelve years and in 2007 was awarded the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association Principal of the Year Award for Visionary Leadership.

Finding the Right Formula

We have been looking for the magic educational bullet for a long time and veteran educators are often cynical about the latest reform initiatives that come down the pike. They are cynical because their experience has been that the reform initiative will soon pass and be followed by another and yet another. Many of these movements and strategies are meant to standardize teaching and are based on a conviction that bad teachers must be identified and jettisoned from the system. With this fear underlying so much of teacher professional development, it is no wonder that teachers are reluctant to invest their energies in the reform strategies or expose perceived gaps in their own understanding. But these gaps do not make a bad teacher; indeed, the teacher who actively takes risks, fails, assesses, and improves is our best hope for a meaningful classroom experience for our children.

If we are to look at this contextually, then, how *do* we motivate students to learn, and educators to be invested and engaged? Daniel Pink, in his recent

book *Drive*, looks closely at what motivates us and finds that research tells us that for routine tasks or the execution of mechanical skills that don't require much creativity, rewards can bolster performance. But for tasks requiring innovation, they can actually be harmful. Pink further notes that there are three essential elements to motivate people to do their best creative work: autonomy, mastery, and purpose. He describes autonomy as "the desire to direct our own lives," mastery as "the urge to get better at something that matters," and purpose as "our yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves." In today's environment teachers feel far from autonomous. As for mastery, teachers don't trust their peers and administrators to help them navigate their own growth, while their jobs are often held hostage to test scores.

Finally, there is real anger from many teachers about their purpose, as defined by Pink. They didn't enter teaching to get rich. They entered the profession to make a difference, and they feel their capacity to do so is being short-circuited every day by the testing culture in which they find themselves. It is critical that teachers and students find autonomy, mastery, and purpose in their school lives to flourish and do their best work.

This perspective offers clear guidance for curriculum development, and once again asks us to think of curriculum as the Maori might, by beginning with the principles that guide our lives, rather than a list of necessary knowledge. What we teach is critically important, because it must reflect the personal needs and interests of our students. How can our curriculum be designed to outline the necessary processes and skills needed for students to be successful over time and still leave teachers free to engage fully in learning with their students? In this model, collaboration, another 21st century learning skill, is essential. When teachers are collaborators with other teachers, and mentoring and coaching are part of their way of life, teachers have a chance to develop to their fullest. This culture of collaboration could then model for students how they can contribute to something that matters, bringing their own unique vision to bear on their personal work and the quality of the school experience. Standards and assessments do matter, but only when autonomy, mastery, and purpose are present. Standards and assessments should serve our larger goal of developing school communities that lead the way for students to become the kind of engaged citizenry that our country needs. They should never lead us down the path of diminishing individuality and squashing the vast pool of our human potential. That is, after all, our best hope for a solid economic system in a society that reflects a culture of innovation, strength, and caring. It is also the foundation of our democratic way of life.

Students in Durham, NC, who transition from their elementary school into middle school are involved in an integrated study called E Pluribus Unum (From Many, One). Each year these new fifth graders begin with a syllabus and a notebook that outlines their path through the project, a study highlighting the experience of the people who immigrated to the U.S. between the 1890s and 1950s. The students engage in multiple projects designed to draw on their own lives, including interviews with relatives and research on their own cultural heritages. The experiences include social studies, lots of reading and writing, art and music. A central piece of the work is the Ellis Island simulation, for which students are given a character, and a "secret" list of facts about their character. They write from the point of view of the character, pack a box or case that reflects their character's journey, and create music that expresses the journey from different countries to Ellis Island.

The exercise culminates with the students, dressed as their characters and carrying their one suitcase with items they have brought from "home," come to the desk at Ellis Island and make their case for entry into the country. Students carefully choose what they might share with the official that might support their chances of entry. Some are admitted, others not. It is an experience that is more than personal. It engages the students in many independent activities, as well as a number of collaborative projects.

Students repeatedly reflect on their experiences, in their writing and conversations, assessing their own work and that of their peers. They write letters "home" from America, read novels describing the experiences of young people of the time, and create newspapers that might have circulated at Angel Island Immigration Station. They create presentations, papers, and poems for themselves and their peers. They make their own transition into a new stage of

their own lives through the lenses of the many Americans who also faced the changes and uncertainties of a new home. This experience is centered in the lives of the students, offers enormous autonomy in its many tasks, and provides a sense of mastery and purpose. And it is personal. The kids really care about their characters and they are encouraged to contemplate deeply the many social justice issues involved in immigration. Autonomy, mastery, and purpose all work together in a school experience that more than meets rigorous academic content.

It will take great courage for us to throw off the fear-based curriculum and move to our guiding principles for living as the foundation of the curriculum in our schools. We do have guiding lights to follow, and a host of educators who have, in the face of difficult resistance, refused to do otherwise. There are many educators who intellectually support such innovations, and many more who simply thirst for this re-orientation of our most basic values in schools. A culture that, as Sir Ken Robinson has said, cultivates "the real depth and dynamism of human abilities of every sort" represents a move toward a process that will allow students to develop a capacity for undertaking whatever challenges lie before them. How can we possibly do less?

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Holistic and Indigenous Education: A Dialogue

Four Arrows and Jack Miller

Holistic education theory and practice would benefit from greater attention to Native American practices and insights.

Dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world.
Paulo Freire (1970, 88)

The ultimate aim [of Indigenous education] is not explaining an objectified universe, but rather learning about and understanding responsibilities and relationships and celebrating those that humans establish with the world.
Greg Cajete (2000, 79)

Four Arrows: Jack, I am honored that you have invited me to co-author this dialogue about similarities and/or differences between "Indigenous education" and "holistic education." My hunch is that we will spend more time agreeing than not, but for me the effort is worthwhile if only to validate the source of a way of learning that has largely been ignored or dismissed. Last week when the Tucson Unified School District implemented its new "ban on ethnic education" law and restricted the use of Paulo Freire's book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), I was not surprised to see Bigelow's text, *Rethinking Columbus* targeted, as well as my own book, *Unlearning the Language of Conquest: Scholars Expose Anti-Indianism in America* (2006). Such "anti-Indianism" has a long history in education. For example, contemporary Harvard archeologist, Steven La Blanc writes that it is a complete myth

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to claim that remembering some ancient idea about being one with our natural environment will somehow restore ecological balance and minimize warfare (2003). Similarly, British historian Hugh Trevor-Roper (1965, 9) wrote in the 1960s about how

> unrewarding is any serious study of the gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the globe, tribes whose chief function in history is to show to the present an image of the past from which, by history, it has escaped.

James Clifton, an anthropologist, argues in his book, *The Invented Indian* (1990, 36) that "acknowledging anything positive in the native past is an entirely wrongheaded proposition because no genuine Indian accomplishments have ever really be substantiated." Robert Whelan, director of a pro-free-market think tank, in *Wild in the Woods: The Myth of the Peaceful Eco-Savage* (1999, 23) also dismisses any positive contributions of Indigenous peoples from around the world. He writes, "Indigenous peoples of the earth have nothing to teach us about caring for the environment."

I am not sure holistic educators, perhaps including you and Ron Miller, two of my educational heroes by the way, have sufficiently acknowledged the links between holistic and Indigenous education. For example, in Miller's article entitled, "Philosophical Sources of Holistic Education" published in the *Journal of Values Education* in 2005, he lists five sources, beginning with your book, *The Holistic Curriculum* (1988) and his journal, The *Holistic Education Review* that followed on the heels of a few humanistic psychologists whose used the term "holistic." He says this official movement was a product of the 1960s and derived from the perspectives of such philosophers as Whitehead, Jung, Bateson, and von Bertalanffy and their emphasis on complementarity. He says a second source of holistic education was found in quantum mechanics; a third in the deep ecology movement; a fourth, a "transnationalist perspective associated with an ideology of pacifism," and a fifth, though he admits it is subtle and seldom referenced, was the emergence of contemporary feminism. If the women's movement is barely credited in holistic education literature, then what can you say about Indigenous sources? If the roots of holistic education are as clearly rooted in the ways of knowing that Indigenous peoples practiced successfully for tens of thousands of years as I assert, should holistic educators not start making this connection explicit in light of the global ecological crises we face on Mother Earth today?

Jack Miller: It is an honor for me to participate in this dialogue. I have read your work for years starting in the *Holistic Education Review* and was delighted that you gave the keynote at our most recent Holistic Learning Conference. I believe that holistic education as a practice started with Indigenous peoples; in other words, the original vision of holistic education was an Indigenous one. Rather than focus on Ron's "Philosophic Sources of Holistic Education" article, I would like to start by focusing on three central principles that I believe both Indigenous educators and holistic educators share. In my view these are fundamental to the practice of both Indigenous education and holistic education. The first one is bringing to awareness the deep interconnectedness of life, or realizing what some indigenous peoples refer to as the web of life. Seeing how we are intimately connected to all life and the processes of the earth is vital to holistic education. So much of education has been about fragmentation and breaking knowledge into unconnected courses, units, and lessons. I believe both Indigenous educators and holistic educators seek an education that encourages the student to see relationships and connections.

A second principle that I believe is shared is a sense of the sacred: the cosmos, the earth and its inhabitants are viewed as sacred and with wonder. No one has expressed reverence for the earth better than Indigenous peoples. Unfortunately, this has been lost today in the materialistic, consumerist mindset. We have forgotten how to be enchanted by looking at the stars, feeling the wind on our face, or smelling grass after it has rained.

The third principle is educating the whole person, which includes body, mind, and spirit. Today, education focuses almost exclusively on the mind with some lip service to the body. The soul is ignored. I think that both holistic and Indigenous educators would agree with Gandhi's view of education when he wrote in *India of my Dreams*:

> I hold that true education of the intellect can only come through a proper exercise and training of the bodily organs, e.g., hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose, etc. In other words, an intelligent use of the bodily organs in a child provides the best and quickest way of developing his intellect. But unless the development of the mind and body goes hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul, the former alone would prove to be a poor lopsided affair. By spiritual training I mean education of the heart. A proper and all round development of the mind, therefore, can take place only when it proceeds *pari passu* with the education of the physical and spiritual faculties of the child. They constitute an indivisible whole. According to this theory, therefore, it would be a gross fallacy to suppose that they can be developed piecemeal or independently of one another. (Gutek 1997, 363)

Today, ministries and departments of education have committed the gross fallacy that Gandhi refers to and which both holistic educators and Indigenous educators seek to redress. Although I believe that these basic principles are shared, there is still much for holistic educators to learn from Indigenous educators. Holistic education is often spoken about but not embodied. We have conferences and courses on holistic education but often they do not move beyond talk. We may start a course or conference with a minute of meditation, but we are still seeking ways to integrate more deeply the principles of interconnectedness, wholeness, and sacredness.

Four Arrows: First, I want to say how much I appreciate your saying that the original version of holistic education started with Indigenous peoples. This admission has more value on multiple levels than I can express, and I want to move directly to your ideas.

If, as you say, holistic education embraces interconnectedness, "a sense of the sacred" and mind/body/spirit learning, it indeed coincides with Indigenous beliefs. Had you stopped there, we might have had to end our dialogue here. However, you concluded with a most important observation that allows us to continue, i.e., the rhetoric is too seldom embodied in practice. Perhaps there is something in Indigenous wisdom that can help here, for although many Indigenous peoples around the world are also losing the will, ability, and/or cultures to assure such embodiment, one thing that makes us distinct is that we have managed to "walk the talk" in spite of the terrible barriers faced in doing so over the past millennium. Much of the Indigenous plight relates to a refusal to let go of these three principles in spite of the hegemonic influences that prevail.

So how can holistic educators integrate more deeply the principles of interconnectedness, wholeness, and sacredness? How can we move to the "naming of the world," to establishing and celebrating our relationships and responsibilities? You hinted that a minute of meditation before a conference is not enough, so let's start with this ritual and see what Indigenous practice offers. Most classes in schools, most meetings of educators, and almost all of the presentations at the recent American Education Research Association Conference in Vancouver did not even open with the minute of meditation. When I was Dean of Education at Oglala Lakota College on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, however, no meeting, class, or presentation ever started without a significant prayer, song, or ritual.

When a traditional Indigenous speaker is about to share sacred knowledge — and all knowledge is considered sacred — he or she has a responsibility to acknowledge the many relationships that have bearing on the topic. It reminds everyone of our inherent contract and partnership with everything in the visible and invisible world that might influence outcomes. Greg Cajete talks about such ceremonies as "choreographing situations to bring people in contact with the compacts (2000, 81)." An example of this occurred at your recent Holistic Education Conference that Greg and I keynoted at Geneva Park near Toronto. Recall that I found a local Indigenous elder to come up on stage before I spoke to honor the ancestors on whose grounds we were meeting and the wildlife that surrounded the sacred place? This simple act may have set a tone for the whole conference. It gave us new knowledge; reminded us of our responsibilities to the land; encouraged a more creative participation with the life around us; honored the life energy of the cosmos and the influence of those who came before; and probably enhanced the cultivation of new relationships for many.

Related to this implementation of pre-teaching rituals are dreams and visions. I wrote my first dissertation based on a vision, and a number of Indigenous educators refer to the role of dreams and visions when they talk about their dissertations and the struggles they had to get them approved (Four Arrows 2010). I think there are a number of opportunities in holistic education to give more attention to or cultivate opportunities for vision and dream work. It is not necessary to bring peyote in the classroom, of course, but there are a variety of trance-inducing strategies we can discuss that Indigenous learners and teachers use that *would* be appropriate. However, before we talk about specific ways to do this, you might speculate on the barriers that might emerge for Canadian educators. I know that in many U.S. institutions, just mentioning "trance" could suspend a teacher. I am also interested to learn, if and how holistic education has historically moved beyond mere cognitive realms of knowing.

Jack: Two approaches which have been used by holistic educators that I think are congruent with Indigenous education are dreamwork and visualization. The use of dreamwork has been very limited as our culture is generally not comfortable looking at dreams, particularly in educational settings. However, a former student at OISE, Marina Quattrocchi (1995), did her doctoral thesis on high school students keeping dream journals and working with these journals in her English class. A dream journal is simply a record of dream recorded after the person awakens. In her study she identified several positive student outcomes from working with the journals:

- Increased awareness and insight into their present problems, struggles, and emotions.
- Problem-solving abilities increased particularly with relationships. For example, one student had a dream that showed the chaos that resulted from her decision to "sneak around" with a boyfriend that her parents did not approve of. Images in her dream convinced her to end the relationship.
- Better class rapport. Quattrocchi found that as the dreams were discussed in class, rapport improved in three areas: student-student, student-teacher and student-class.
- Evidence of personal growth by confronting the shadow. The most frequently recurring dream was of being chased by a sinister figure. Students were able to work with their dreams to confront the shadow figure, and thus grow.
- Increased Creativity. Some students took the opportunity to be creative in relation to their dreams. Two students brought in music that they felt helped represent their dreams. Others wrote poetry, drew pictures, and dramatized the dream through a skit.
- Spiritual links were made by many students. For example, one student dreamed that time was sliding by and that she needed to wake up to her spiritual needs.
- Prophetic dreams. Students had dreams that they felt predicted the future in some way.

Marina Quattrochi (2005) has also written a book about dreams and how we can work with them in our lives.

Visualization, or imagery work, has been used more widely in schools and asks the person to imagine different objects or events. Visualization has been used in various sports to improve performance; for example, the baseball player will imagine swinging the bat and getting a hit. Basketball players sitting on the bleachers and imagining doing free throws show the same improvement as their peers who do no visualizations but do practice actual shots for the same amount of time. The most relevant visualizations to our discussion focus on being in nature. One of the more common visualizations is climbing a hill or mountain, which can represent a person's spiritual journey. Images in nature, such as the sun and water, can also have a healing quality. For example, alternative healers often evoke images of sunlight to heal infection or cool water to reduce burns. I know the vision quest has an important place in some Indigenous cultures and there are some similarities in that both call upon the imaginative capacities of the person. However, the vision quest, as I understand it, is a much more challenging practice that involves much more (e.g., isolation and fasting) to trigger the vision. I should add that there has been resistance to the use of visualization in some places in the United

States from fundamentalists who object to its use in schools. My guess is they would also object to using some Indigenous education practices as well.

Four Arrows: I am excited to learn about your student's doctoral research on students' reflections on and benefits from dreams. I did not know about this dissertation and plan to refer to it in future writing!

I used to teach hypnosis to marriage, family, and child counselors for their certification at UC Berkeley and made a career in sports and clinical hypnotherapy for a while. I understand the resistance to visualization and trance work and think it is a shame that politicians, preachers, and peddlers are allowed to evoke hypnotic imagery but teachers are restrained from doing so! The truth is, however, that they use it inappropriately all the time. Children (and other animals) go into spontaneous trance states when in fright, so if a big teacher walks up to a small child who has been having much trouble with a math problem and says, "Son, you are never going to amount to anything!" this might embed itself in the child for the rest of his life. As you point out, images can have healing effects. In my book, *Patient Communication for First Responders: The First Hour of Trauma* (1988), I have a photo of a man who came into Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley, California, with second degree burns on his arm. Dr. Gerry Kaplan had the man visualize fresh fallen snow in a clean mountain environment, wrapped the arm in gauze, gave him an aspirin and sent him home. He had complete healing in twelve days!

There are some differences, I think, between how holistic educators appear to think of and use visualization and how American Indians use it on a vision quest. As a Lakota Sun Dancer, I have done a number of *hanblecheyapis*. It is one of seven sacred ceremonies and a requirement for Sun Dance preparation. In short, the Native vision quest is not thought of as an opportunity for "imaginative capacities," but rather as a sacred plea for guidance from the spirit world. I think this distinction may be significant, but you are correct when visioning is connected to the natural world.

For example, in preparation for a very hot Sun Dance in South Dakota, I felt apprehensive about my ability to go with limited water in 114 degrees for four days in the Sawtooth Mountains of Idaho for an *hanblecheyapi*. I had made 150 tobacco ties with which to encircle myself, put red cedar bark in my *chanupa* (pipe), sat in the circle and prayed. Almost immediately a rat-like rodent came into the circle and started chewing on the tobacco. After he left, I remained on the mountain until the next day and had no "visions. " I looked up the creature on Google and it was a kangaroo rat, "the only mammal in North America that can go a lifetime without a drink of water."

This story does not reflect the community involvement usually associated with vision quests because I was far away from my Sun Dance community. Normally, the community escorts the individual up to the vision quest spot and retrieves him when the time (one to four days) is over. An *inipi* (purification ceremony) follows with the medicine man listening to and interpreting the spirit message. So, unlike the dream journals and visioning that might be used by holistic educators, Indigenous visioning is both an independent and a collective event.

This story also shows what Cajete means when he says, "Every act, element, plant, animal and natural process is considered to have a moving spirit with which humans continually communicate (2000, 69)." As a Western-trained scholar and hypnotherapist, I cannot help but acknowledge the role of trance states for assisting this communication, but I think that holistic educators brought up in Western traditions and religions will find that receiving visions is going to be a bit challenging to understand and accept, let alone put into practice, no?

Jack Miller: In the 1970s Andrew Weil, known now for his work in integrative medicine, wrote a book entitled *The Natural Mind*. In it he argued that young people seek experiences beyond rational consciousness; for example, children will spin around till they get dizzy and then fall on the ground to see the world spinning. He argued that it is natural to explore non-rational states of consciousness and that it is a basic human need. It can be argued that if we do not provide safe opportunities to explore these states, which include dreams and non-rational states of consciousness, young people may go underground to experiment with drugs. So this is another argument for exploring dreams and engaging in imagery activities in educational settings. The main caveat is that the teacher must handle these activities

with sensitivity and care, allowing a child to opt out if he or she does not feel comfortable with the activity. Also, the activity needs to be integrated into the curriculum so that it supports learning. One example that I came across years ago is entitled the Water Cycle. Through this visualization students can actually "become the water" and have an inner experience of evaporating, becoming a cloud and then coming down as snow. This activity can complement the study of the water cycle in the classroom and connect it to the student's experience.

I believe the experiences we have been discussing also allow access to the invisible world. In my book *The Contemplative Practitioner*, there is a chapter on this world. It begins with a quote from Black Elk:

> Crazy horse dreamed and went into the world where there is nothing but the spirit of all things. That is the real world that is behind this one, and everything we see here is something like a shadow of that world.

This world has been called many names: the Tao, collective unconscious (Jung), the implicate order (Bohm) and the Oversoul (Emerson). Some people who have had near death experiences describe this world in some detail. Of course, a description of this world can often reflect the cultural perspective of the person experiencing this world.

In our materialistic world it is difficult to explore this world, but I think ignoring it also has it own costs.

Maybury-Lewis (1992, 231, 234) in writing about Indigenous cultures makes this argument:

> We live in a world that prides itself on its modernity, yet is hungry for wholeness, hungry for meaning. At the same time it is a world that marginalizes those very impulses that fill the void. The pilgrimage toward the divine, the openness to knowledge that transcends ordinary experience, the very idea of feeling at one with the universe, these are impulses we tolerate at the fringes, where they are held at bay by our indifferences. Shorn of the knowledge that we are part of something greater than ourselves, we lose also the sense of responsibility that comes with it. But if we do not listen to other traditions, do not even listen to our inner selves, then what will the future hold for our stunted and overconfident civilization?

Experiences of the invisible world, though fleeting, can have a powerful effect on us. For example, there is research that people who have had near death experiences are transformed in positive ways (Moody 1988). So what I am arguing for here is that we should explore how various traditions have described the invisible world. I believe that an open-minded inquiry of this world can provide a broader context for understanding ourselves and non-rational forms of consciousness.

Four Arrows: My neck is sore now from nodding my head up and down in vigorous agreement with what you have said! But how do holistic and Indigenous educators who truly understand the value of these aspects of consciousness get teachers, students, administrators, and policymakers to initiate this open-minded inquiry?

I mentioned early that I wrote a dissertation based on a vision. In light of your reference to near-death experiences, I think it is relevant to say a little more about it. First of all, when my committee chair finally returned my manuscript to me after more than a month, all that was written on it was, "This is either brilliant or bullshit! Please schedule an appointment to see me."

I suppose now that this was, to some degree, a positive example of the open-minded inquiry we seek, although I did not see it so at the time. Still, the dissertation was published and became a popular book (Jacobs 1998).

I once had a vision about a fawn and a mountain lion I came across following a near-death experience as I struggled to climb out of the 8,000 foot deep Copper Canyon in Mexico. It gave rise to a visionary theory I now call the "CAT-FAWN Connection." I think it is worth briefly describing this theory because not only might it give us possible fodder for comparing Indigenous and holistic assumptions, but it also relates to alternative consciousness and gives a strong reason why open-mindedness about the invisible world is rare.

Very briefly, the CAT portion stands for Concentration-Activated Transformation and refers to spontaneous or induced trance states. FAWN (Fear, Authority, Words, Nature) represents the four ma-

jor things that determine whether positive or negative transformations result from trance states. Whether positive or negative in turn depends on whether the event is viewed through a Western or Indigenous perspective.

- *F=Fear*. Indigenous peoples see fear as a catalyst for practicing a virtue (generosity, courage, patience, humility, honesty, fortitude). Western peoples avoid the feeling of fear and its potential for spurring growth.
- *A=Authority*. Indigenous peoples see only reflection on lived experience as the ultimate authority. Western folks see authority as largely external in parents, teachers, policemen, laws, etc.
- *W=Words*. Indigenous peoples understand words to be sacred prayers with a power and energy that expands in the universe. This is why pre-contact cultures thought white man's deceptions were a form of mental illness. Most Indigenous cultures do not even have a word for lies. Of course, the Western world is infamous for using words to deceive.
- *N=Nature*. Indigenous peoples understand the holistic, non-anthropocentric connections and see Nature as teacher. In Western cultures, nature is used largely viewed only as a resource for human consumption.

Perhaps the the reason why school systems do not encourage open-minded inquiry into non-rational forms of consciousness is because we view the data through a Western rather than an Indigenous lens.

If so, what can holistic and Indigenous educators do to change this situation? What can we do to stimulate authentic open-mindedness to at least investigate the things we have been saying? Is it possible that even holistic educators are unable to better "walk the talk" because they adhere to the Western views on Fear or Authority or words or nature? Is this a place where holistic education can learn from the Indigenous? Of course, if you can answer any of these questions, we can end this chapter and celebrate. But maybe we can come up with something that makes sense.

Jack Miller: I believe that most education today is fear-based. Many parents are afraid that their children will not get ahead, so politicians focus on test scores as the measure of good schooling. Much of this discussion comparing test scores has a grim, Darwinian feel that fails to inspire.

In contrast, Michael Lerner (2000) in his book *Spirit Matters* argues that awe and wonder should be the first goals of education. Maria Montessori developed such an approach that can nurture awe and wonder, which she called cosmic education. It gives the child first an all-encompassing sense of the universe with its billions of galaxies. Then it focuses on our galaxy, the Milky Way, our solar system, planet Earth and its geological history, the first specimens of life, all species of plants and animals and finally human beings. Inherent in the whole study is the interconnectedness of all creation, the oneness of things. (Wolf 2004, 6)

Montessori's son, Mario, describes cosmic education when he writes:

> Cosmic education seeks to offer the young, at the appropriate sensitive period, the stimulation and help they need to develop their minds, their vision, and their creative power, whatever the level or range of their personal contributions may be (1992, 101).

He says that the child needs to have a "prior interest in the whole" so he or she can make sense of individual facts. This can be done in part by introducing students to ecological principles that focus on the interdependence of living and non-living things. Mario Montessori gives the example of students studying the life cycle of salmon and its relationship with the environment.

Wolf also refers to the work of Brian Swimme (1992) and *The Universe Story*. Cosmic education helps children place themselves within the total framework of the universe. The image of the universe presented by Montessori and Swimme is one of order and purpose. Since human beings are part of the universe, it gives us a common reference point beyond the boundaries created by nations and religions. Wolf also points out that cosmic education can help children develop a sense of reverence for life and care for the earth. Seeing the miracle of life on

earth within the vastness of the universe can help students more deeply appreciate life and the earth itself. Cosmic education can also give students a deep sense of gratitude.

Of course, Indigenous education is cosmic in its perspective and can provide educators with so much in both the "words" you describe and also encourage direct experiences with nature. It is not enough just to read about the unfolding of the universe; young people need to have direct experiences with nature. A principal I worked with in Japan developed the concept of the school forest, which involves planting a small group of trees on the school grounds. Students take care of the trees, watch them grow, and even talk to the trees and write poems about them. The move to plant school gardens also provides students an opportunity to have a relationship with living things.

Last year I was asked to evaluate a thesis about a teacher (Nichols 2011) who brought a dog into her classroom for several years. It was a Catholic school so the dog's name was Augustine, shortened to Gus. She found Gus made a significant difference in the life of the classroom by bringing the students together and actually helped in their academic achievement. I remember in your talk at the Holistic Learning Conference that animals play an important role in Indigenous peoples' lives, and I think they could also have role in education.

So, I believe that some holistic educators are making a difference, but they remain on the margins. It will take a societal shift to bring them into the mainstream. One encouraging sign for me is the country of Bhutan. Greg Cajete and I went there two years ago along with 20 other educators to help them orient their education system to the country's goal of Gross National Happiness (GNH). Bhutan is the only country that I know of that has adopted holistic and ecological education as the overall framework for its education system. Although it is a small country, the concept of GNH has generated a lot of interest around the world as a serious alternative to our consumerist culture. A session is being held at the United Nations in April to examine their model of GNH.

Four Arrows: I would have loved to have been with you and Greg in Bhutan. Indeed, the country's vision to emphasize sustainable development, preservation of cultural values, conservation of the natural environment, and the establishment of good governance for all instead of strictly economic indicators is what I think our world needs. They also seem to be doing a good job according to international comparisons for "happy countries," placing 18th in 2009 with Denmark in the number one spot and Finland in fifth position. They prove that a country that is not wealthy can still be happy, a lesson I learn every day in my little dirt road fishing village here in Mexico where most of my neighbors do not have running water and still cook over open fires. Of course, one can be critical. There are high levels of domestic violence in Bhutan and any opposition to the Bhutanese monarchy is dealt with harshly. There are also serious problems with violence against immigrants (which might also relate to opposition to the monarch. It is also interesting to look at the paradox of Finland, rated fifth in happiness and first in suicide.

One possibility for using Indigenous wisdom to analyze such possible contradictions has to do with the idea of government and the coercion that stems from it, whether a monarchy or a democracy. In his chapter, "Happiness and Indigenous wisdom in the History of the Americas" (Four Arrows 2006, 35), Frank Bracho hints at this when he writes that

> Jefferson was convinced that Indigenous People who lived without the European forms of government generally enjoyed infinitely greater degrees of happiness. He honored them for not submitting to any laws or to any coercive power lurking in the shadows of government. He noted that the only control they needed in their societies came from the moral sense of right and wrong or, when the rare offense occurred, from exclusion of the offender from society.

Frank, an Arawak scholar who lives in Venezuela, argues that it is the authentic sense of caring for others, the joy of caring for others, that seems to be the inherent reason early American Indians manifested happiness as they did (and many still do in spite of colonizing trauma). He writes that in the Piaroa language, a Venezuelan Amazonian ethnic group, happiness is called, "eseusa" and means "the joy of sharing with others." He also says that Indigenous peoples realize that *being* is more important than *having*. Both of these values, caring and a lack of material-

ism, were described by Christopher Columbus even while he was initiating his genocidal policies.

> They are the best people in the world, and the sanest. They love their neighbors as themselves. They are faithful and do not covet what others have. They give all they possess freely. Their speech is always sweet and gentle, accompanied by a smile. (Setien 1999, 50)

I have studied the 2010 annual Bhutan survey with these ideas in mind. Wow, is it thorough. For each province they have around 473 pages of graphed data covering everything imaginable that seems related to happiness. About 35% of those responding thought that generosity was a strong trait in the country. Around 40% thought that corporate corruption existed to some degree, but I found no questions specifically about how the people felt about their government. It is a fascinating survey and worth checking out at www.grossnationalhappiness.com.

So, this brings us to an interesting point of contrast between holistic education and Indigenous education. Is it fair to say that holistic education, as created in the 70's and 80's in the United States, has essentially adopted the American form of government and capitalism, with its materialistic alignments? How much has critical pedagogy informed holistic education in this regard? Maybe the biggest difference between Indigenous ways of understanding and any of the philosophies of education that come close to it, is that traditional Indigenous values continue to resist materialism and coercive governments. This, I have contended for many years, is one reason for the lack of assimilation of Indigenous cultures and the higher rates of structural inequalities(or the lack of substantial attention to them. What do you think?

Jack Miller: I don't think holistic education reinforces materialism or oppressive institutions, but tries to educate human beings who care deeply about the well-being of others. I think it is interesting that the Nazis closed the Waldorf schools in the 1930s in Germany, and that Maria Montessori left Italy during Mussolini's regime. I think the reason for this is that, ultimately, holistic education attempts touch the "divine spark" in each individual and when people act from this spark they become a threat to authority. Gandhi and King are examples of people who acted from the divine spark and their actions led to the independence of India and the civil rights movement in the United States. Critical pedagogy takes many forms (as does holistic education), but if it is neo-Marxist, then the soul is missing and what we have is another form of materialism. I wonder how sympathetic critical pedagogy would be to our discussion of the invisible world? I find critical approaches like engaged Buddhism more appealing, which bring wisdom and compassion to social action. I also find the work of bell hooks (2000) very powerful because she is not afraid to introduce love into her work on critical pedagogy.

I would like to return to the beginning of our dialogue where I mentioned three of the basic principles that I believe Indigenous education and holistic education share: holding a sense of the sacred, valuing the web of life, and educating the whole human being. For me, Indigenous education embodies these principles more deeply because of its traditions, respect for ancestors, and the deep connection to the earth. When Indigenous people speak about our relationship to earth and the universe, it does not come from the head but from a much deeper place. So much of holistic education is about embodiment, and we can learn from Indigenous education about practices that lead to this deeper integration. I find the words of Don Miguel Ruiz (2004, 183-184), who is a carrier of Toltec Indigenous wisdom from Mexico very inspiring when he writes about love:

> What we call love is something that is so generic that it's not even what love really is. Love is much more than words can describe. As I said before, we cannot really talk about the truth, we need to experience truth. The same is true of love. The only way to really know love is to experience love, to have the courage to jump into the ocean of love and perceive it in it totality. We see love coming from everywhere … from the trees, from the flowers, from the clouds, from people, from everything. At a certain point we are simply in ecstasy, and there are no words to explain it because there are no agreements yet about how to explain it.

We have not talked about love in our dialogue, but the kind of love that Ruiz writes about is also the love

that inspired King and Gandhi as they both spoke about how love was at the center of the universe. This love should also be central to holistic education (Miller 2009).

Four Arrows. I appreciate your comment implying that critical pedagogy would not likely embrace dialogue about the invisible world. In the 80's I wrote an essay in my doctoral program entitled, "Critical Pedagogy and Spirituality: The Missing Link" and I still think the discipline is too anthropocentric. I do not believe, however, that politics can or should be separated from education. Part of our "deep connection to the Earth" requires critical reflection and action in support of it. Sandy Grande (2008, 250) says that "red pedagogy is understood as being inherently political, cultural, spiritual and intellectual … and promotes an education for decolonization" (2008, 250). "Trickster" metaphors also helped prevent the need for such authoritarian realities by getting us to laugh at potential harmful practices long before they became entrenched.

This brings me to your last sentence about love. Recall that the Indigenous way sees fear as the catalyst for practicing generosity. "The highest expression of courage is generosity." True generosity thus stems from love, and love is the opposite of fear. Critical reflection, when properly done, is based in love for the world. I submit that any philosophy birthed in Western intellectualism, including holistic education, cannot be as full of love or as fearless as that rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing that are more rooted in Mother Earth. A non-Indian actually expresses this idea beautifully, so I will also close with a reflection on love written by D. H. Lawrence.

> Oh, what a catastrophe, what a maiming of love when it was made personal, merely personal feeling. This is what is the matter with us: we are bleeding at the roots because we are cut off from the earth and sun and stars. Love has become a grinning mockery because, poor blossom, we plucked it from its stem on the Tree of Life and expected it to keep on blooming in our civilized vase on the table. (Cohen 1990, 9)

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Transactional Analysis in the Creative Classroom

Donna Glee Williams

Berne's description of the Child, Adult, and Parent can be applied in many types of classrooms to help students resolve creative blockages.

Teachers of the creative process know from experience and intuition that different types of students need different types of teaching. Art students who splash paint with abandon over miles of canvas but have no interest in craftsmanship or self-evaluation need a different sort of intervention than the young artists who are so bullied by their own self-criticism that they can hardly bear to make a mark. Music students who by dint of excessive practice produce music-box accuracy — completely without fire — need a different sort of help than their sloppy but passionate colleagues. Our task as coaches and instructors is to understand our students' needs and to design experiences that will help them master their chosen arts, whether these be visual, written, dramatic, musical, or outside of the traditional boundaries of "the creative arts." But our job does not stop there. We must also see that when they leave us, *they* understand their own needs and have some conceptual frame for continuing to challenge themselves and improve *under their own discipline*. A modified version of Transactional Analysis, because of its relevance and simplicity, can provide just such a system.

Transactional Analysis (TA), the understanding of human interaction that grew out of Berne's 1964 work, is a simplified neo-Freudian approach to human personality. It was enormously influential in psychotherapeutic praxis of the time and left its mark on American thinking in the form of the psychological construct the *Inner Child*, popular to this day. TA is no longer trendy in the self-help or therapy literature, but it provides an excellent paradigm for teaching students about the appropriate interaction of creative playfulness, technical skill, and self-criticism in creative endeavors from finger-painting to astrophysics.

Berne's scheme is based on three systems in the mind that he called *ego states*: Child, Adult, and Par-

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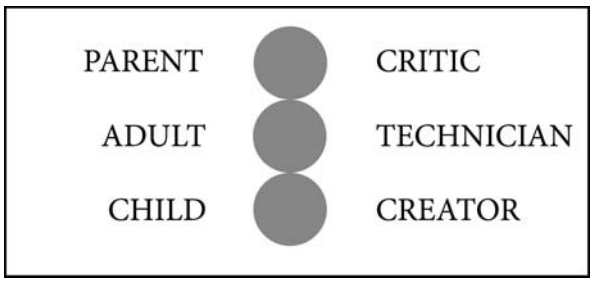
ent, loosely parallel to Freud's id, ego, and superego. The *Child* ego state is the natural uncontrolled and untutored energy of a child to explore, move, express itself, and instantly gratify its biological urges. Spontaneity, creativity, and liveliness are rooted in this ego state, as are selfishness, impatience, and other less charming characteristics of the immature human. The *Adult* ego state grows out of the child s increasing contact with the world as he or she develops reality-based



skills and learns to manipulate things and events. A person's ever-growing "how-to" knowledge comprises the contents of the Adult. The *Parent* ego state comprises neurological "recordings" of the pronouncements and behaviors of a person's parents and other early caregivers. Because so much parenting is oriented towards accepting or rejecting specific behaviors, the content of the Parent ego state is largely evaluative and judgmental, although the judgments may equally well carry the sweet flavor of approval or the bitter tang of condemnation. Berne saw the personality in terms of interactions between all three of these phenomenological states.He represented them visually as a three-tiered stack of contiguous circles.

In the classroom, the same simple schema can be used to explain how different parts of the personality produce free-flowing creativity, possess technical competence gained from previous experiences, and are capable of evaluation and self-criticism. Just as the Child, Adult, and Parent ego states work together to enable a spontaneous, effective, and self-controlled personality, so the *Creator*, *Technician*, and *Critic* must collaborate in the creative endeavor. Each is important.

This schema clarifies for students various disorders of the creative process. For example, the unbridled Creator (unserved by a competent Technician and a rigorous Critic) will bring to the table a product that is free-flowing, but undisciplined and ineffective. The pure Technician, not in the service of a free Creator and a rigorous Critic, will bring a sterile but highly dexterous product. The premature Critic, preoccupied from the beginning with how good or bad the product is, will have trouble producing anything at all and will probably ask a lot of frustrated questions about how to get started.

This schema can guide teachers, and students themselves, to the intervention appropriate to their problem. Identifying where the imbalance exists (creative flow, technical competence, or critical rigor), and whether it is a deficiency or an excess, will go a long way towards defining the intervention that is needed. For instance, in a writing classroom, the logorrhea of the uncontrolled Creator will benefit from grammatical drills and work on proofreading, but these approaches will do nothing for the writer blocked at the drafting stage by a premature or unrealistic Critic. The student with the overactive Critic may have a grandiosely positive or punitively negative self-assessment. This student may need the help of peer feedback to establish realistic standards for his or her own work. A different but related problem may occur when the Critic chimes in with an evaluation of the creation before it is even drafted, demolishing the student's ability to compose with ease and spontaneity. The writer with the juiceless but technically correct product needs guidance in how to connect that valuable competence to passion, how to put craft at the service of something he or she really cares about. Once students understand that this is a problem of timing, that their self-critical skills are valuable but must be employed *after* the Creator has been allowed to play fearlessly with the act of composition, then they can begin to learn the tricks (such as rapid, timed freewriting) that can give creativity free rein.

The schema can be applied in many types of creative classrooms at many levels of expertise. Elementary students are able to understand and to relate to the theory and advanced graduate workshops have found it useful. It can help both students and teachers grasp that the creative process will only bear fruit when a free Creator is served by a competent Technician and a rigorous, clear-eyed Critic with appropriate standards.

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Psychodynamics of Teaching and Learning

Clifford Mayes

When educational processes do not stimulate and fortify the heart and soul of a student, they are no longer education but mere training.

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Since education is a process of coming to know something, a theory of teaching and learning must consider the following questions: *What does it mean to know? How much can we know? Are some ways of knowing better than others, and if so, which ways, and in what contexts?* In this article, I look at how psychoanalytic theorists who have written about education have approached these questions — from the early Freudians and classical psychoanalysis at the dawn of the 20th century to its present form in which the empowered ego, in rich relationships with others, is seen as the nucleus of psychic functioning (Kohut 1978; Fairbairn 1992; Winnicott 1992). In a day and age when standardized, statistically-governed approaches to education seem to reign supreme, and in which "knowledge" and its purposes are defined, from the far Right to the far Left, mostly in economic and political terms, it is vital to the emotional health of both students and teachers to stress the fact that there is another dimension of education that is at least as important as profitability and cultural politics. It is the subjective domain, the deep and often complex emotional processes involved in teaching and learning. Indeed, few things carry such psychological valence, both positive and negative, as what Salzberger-Wittenberg (1989) has dubbed "the emotional experience of teaching and learning." Enter psychoanalytic theory into the realm of pedagogy.

In what follows, I will take a roughly chronological view of what psychoanalytic theorists have written about education over the last 90 or so years, isolating themes that are key to a psychoanalytic slant on the question of what it means to know.

Primary and Secondary Processes In Teaching and Learning

In examining the major statements made between 1922 and 2002 by psychoanalytic theorists concerning education, I found that the fundamental distinction they have called to our attention is the difference between "primary" and "secondary" forms of knowing (Mayes 2009a). In so doing, they have turned how we usually think about cognition on its head. A great many educational theorists these days, conforming to the corporate "bottom-line" tenor of the times, assume that acquiring certain cognitive capacities and marketable skills is the sum total of education, or at least its leading purpose. Analytical skills that are shaped and then marshaled for corporate purposes are primary from this perspective

Clearly, the prophecy uttered in 1988 by the most renowned of all American educational historians, Lawrence Cremin, has come to pass, that the greatest danger to America in the 21st century would be the formation and metastatic growth of an unholy trinity that he called the *military-industrial-educational complex*, echoing and adding to President Eisenhower's warning about the military-industrial complex just before he left office (Cremin 1988). Thus it is that the *care-full* nurturance of the student's holistic growth matters less and less in educational theory and practice anymore compared to the cultivation of the student as "human capital" in the service of high-tech global capitalism (Spring 1976), which incessantly roams the digital plains looking for people and places to financially dominate — and then drop in an instant in favor of new fiscal game where even greater profitability beckons later this week, day, or hour (Friedman 2005). To the military-industrial-educational complex that is now setting the agenda for more and more of American schooling, deep emotional processes in a student that occur "below" the cognitive surface are relegated to secondary status, where they are seen (if they are considered at all) as a pesky problem to be solved, even an illness to be cured.

However, for the pedagogically-minded psychoanalytic theorists, the reverse has been true. Psychological processes that occur outside the grasp of the conscious mind are primary in the sense of being the foundation for conscious thought, whereas what dominates classroom discourse — propositional, discipline-based talk — is secondary although, of course, no less important than deeper psychological processes. A major point that the psychoanalytic writers have made since their first educational statements at the outset of the 20th century is that teaching and learning are supremely delicate, intricate events that involve the entire person in all of his facets, conscious or not. This fact — the multivalence of psyche as it comes to "know" something deeply as a matter of the whole person, not just the ability to master a set of cognitive procedures or memorize facts — causes psychoanalytic educationists to consider extra-conscious processes as operating on a par with conscious ones, and in some cases even being primary to them. What happens consciously in the classroom is the secondary, cognitive tip of the iceberg. What is happening subconsciously in the student both in and out of the classroom is the total iceberg.

The 1920s: Laying the Groundwork

In the early 1920s Oskar Pfister (1922) — a lay psychoanalyst, Swiss Lutheran minister, member of Freud's inner circle, and before that a school teacher — warned that a student's attitude toward school, a specific subject, or even a homework assignment may be shaped and colored by psychological issues that are troubling the child and preventing her from fully engaging with the subject matter, the teacher, and her classmates. A high school student who is being sexually abused at home at night, for instance, may find it excruciating the next morning to be compelled to enter into a high-school classroom discussion about the treatment of female slaves in the antebellum American South. An adolescent boy who is under the thumb of a dictatorial mother at home may be trying too hard to please his female teacher at school — so much so that his "excellent" work may be as much a reflection of his transferred Oedipal issues as his cognitive abilities — academically praiseworthy but emotionally problematic, what Ekstein and Motto (1969) called "learning for love" instead of "love of learning." An epistemology of education that looks only at secondary processes is extremely limited in appreciating the vast structure of both how and what a student really "knows" or "doesn't know" in the daylight world of the classroom.

Caroline Zachry (1929), an important theorist and practitioner in the early days of American Progressivism's Freudian wing in the 1920s, thus urged teachers to take a more psychologically informed view of their students. This did not mean that the teacher needed to be a therapist. Not at all. In fact, it would be unproductive, inappropriate, and potentially harmful for the teacher to try to play the therapist with her students. What the teacher *did* need to do, Zachry asserted, was to be conversant with the basic principles of psychoanalytic theory that were relevant to what it means to teach and learn, for teaching and learning entail and incite a wide range of emotions. Such knowledge would help the teacher see the child's cognitive life and emotional life as of a piece. The child's psychodynamics were not "something apart from her work, but … essentially part of it" (Zachry 1929, 272). Indeed, Zachry went so far as to claim that the child's emotional and intellectual development are so intermixed that "success in one is contingent upon success in the other" (p. 272).

This resonates intuitively. Who would deny that a child who is having trouble in school will usually *feel* that fact deeply, just as a child who is having emotional problems will be affected by them in her academic performance? An epistemology of educational processes that merely looked at the child's surface performance or that focused only on changes in the student's cognitive "map" of something after instruction, was inadequate, Zachry concluded. For although everyone agreed that behavior and cognition were important, what many people missed was the fact that behavior and cognition are simply visible manifestations of more fundamental psychodynamic complexes (a complex not being a "bad" thing necessarily but simply a cluster of feeling-tones, images, and narrative-threads around a central emotional "theme"). Not infrequently, classroom performance is either evidencing a student's emotional difficulties, as in some cases of poor academic performance, or masking them, as in some cases of high-achieving children. An exclusively cognitive-behavioral epistemology in education does not even begin to address root emotional problems in the child and might well exacerbate them by creating further psychological strain in the child who is now to be punished for subpar academic performance by adults blind to its causes.

As dangerous as punishment for low academic performance, Zachry noted, are the lavish rewards typically showered upon the student who does exceptionally well. Although a teacher naturally loves to see a student learn, it is well worth bearing in mind that a student's stellar performance may be motivated by an excessive desire to please. And even when it is not, it is not unusual for high-performing students to "stuff" their own legitimate needs in order to prepare for the next soul-sapping high-stakes test. How could a student who is anxious to please do otherwise; how could one not conclude that his "excellent" grades that garner so many seductive rewards *must* be what are making him loveable in everyone else's eyes, not who he actually *is* as a unique individual? Again, the child is not motivated by the unfettered love of learning but is learning to win conditional love. This is hardly the way to shape creative lifelong learners who take joy in the ongoing expansion of the many facets of their lives. In fact, it is the way to do just the opposite — and thereby create dreary conformists whose inner and outer lives are little more than a stumbling along towards the bland grail of the statistical average.

As he moves farther and farther away from his authentic self a student becomes less and less real to himself. He becomes an alienated *object* of others' expectations of him, not a free and vibrant *subject* engaged in carving out emotionally fruitful life-projects for himself. In my 30 years as a counselor, teacher, and educational researcher, I have come to agree with the Existentialist psychotherapists that the root of neurosis is the immobilizing fear and depression that one has become a frozen and disempowered object, a puppet who dances to someone else's tune for their emotionally and politically colonizing purposes (Frankl 1967; May & Yalom 1995; Perls, Heffeline & Goodman 1957). Unable to shape one's own life-narrative in vigorous ways that expand the sense of meaningful selfhood, one becomes ill. Psychological health lies in being an empowered *subject* engaged in existentially authentic life-projects. But psychological illness comes quickly and with a dire inevitability when one feels oneself an *object*. The overly-eager-to-please or just-plain-

browbeaten student lives awash in the enervating fear that he will not do well on the next test — or the next, or the next — and will then lose the heady love he must always and only provisionally enjoy. His horizons of affirmation all have percentage signs on them. When self-alienation and performance anxiety are the powering forces in a child's psyche, we may be sure that something grim will happen somewhere down the line — often in the form of a nervous breakdown, a psychosomatic illness, or even suicide.

The general point to be grasped, Zachry contended, was that the process of knowing begins and develops in the subconscious realm before it makes its appearance at the conscious level. A psychoanalytically-sensitive epistemology must therefore begin in the subconscious as the font of all human knowing. Far from being a marginal issue, the student's *subjective experience* is key. The student's subjectivity will inevitably impact *what* she knows, *how* she knows it, and what she will *do* with that knowledge.

The 1940s: Each Student is a Subjective Universe

Although the 1930s were a relatively quiet time in psychoanalytic educational theory, the 1940s were lively. One of the most important psychoanalytic theorists at this time was Peter Blos who continued to highlight the fundamentally subjective nature of knowing by making the simple and crucial point that is all too often disregarded in grand theorizing about the socioeconomic purposes of education that "no two children in a classroom are having exactly the same experience" (Blos 1940, 492). In current depth-psychological approaches to teaching and learning, the idiosyncratic nature of each student's apprehension of what is being taught is captured in the concept of the subjective curriculum. Each student has her own "subjective curriculum," for each student has a unique experience of the curriculum and indeed of everything that is going on in the classroom. There are as many subjectively curricular universes in a classroom as there are students.

This is the case, said Blos (1940, 492), because the past and present experiences of the individual that have shaped his psyche will determine his emotional response to subject matter and "the meaning it will have for him, his ability to accept it, and the purpose it will serve in his total development."

> The child does not react solely with his intellect to mental operations but needs to reinforce them with personal meanings and urgencies which are related to them…" (Blos 1940, 494).

This is to restate in psychoanalytic terms the basic thread that runs throughout all of Dewey's writings: The teacher must help students find material interesting and relevant for durable learning to happen. This does not mean coddling students. It *does* mean finding ways to help students connect with topics being discussed and projects being carried out in the classroom so as to make them their own and advance their life-projects — and increasingly so as they mature. Students may laboriously memorize what is uninteresting and tangential to them, but they will quite justifiably and sanely begin to forget all of it the minute they leave the testing room and walk back into the spaces where they actually *live*. The pedagogical point, said Blos, is as basic as it is crucial: Teachers need to have some knowledge of and considerable empathy for the fact that how well a student learns at the secondary cognitive level will hang to some extent upon how perceptive the teacher is about the student's primary processes. Like all the psychoanalytic theorists who have written about education, Blos stressed that although the teacher must not try to play therapist, she needed to be psychoanalytically savvy. "Failing this," Blos (1940, 496) solemnly declared, "[the teacher] will be ineffective."

The 1950s: The Beginning of the Self-Esteem Movement

Lili Peller, another psychoanalyst and educator, returned to Blos's theme in the mid-1950s, declaring that the teacher must be aware that how any child learns — not just "troubled" ones — contains the entire spectrum of

> deep and contradicting emotions, his intellectual power, his fears, his ability for keen observation as well as for denying unpleasant facts, his reactions to frustrations, his anticipation of his adult role. Without this complex basis of reaction the child's development would not differ essentially from the results of animal training, and the child would not undergo transmutation into an ethical and social being (Peller 1978, 54).

Conservative critics of psychodynamically-sensitive education may cavalierly (and not a little cruelly) dismiss it as just sloppy liberalism that coddles the child and doesn't attend to the "real business" of education, which is to create people who are cognitively "sharp," armed with important "skills," and anxious to use all of this in the service of maximizing personal wealth and extending corporate empires. However, they are wrong.

While no one doubts the importance of promoting the student's cognitive skills, the stubborn reality is that when the emotions of the child are *not* nurtured, the child will either shut down and not learn as a means of protest; or, if he does learn, will learn in a more-or-less slavish way that cripples creativity, strangles delight in learning, and causes a breach between cognition and emotion. Such a schism is fatal, for it must finally impede, if not destroy, the generative interplay of feeling and thinking — the heart of creativity.

Thus it would be a mistake to deem irrelevant or indulgent (as conservative critics of education are wont to do) the growing emphasis in the psychoanalytic literature from the 1950s onward on the child's self-esteem and general emotional health (Symonds 1951, 189). Attending to the child's primary psychodynamic nature makes good pedagogical sense. Children who are operating well at primary emotional levels are much more likely to be intellectually curious and productive at secondary cognitive levels (Pearson 1954). What strictly monetary and political approaches to education miss is that a psychodynamically attuned pedagogy is indispensable in forming healthy, independent thinkers who are neither ruled by their emotions nor oblivious to them. Indeed, it is impossible to imagine a free, just, and economically vital nation that is not comprised of emotionally sane individuals, another point that the psychoanalytic theorists have made with one voice over the decades. As the Greek psychoanalyst and economist Cornelius Castoriadis, who was deeply involved in educational issues, pointed out,

> The aims of psychoanalysis and pedagogy [are], first, the instauration of another type of relation between the reflexive subject (of will and of thought) and his unconscious, that is, his radical imagination and, second, the freeing of his capacity to make and do things, to form an open project for his life and to work with that project. We can similarly define the aims of politics…. Democracy in the full sense can be defined as the regime of collective reflexivity. (Castoriadis 1991, 52).

Whether the program is neo-liberal or neo-conservative, current agendas for educational reform are equally inadequate, even destructive, in terms of the student's psychodynamic health. Despite their cosmetic differences and slightly varying sound bites, both neo-conservatives and neo-liberals view schooling as mostly just a tool to achieve political uniformity (whether in the form of benighted reactionary politics or the mind-numbing insipidities of political correctness) and — always, above all! — profitability. They blithely ignore the simple fact that *truly* educative processes aim at existentially transforming the student, or rather, offer the means for the student to transform herself. They do not numb and depersonalize the student by merely dumping information and prefabricated programs into her head, and then monitoring her degree of conformity to it all by the draconian means of high-stakes standardized testing. Such things are enemies to creativity.

The 1960s and 1970s: The Feminine Voice and the Fantastic Roots of Creativity

In the 1960s and 1970s the interest in the deeper psychodynamics of education grew to a height that it had not been seen before — and has not been seen since. This is not surprising in light of the fact that these two decades witnessed a concern with the emotional domain in general, which archetypally operates under the sign of the feminine principle. Far from free of its own sets of problems, these two decades were positive in honoring and including the feminine perspective and voice as they had rarely been before in the American experience. Men even wore colorful shirts, beads, recited poetry, attended encounter groups, and grew their hair down to their shoulders!

The burgeoning power of the feminine threw into high relief such things as concern for the planet (*Mother* Earth, after all), exploration of emotional depths in therapy, commitment to respectful interaction with other cultures, exploration of alternative

spiritualities, celebration of female sexuality in its autonomy and fullness, horror at the wanton wastage of an ill-begotten war, rejection of toxic additives in food, and the emergence of what can only be called a renaissance of popular art. What was at play and at stake in this gendered politics of culture was the inclusion of a long-stifled feminine voice to counterbalance the booming male voice that had dominated the stage for too long. It should come as no surprise, then, that during the 1960s and 1970s psychoanalytic educational theory began to train a psychodynamic lens upon the very fortress of traditionally male ways of knowing: the boys' club that warned girls to stay out, the bastion of normative science.

For instance, the curriculum theorist Lawrence Kubie (1967, 66) opined that "even when a scientist is studying atomic energy or a biological process or the chemical properties of some isotope," he is also active, in a sort of parallel fashion, at the subconscious level. Consciously, of course, many scientists believe the objects of their studies are hard-and-fast "realities," although this has been problematized by both Einsteinian and post-Einsteinian physics as well as by histories of science that highlight the subjectivity of the scientist and the cultural-poetic sources of various paradigm shifts in scientific revolutions (Kuhn 1970). Hence, regarding the body of so-called objective assumptions, algorithms, and tools of the scientist that exist on the conscious level, "on the preconscious level it [is a matter of] their allegorical and emotional import, direct and indirect." At the subconscious level, "biological processes, chemical properties, and isotopes" are inseparably enmeshed in the scientist's own emotions and undoubtedly in his dream imagery as well (Kubie 1967, 63).

The scientist who is not in touch with his own primary processes is all too prone to use the images, discourses, and tools of his field of inquiry as a means of dealing with *all* aspects of reality, many of which the scientific method is not designed to handle. In philosophy this is called a "category error," using the procedures of one field of inquiry in another field where they do not fit. The scientific frame of mind, laudable as it is, can become a caricature of itself in its flight from the emotional realm. This is what is happening when a scientist uses his specialized discourse to "express the unconscious, conflict-laden, and confused level of his own spirit; using the language of his specialty as a vehicle for the projection of his internal struggles" (Kubie 1967, 63).

In a similar vein, Jones in his intriguing 1968 study, *Fantasy and Feeling in Education*, critiqued strictly "cognitivist" perspectives and goals in education. *The whole* psyche is involved in learning, not just formal conceptualizing. A student's imagination will affect and may even determine how she

> conceive[s] a squared root, a declined verb, a balanced equation, the plural of "deer"; or the harshness of the Arctic environment, or the nature of myth, or the varieties of human conflict regulation — or the meaning of infinity" (1968, 82).

In the following year Ekstein, in a fine anthology entitled *From Learning for Love to Love of Learning: Essays on Psychoanalysis and Education*, insisted that we must give equal weight to the cognitive and emotional realms — the propositional and psychoanalytic — in education:

> Our interest in the mind now is not only in terms of trying to clarify the unconscious conflict which holds the child back, but to free the mental forces which make it possible to solve problems, and, particularly to study the [primary] nature of those [secondary] cognitive functions which help us to contribute to the teaching of problem-solving. (Ekstein 1969, 111)

Even Jean Piaget, the father of cognitive constructivism, wrote: "The psychology of cognitive functions and psychoanalysis will have to fuse in a general theory which will improve both, through mutual correction" (in Anthony 1989, 117).

As an example of this, consider Piaget's highest stage of cognitive development, the formal-operations stage. At this stage, beginning around the age of 12 to 14, the person begins to realize that his culture — which he had simply taken for granted until now as just the way things are and the way God wants them — is really only one way among many that people live together as a cohesive, sustaining group. His culture is not uniquely privileged. In virtually all respects, the adolescent is starting to appreciate that most cultures are able to encounter life's typical situations and handle them with great effi-

ciency and a measure of grace. And lo and behold, some cultures may handle certain things even better than his own does!

For an adolescent to arrive at this conclusion, however, requires a considerable degree of emotional strength. He has to be stable enough to not be deeply shaken by the potentially shattering recognition that his and his parents' ways of being in the world are not absolute, not even the "best," but simply one among many possibilities. To the emotionally insecure adolescent, such cultural relativism may just be too threatening. Indeed, many people never get to this stage, so fundamentally disconcerting is it to them that *their* flag, *their* nation, *their* history is not somehow specially favored by God, who looks just like them. Thus, the crowning stage in the Piagetian picture of the growth of the secondary cognition depends in no small measure upon how strong the individual's psychodynamic processes are. Cognition and emotion, complexly intertwined, determine not only if a student will learn but also how she learns (Henderson & Kegan 1989, 286). What Gardner (1983) has called our "multiple intelligences" may partially stem from extra-conscious dynamics and not just genetic or other sorts of biochemical configurations.

Interest in the cross-fertilization of psychoanalytic and cognitive approaches in the classroom continued in the 1970s. To illustrate this point, Kirman (1977, vi) pointed out that in the best child-rearing practices in the home "there is no artificial separation of the emotional and the intellectual. Neither should there be in the classroom."

The 1980s: The Subjective Curriculum, the "Learning Ego," and the "Courage to Learn"

Curriculum theory, under the sway of cognitivist approaches to education, tends to focus on how to most efficiently deliver "the official curriculum" (Eisner & Vallance 1985). However, in the 1980s interest among psychoanalytically-minded curricularists grew around what came to be known during that decade as the "subjective curriculum" (Cohler 1989, 52). As mentioned above, this term indicates how the student *experiences* the official curriculum and the teacher who is teaching it. The subjective curriculum speaks to the all-important fact of the student's subjectivity; and since there are as many different experiences of each classroom as there are students in it, it follows that there are as many subjective curricula as there are students. An individual's unique subjective curriculum is comprised of

> such factors as the child's relationship with teachers and fellow classmates, the personal significance of the curriculum, and the importance of a sense of self as a requisite for taking on the challenge of new learning. (Cohler 1989, 57)

As every experienced teacher knows, the student's emotional responses to the teacher, fellow students, and material being studied — the student's subjective curriculum — can make or break the teacher's chances of successfully presenting "the operational curriculum," which is the way the teacher chooses to present (or not present) the state-defined official curriculum to students (Eisner & Vallance 1985).

Nor is the teacher without her own subjective curriculum. For how she actually teaches the curriculum will be colored by her own psychodynamic processes: her subconscious associations with what she is teaching, her experiences teaching it in the past, her feelings of connectedness to or alienation from her students or a particular student, her sense of empowerment or disempowerment in the larger culture of the school, and even an argument she may have had over breakfast with her husband before coming to school or a doctor's appointment she is nervous about after school. In all of what goes on in the classroom, there are not only conscious but also subconscious fluctuations — high and low, positive and negative, smooth and stormy — that are occurring both within the teacher and student, and also between them. The life of a classroom is

> in part, the invention of both teacher and students. Each one projects distillates of his own inner perceptions and experiences, past and present, onto the subject under study, be it mathematics, reading, history, or literature. (Field 1989, 853)

As a primary process, the subjective curriculum will either undergird or undermine the success of the official/operational curricula at the secondary level.

The secondary ship of the classroom will wreck on the primary rocks of the teacher's and students' subconscious dynamics if the navigating teacher is heedless of them. An emotionally inhospitable classroom, crashing against primary processes, will never reach the shore of secondary processes with all of its curricular cargo intact.

A common theme among psychoanalytic theorists has been that damage to the child at any stage may impede her "courage to try" and "courage to learn" (Cohler 1989, 49, 53). "No matter how great the opportunity, motivation, or innate capacity, no learning will occur unless the individual finds within himself the courage to try" (Bernstein 1989, 143). A young girl who has enormous potential as a poetess may never even know she has that talent, much less be able to cherish and develop it, if she is constantly trying to please a harsh mother dominated by father issues who is using her daughter as a surrogate for living out mother's unfulfilled phantasy of becoming a hard-hitting lawyer to appease *her* father, who was disappointed that she was not a boy. Far from being rare, parental narcissism is often the engine that drives the child's academic success — so much so that the student lives in constant (and sadly justifiable) anxiety that she will lose her parents' affection and attention if she does poorly at school. Not only the child's but the parents' primary narcissistic needs and wounds (Kohut 1978) impact what transpires in the classroom. In *Uncertain Lives: Children of Hope, Teachers of Promise,* Robert Bullough (2001) has examined the school lives of children who come from homes where drugs, promiscuous sex, incest, physical and sexual abuse, and constant entanglement in legal problems are everyday facts of life. In this heart-rending book, teachers emerge as the heroes and heroines they so often are for their students as important sources of emotional sustenance for the child, and the child's only safe harborage. These teachers know with poignant immediacy about the emotional nature of teaching and learning, and the healing role that an emotionally rich classroom can play in a child's life.

A child's psychodynamic development not only affects his experience of schooling, which in turn affects his psychological development. A person's life as a student — his adventures and misadventures on the existential staging grounds of his youth — often looms large in his life narrative. Simply put, if a student's experiences at school are mostly creative and happy, this can only enrich his overall life narrative. Painful, tedious, and irrelevant experiences in school, on the other hand, can discolor and fragment his life narrative in significant ways. I am often surprised in doing therapy with individuals of *any* age how often a person's overall sense of his life includes, and sometimes features, memories of his school years.

One of the most fascinating ideas to emerge from the psychoanalytical literature on education in the 1980s was that of "the learning ego" (Anthony 1989, 108). If I as a teacher help a student come to see herself as someone who is capable as a learner, I have also helped her see herself as someone who is capable in general. I am an instrument in forging a healthy ego-structure in her because I have fostered the maturation of her learning ego. If, on the other hand, I send her the message that she is not a capable learner, I have caused her to doubt that she is capable at all, for what is capability except the potential to learn and then put that knowledge into action? I have placed a corrosive in her psyche and soul that will slowly, surely, and sometimes irrevocably damage her ego-structure. The point is simply this: No wise theorist or practitioner should ever separate cognition and emotion. Nor should she separate the child's life at school from that child's life in general. The two narratives — of oneself as a student and an existential agent — are symbiotically tied, and teachers cannot escape the fact that they play no small role in whether that symbiosis is uplifting or depressing for the student.

The recent "epidemic" of learning disorders and hyperactivity attention-deficit disorders (Almon 1999) are often much less biochemical, in my view as both a teacher and therapist, than the result of educational policies, theories, and practices that ignore the student's deeper needs and turn her into a performing monkey in the three-ring circus of high-stakes standardized teaching/learning/testing. When she breaks down under this demeaning pressure, she is often forced to ingest chemicals that drug her into compliance, chemicals produced by the very corporate political economy that produced the policies

that caused the problem in the first place. As Alan Block has argued, what passes for education in American schools is in the final analysis "the social practice of violence against children" (Block 1997).

Recent Developments: "The Imaginal Domain"

An enchanting idea that has recently emerged in the psychoanalytic literature on education is that of "the imaginal domain," (Bardford 2002, 57) a phrase that captures much of what psychoanalytic educationists have been advocating over the last century. The imaginal domain is that "unique domain of learning where objective ideas and subjective emotions are joined together" (Bardford 2002, 57). This is the space that is brought into being *in* the classroom and *as* the classroom when primary processes, honored and well-tended, flower into living knowledge at the secondary level of cognition, the fruit of a psychoanalytically sensitive epistemology of education.

Barford's notion of the imaginal domain of education is heavily indebted to various psychoanalytically-minded curricularists who have used artistic creativity as a model, metaphor, and means of education that is personally animating and generative. This use of aesthetic vocabulary and vision to fashion a theory of curriculum is perhaps best represented in the work of the American Existentialist philosopher of education Maxine Greene. She felt that wedding the psychodynamic and aesthetic approaches to education offers the student

> occasions for ordering the materials of his unique world, for imposing "configurations" by means of experiences and perspectives made available for personally conducted cognitive action (Greene 1975, 299).

But before reconstructing our world, said Greene, we must first deconstruct it by exploding the comfortable premises of our ordinary existence. This aesthetic goal, which underlay Cubist painting in its rupturing of usual geometries, is translated by Greene into educational terms as the "Cubist curriculum" (1975, 299). The pedagogical goal here is to move the student beyond the easy, standard interpretations of the subject matter; to confront the issues under discussion with the same trenchant curiosity with which the critic engages a piece of art or the artist makes it. When this happens, classroom discussion fructifies in self-awareness as the basis for humane action both in the classroom and beyond.

This emphasis on the aesthetic dimension of *any* subject — from physics to physical education, from literature to woodshop — permeates the aesthetic curriculum (Willis 1991, 173).

> [It] is that form of interpretive inquiry that focuses on human perceptions, particularly on the aesthetic qualities of human experience. As such, it is that form of interpretive inquiry that comes closest to artistic inquiry….

However, it would be a mistake to conclude that only art classes promote the "expressive outcomes" of "aesthetic" curricula. *Any* classroom can become an aesthetically and psychodynamically lively zone.

> Any activity — indeed, at their very best, activities that are engaged in to court surprise, to cultivate discovery, to find new forms of experience — is expressive in character. Nothing in the sciences, the home or mechanical arts, or in social relationships prohibits or diminishes the possibility of engaging in expressive outcomes. The education problem is to be sufficiently imaginative in the design of educational programs so that such outcomes will occur and their educational value will be high. (Eisner & Vallance 1985, 122).

Conclusion: The Heart of the Matter

When educational processes do not stimulate and fortify the heart and soul of a student, those processes cease to be a matter of education and become mere training. There is a pragmatic place for training in schools, of course, but it is a secondary place and its nature is by definition only instrumental. In envisioning the aims of education, we must go far beyond that. We must go both higher and deeper than a pseudopedagogy of contingent instrumentalism (the standardized approaches to education that now hold sway) could ever do. Let us help our students aim for the conceptual stars, to be sure, but let us do this wisely — by carefully attending to the emotional profundities involved in what it means to really *know* oneself, another, and the cosmos. Let us theorize about and practice education with our emotions

healthily in play and fully fed, as if our psychological wellbeing depended upon it — for it does.

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Notes

1. Most of them were practicing psychoanalysts at the time they were writing about education. I have looked primarily at such individuals — as opposed to what educationists have written about the uses of psychoanalysis in education — because of the varied interpretations among educational scholars about the pedagogical implications of psychoanalytic theory. It seems to me important to look first at what psychoanalysts themselves have had to say about education as a starting point for discussions about a psychoanalytically informed pedagogy. Recently, educational scholars such as Britzman (2003) and Block (1997) have powerfully employed Kleinian, post-Kleinian, and self-object ideas into educational discourse. I have also attempted to use self-object theory in my work, in addition to the work of Freud's most important disciple, and later apostate from the Freudian cause, Carl Jung, whose ego psychology bears many resemblances to Freud's but who extends his inquiries into the transpersonal realm (Mayes 2005, 2007, 2009b).

2. This is not to say that sexuality does not figure prominently in neo-Freudian and post-Freudian psychoanalytic theory. However, in the works of Kohut, Winnicott, Fairbairn and other self-object theorists, sexuality as a psychic need and not merely physical instinct is seen as a secondary, though still highly important, outgrowth of the more primary need to be in relationship with an "other" or others — a need that typically begins in the infant with his or her mother in what Winnicott has called "the romance of the nursing couple." (1992, 259)

3. This has traditionally been much less true in K-3 education, where the psychodynamic needs of the child are considered important. Early Childhood Education folds elements of psychoanalytic theory into its theory and practice. Why psychoanalytic concerns seem to be of decreasing importance in the classroom as a student gets older is a pedagogical issue that needs to be examined in greater depth.

4. For discussions of the archetypally feminine in education, see Mayes 2007.

5. Any therapist who has conducted therapy in any sort of depth with a scientist or a "science type" cannot fail to notice how often the scientist's commitment to and uses of "objective" perspectives may serve as a linguistic and conceptual bulwark against authentic emotional involvement in the therapeutic process. The depth psychotherapist may note (as I have done) how the specific language(s) of science are often invoked, quite inappropriately to the situation and issues at hand, as ways of "dealing with" and "solving" a problem. I once did therapy, for example, with a graduate student in physics who wanted to plot on a graph the progress he was making about his excessive need to control things. It was no easy task to show him the internal contradiction in this plan to plot/control his progress in the need to plot/control. In such clients, the insistence upon the primacy of "objectivity" and the irrelevance of subjectivity is sometimes so militant and shrill, so out of proportion to — even irrelevant to — the issues being discussed in the consulting room that one realizes that "objectivity" has become irrational, a shield against emotional facts.

6. There is also the important therapeutic issue of transference and countertransference (or projection and counter-projection between the student and teacher), which I have examined in other works but which lie beyond the scope of this paper. (Mayes 2005, 2007, 2009b)

7. This idea comes from Professor Edward Pajak, Johns Hopkins School of Education, in conversation with him, June 2009. Pajak's work (Pajak & Blase, 1989) has been crucial among educational theorists in advancing the study of psychoanalysis in both teaching and teacher supervision.

Book Review

Joining the Resistance

by Carol Gilligan

Published by Polity Press (Cambridge, UK, 2011)

Reviewed by Judith S. Kaufman

This densely packed and intriguing book is, in part, Carol Gilligan's response to the many critics of her first book, *In a Different Voice*. *Joining the Resistance* is also an argument for the idea that feminism is about "liberating democracy from patriarchy," and it is an expression of optimism that within each of us is a voice of caring and compassion that is natural to who we are as human beings.

As a graduate student in the late 1960s, Gilligan worked with both Erik Erikson (a student of Freud) and Lawrence Kohlberg (influenced by Piaget). All four of these theorists regarded women as less cognitively and morally developed than men; emotion and concern for others clouded their reasoning. Unconcerned with gender at that time, but nonetheless interested in the development of morality and identity, Gilligan began exploring how individuals respond to real moral conflicts. It was 1973, the year that Roe v. Wade was decided and Gilligan interviewed women about their decisions to continue or terminate a pregnancy. She heard in their stories the tug between selfishness and selflessness; whether they decided to abort or not, they were selfish if they did not value the concerns of others over their own concerns. She asked them, "Why is it selfish to respond to yourself? And in that historical moment, woman after woman said: 'Good question'" (p. 22). Ultimately, this led to the research chronicled in *In a Different Voice* (1982). In 2011, Gilligan writes,

> I had approached the study of morality as a naturalist. As a graduate student in psychology, I had listened to the ways psychologists spoke about people and their lives. When I began my own research, I listened to how people speak of themselves and talk about others, the stories they tell about their lives. My ear was caught by the disparity between the voices of theory and the voices of people on the ground. (p. 177)

And what she heard from the voices of boys and girls, women and men were two distinct ways of talking about morality. She identified an ethic of rights and responsibilities most often voiced by boys and men, and an ethic of care and relationship most often voiced by girls and women. She argued that the difference was not hierarchical, as implied by Kohlberg's theory. Rather, Kohlberg's theory was flawed because it failed to account for an entirely different perspective. Writing in 1982 about 11-year-old Amy and the way she interpreted the Heinz Dilemma,[1] Gilligan (1982, 28) says,

> Her incipient awareness of the "method of truth," the central tenet of nonviolent conflict resolution, and her belief in the restorative activity of care, lead her to see the actors in the dilemma arrayed not as opponents in a contest of rights but as members of a network of relationships on whose continuation they all depend. Consequently her solution to the dilemma lies in activating the network by communication, securing the inclusion of the wife by strengthening rather than severing connections.

And so the justice vs. care debate was born and Gilligan was critiqued by feminists who argued that she was essentializing the very differences between the sexes that feminist theory had been struggling against since the 1960s.

In her current book, Gillligan addresses this debate and tells us that care and compassion are not feminine issues; they are human concerns and they must live alongside an ethic of rights and responsi-

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bilities because one ethic cannot survive without the other. "They live side by side but draw on different aspects of ourselves" (p. 23). However, when one ethic is seen as feminine and the other masculine, morality becomes gendered. Gilligan explains that the different voice is not about gender, it is about joining reason with emotion and self with relationships. "Undoing patriarchal splits and hierarchies, it articulates democratic norms and values; the importance of everyone having a voice, being listened to carefully, and heard with respect." (p. 24)

In over 20 years of research subsequent to *In a Different Voice*, Gilligan traced girls' development from childhood into adolescence and discerned what she calls a time of initiation into patriarchy. Many girls in middle childhood are exuberant, playful, willing to take on the world, and speak truth to power. However, as they approach adolescence and their bodies begin to change and develop, their exuberance is tempered and their voices are silenced. In what I found to be a fascinating insight, Gilligan suggests that the same thing happens to boys, but far earlier, around the ages of five to seven. The difference stems from patriarchy. We allow girls far more freedom to push gender envelopes until they reach adolescence. However, the "love laws"[2] are much more stringently enforced for boys who begin to feel the effects of gender policing as they enter the school environment.

Gilligan (p. 25) writes,

> When children are initiated into cultures that divide reason from emotion, mind from body, self from relationships, when these splits become tied to gender identity and the roles they are expected to play, they will feel pressed to reject or dissociate themselves from aspects of themselves that would lead them to appear unmanly or not what a woman should be.

Initiation times are full of psychological distress. As boys enter school, many experience learning and speech disorders, and attention problems. They exhibit more out of touch and out of control behavior, and they show more signs of depression until adolescence. For girls entering adolescence, depression, eating disorders, and cutting are all too common (p. 28). Because of the age difference, Gillligan tells us that boys don't have the range of experience or cognitive capacity to articulate what is happening; they think that this is how it is. Whereas girls at adolescence learn how things are said to be, which is often at variance with what they know to be true. Gilligan draws on her own data, as well as research on boys by Niobe Way (2011) and Judy Chu (2000), to support these conclusions.

Gilligan then moves to a discussion of resistance. She suggests that there is an inherent tension between our human nature and the structures of patriarchy, leading the healthy psyche to resist an initiation that mandates a loss of voice and a sacrifice of relationship. Gilligan contends that women's voices are essential to wresting democracy from patriarchy. Drawing on her early research with girls, she observes, "Even when succumbing to the pressures of initiation, articulate girls would narrate their experience and reflect on what was happening to them" (p. 36). Because of their age at initiation, girls are more articulate, more likely to be conscious of the contradictions between their own experiences and patriarchal expectations, and thus more likely to resist — and Gilligan's research bears this out. Women and girls are also more likely to resist because they have less power in a patriarchal culture. The powerful do not resist, lest they lose the privilege that comes with power.

In a very interesting chapter entitled "Identifying the Resistance," Gilligan describes bringing eight 11-year-old girls to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Their task is to find out how women appear in the museum. "Naked," Emma says and the group agrees. Later, when asked to write conversations with one of the women, Emma chooses a headless, armless Greek statue and poses two questions, "Are you cold?" and "Would you like some clothes?" The statue replies that she has no money (p. 115). Gilligan reads Emma's conversation and questions as playful, irreverent, and political when the statue has no money for clothing. Emma's resistance is "an insistence on knowing that one knows and a willingness to be outspoken" (p. 115). Gilligan contextualized the resistance of the girls' responses in stories of other women who resisted, such as Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* who called on the women of Sparta and Athens to withhold sex from their husbands until they laid down their weapons. She evokes Hester in *The Scarlet Letter* who sees through the "iron framework" of Prot-

estantism (p. 122), and discusses Shawn Slovo's 1988 film, *A World Apart*, about her mother, Ruth First, a white journalist working with the ANC in South Africa. Slovo comes to terms with the absence of her mother and Gilligan (p. 128) writes, "Once daughters are able to see beyond their enclosure," they know their mothers cannot stay. They must join the resistance and daughters must find other ways to connect with their mothers. Gilligan employs additional stories and events and reiterates that girls and women are key to the politics of resistance.

One other focus that I found particularly interesting and heartening is Gilligan's exploration of the origins of care and compassion. Recall that she states that care and compassion are not solely feminine concerns. In the second chapter of the book, she presents evidence that the human species is wired for care and compassion. She cites Hrdy's (2009) work on alloparenting or communal child rearing. The "man as hunter" hypothesis explains "family life among our great ape ancestors but it does not apply to our hominid forebears" (p. 52). In fact, the continuous contact between infant and mother (in the hunter narrative) turns out to be a projection by Darwin and John Bowlby.[3]

In reality, the evidence suggests that without alloparenting or communal childrearing, there never would have been a human species. It is not the nuclear family and exclusive maternal care but the capacity for mutual understanding and extended families that are coded into our genes (p. 53). In one fell swoop, Hrdy's work demonstrates that the patriarchal nuclear family is not "natural" to the species.

Additional evidence for caring and compassion emerges from neuroscience. Rilling et al. (2002) report on research which demonstrates that our brains light up more brightly when we choose cooperative over competitive strategies. This same area of the brain, Gilligan notes, also lights up for chocolate (p. 55). Further, she cites work by Demasio (1994) and LeDoux (1996) which demonstrates that we are hard-wired to connect emotion and thought.

There clearly has been a paradigm shift, but popular culture and the academy continues to echo the "man as hunter hypothesis." The consequences are enormous. Gilligan (2009, 57) quotes Hrdy who writes,

> Patriarchal ideologies that focused on both the chastity of women and the perpetuation and augmentation of male lineages undercut the longstanding priority of putting children's well-being first.

Hrdy is also concerned that we are losing our capacity for mutual understanding. Children develop under particular rearing conditions, and if generations are produced that do not experience those conditions then care and compassion will disappear.

There is so much more to this important, rich, and powerfully written book, but the essence is that patriarchy is primal. Racism, poverty, and environmental degradation all spring from the lack of care and compassion that typifies this oppressive social structure. Patriarchy explains the persistence of systemic injustice in a democracy and an ethic of care provides the resistance needed to free democracy from patriarchy. Gilligan astutely reminds us that we have within ourselves the suppressed voice of resistance. "In nature, spring — the time of ripeness when hibernation ceases — happens only once a year. In the psyche, the potential is always present. The time to act is now." (p. 180)

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Notes

1. The dilemma is about Heinz who is considering whether or not he should steal a very expensive drug which could save his wife from dying. Eleven-year-old Jake is clear that Heinz must steal the drug because his wife is worth much more than the costs of the drug. Amy says no because Heinz could go to jail and his wife would die. She says

that the two of them should talk it out and find another way to get the money (Gilligan 1982).

2. Gilligan borrows Arundati Roy's (1998) term for the often invisible constraints of the culture: "the laws that lay down who should be loved, and how. And how much" (Roy 1998, 33).

3. Bowlby's (1951) theory on maternal attachment suggested that a singular attachment between mother and infant provided an essential foundation for healthy psychological development. His work was exploited to convince women to leave the factories and return to their homes after World War II.

Book Review

Companions in Wonder: Children and Adults Exploring Nature Together

Julie Dunlap and Stephen R. Kellert, eds.
Published by MIT Press (Cambridge, MA)

Reviewed by Dana L. Stuchul

> Interlocutor to poet: Please, will you write a poem against the war?
>
> Poet: I have written too many.
>
> Interlocutor: But this war could end it all, could end life for all of us if not spoken against.
>
> Poet (speaking in verse): With all my poems, "not one breath was restored to one shattered throat man's woman's or child's not one not one but death went on and on never looking aside except now and then like a child with a furtive half-smile to make sure I was noticing."[1]

A poem of protest against war might epitomize futility, as if words — poetic or reasoned — could stem the tide of humanity's violence. As if words could actually resurrect the dead. Similarly, a collection of essays highlighting how children and adults explore nature together appears absurd in the face of cataclysmic environmental prognostications, each new week supplying the most recent calculus of doom.[2] But what exactly does the nature writer exploring the child (youth)/nature experience have in common with the war-protesting poet beyond the specter of futility?

Though the former's effort drips with its own despair, self-consciously aware of its own failure, the latter appears naïve, seemingly unaware of the evolutionary hour in which s/he writes — a Pandora-esque figure fastening her grip on Hope even as all ills escape.[3] Hope appears foolish in the face of overwhelming evidence of loss. Neither the poem nor essay will restore what has died. Yet, in cultivating hope against irrefutable "abominations," both the poet and essayist preserve "wholeness of heart," both preserve and even reignite aliveness. Both notice death's "half-furtive smile" and both smile back.

And, so, these efforts converge after all. Adults exploring nature with children will certainly not abate melting ice caps, restore altered seasonal variations, reconstruct mountaintops, rebuild depleted soils, and resurrect now extinct species. The adult exploring nature with a child, however, will heal himself, will, if even momentarily, hold at bay the anxieties, insecurities, uncertainties, and fears that hold hostage his presence to the awe and mystery implicit in all that is natural. In so doing, the adult makes acquaintance with his own wonder. These essays remind us — adults — to feel, to become acquainted again with mystery, to delight in what we don't know,[4] to come alive!

Such is the profound gift offered in this "installment," a collection of nature writings, many previously published essays by notable writers that include Barry Lopez, Scott Russell Sanders, Richard Louv, and Janisse Ray. The editors, Julie Dunlap and Stephen R. Kellert, have also deliberately selected lesser known writers within this genre as well as writers from groups less frequently represented, people of color, Native American perspectives — though all American. The collection also includes multiple generational and familial perspectives, and does not limit itself to the parent-child relationship. All of which is to say that this collection is, indeed, an installment, admittedly unsystematic in that the terrain of nature writing "is a vast and partially mapped one." Too, the editors confess a paucity of "urban-focused" pieces, noting this as an area for "future elaboration," which is of particular significance given the concentration of population in urban areas.

But, for whom is this installment installed? Who would be served well in reading this book?

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To answer this question, I insert my own story. As a former secondary science teacher and current teacher educator, I did not read this book as a teacher or researcher, but instead as a mother to my nearly six-year-old daughter. My question to myself: Can I learn something that I can implement in my living and learning with Katie? It's notable also that Katie's dad is an ecologist and environmental educator, that together we live on a suburban "homestead" just blocks away from a major university where we both teach. And, on our homestead (which we utilize in many ways within our teaching), we have backyard chickens, multiple and extensive vegetable gardens, a small apiary, fruit trees and shrubs, and a handmade earthen bread oven. We make regular excursions to our nearby state parks and preserves. And, we consciously create opportunities for our daughter to engage nature in unstructured, unmediated ways. In short, nature experiences and study, cultivating awe and wonder, engaging questions and senses is integral to how we experience ourselves both as parents and people (no less as teachers). We are most assuredly in the pro "awe and wonder" camp!

And, so I began. Having read the introduction, I was deeply impressed with the comprehensive overview of research dealing with children and nature, ostensibly providing a justification for the myriad of efforts to reconnect the two. The rationale for inserting adults into the relationship is inspired by Rachel Carson. In fact, the entire compilation can be understood as an extended, admiring, and intelligent nod to Carson and her posthumously published book, *The Sense of Wonder*.[5]

Despite the comprehensive "state-of-the-genre" overview, identifying gaps in current research while articulating new questions and implications, my initial plunge left me feeling frustrated, disenchanted, even saddened. I did not believe that more and better research would bring us beyond our contemporary madness.

Reaffirming my resolve, I read on, deciding to pick a chapter written by an author known to me. This was a reasonable approach, since the chapters are arranged alphabetically by authors' last name. Within minutes, I found myself deeply moved by a conversation between a father and son.

> Father: "You're right," I finally told him. "Life's meaningless without hope. But I think you're wrong to say I've given up."
>
> Son: "In seems that way to me. As if you think we're doomed."
>
> Father: "No, buddy, I don't think we're doomed. It's just that nearly everything I care about is under assault."
>
> Son: "See, that's what I mean. You're so worried about the fate of the earth, you can't enjoy anything. We come to these mountains and you bring the shadows with you. You've got me seeing nothing but darkness." (p. 223)

I was further moved at the description of a father and daughter walking along a beach, hand-in-hand as best friends. Later, the author (the daughter now grown) would do the same with her own daughter. In another essay, the author recounts the connection to a childhood place over several generations, and how that place imprints itself on the personalities of family members and their relationships.

I felt the tension of not knowing the full impact of a parent's decision on her child as I read of a mother's turn toward life in the country and away from more city-fied living and the superficial enticements it affords. My heart felt wrenched at recognizing how much faith, trust, and hope parenting requires.

Later still, I found myself laughing as a father described his herculean efforts to establish a garden in an inhospitable place. His toddler daughter taught him so much more than gardening taught them both. I was reminded of my own contradictions and hypocrisies, stubborn-headed fixations, and that, despite our self-assurances, we are all beginners beginning. Likening gardening and parenting, this author writes,

> In gardening and in parenting we risk failure every moment of every day, and how could it be otherwise? We hope and yet we fail; we fail and yet we hope. What education would our children and our gardens provide us if they did not constantly show us our limits? A sustainable relation to both the human and the natural worlds depends not on our ability to transcend but rather on our ability to embrace limits. Sustainability is not a game we can play to win.

> Like parenting and gardening, it is instead an endless string of failures, a practice of love, humility, and humor through which we just keep trying, *not because our success is certain but because it certainly is not*. (p. 50, emphasis added)

I was deeply comforted, even inspired by this essay, and the more I read, the more inspired I became. I return to my question, who would be well-served reading this collection? The answer is any person who is alive and hoping to be more so. These essays evoke feelings. They provoke a hope, visceral and embodied. They remind us that aliveness co-exists with death. An aliveness made more vibrant inside the Technicolor light of nature.

Notes

1. From "A Poem of Difficult Hope" in *What Are People For?* by Wendell Berry. New York: North Point Press, 1990.

2. See "Global Warming's Terrifying New Math: Three Simple Numbers That Add up to Global Catastrophe — And That Make Clear Who the Real Enemy Is" by Bill McKibben in *Rolling Stone* (July 12, 2012).

3. See Ch. 7, "Rebirth of Epimethean Man" in *Deschooling Society* by Ivan Illich. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.

4. I am reminded of *The Virtues of Ignorance: Complexity, Sustainability, and the Limits of Knowledge*, edited by Bill Vitek and Wes Jackson. Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2008.

5. *A Sense of Wonder* by Rachel Carson (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), originally appearing as "Help Your Child to Wonder" in *Woman's Home Companion* in 1956.

Book Review

Learning to Liberate: Community-Based Solutions to the Crisis in Urban Education

by Vajra Watson

Published by Routledge (New York, 2012)

Reviewed by Michael Pezone

Vajra Watson's *Learning to Liberate: Community-based Solutions to the Crisis in Urban Education* highlights the best practices of four community-based educators to show how teachers "can work more effectively so that schools become institutions of equity that serve as catalysts for social change (p. xviii). Watson's detailed portraits of the four — Dereca Blackmon, Rudy Corpuz Jr., Victor Damian, and Jack Jacqua — reveal their deep commitment to "at-risk" urban students and to creating learning environments in which "a liberatory praxis is functioning, one that disrupts subjugation" (p. xxi). Watson describes their work as part of a struggle against the type of schooling that is used to validate inequality and oppression and that teaches "have-not" students to internalize their status (p. xxi).

Watson describes her research as motivated by two hopes. First, she wants to reveal successful practices in a way that demystifies the idea that these educators are "miracle workers." She also hopes to shed light on the possibility that their transformative teaching may help to improve traditional classroom teaching. As a social studies teacher in an urban New York City public high school, I was keenly interested in a research question Watson poses about the community-based educators, "Can the lessons derived from their work inform the practices and pedagogy of high school teachers in low-income communities?" (p. 6).

As Watson summarizes it, community-based educators employ four pedagogies that together can be used as a pedagogical model that will enable students to develop social resistance and "break the cycle of social reproduction" in their lives (p. 152). This model emphasizes the importance of connection, community, compassion, and commitment. According to Watson, an essential feature of their practice is that the four educators demonstrate love and respect for students. While "love is a central, transformative force" (p. 154) and "education is foremost an act of love" (p. 157), the educators also employ tactics and values that are celebrated elsewhere in critical pedagogical studies of urban teaching. These include the need for caring relationships with students, high expectations, dialogic and democratic teaching strategies, teaching that is relevant to students, and teaching that helps students become active citizens (p. 157).

Watson presents anecdotal accounts of the positive effects of this pedagogical model. In an urban landscape in which they daily face poverty, abuse, injustice, violence, and death, students find homes and family bonds within the nurturing environments of the community programs. This is the most effective and inspiring aspect of Watson's book. She presents the intelligent and passionate voices of troubled, "at-risk" teenagers, recounts their moving personal histories, and reveals how progressive pedagogy can help some students turn their lives around.

How successful, then, is Watson in realizing her goals for this study? Her first goal was to demystify the four educators as "miracle workers." There are two points to be made here. First, it is impossible for the reader to evaluate just how successful (as opposed to miraculous) the community-based programs really are. While Watson presents anecdotal evidence, she presents no quantitative data. It would be helpful to know, for example, how many students attended each program and for how long. A detailed longitudinal

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study of at least a few students also would have been helpful. The second point about Watson's attempt to demystify the four educators concerns the fact that they devote a tremendous amount of time and energy to their students, even at times to the detriment of their own family relationships. Watson acknowledges this when she writes:

> I am not always able to make it to the YGC [Youth Guidance Center] meetings, for instance, because I have two small children. I feel compelled to ask Jack, "Does that mean my efforts will be futile?" He tells me, "Of course your own family is always first but you have to be able to basically want to teach these children the same way you're teaching your children. So it's all just one commitment. Seven days a week. You might have to do something Saturday for somebody or on a Sunday you might have to go to somebody's church when they're being baptized" (pp. 129-130).

When Watson describes Corpuz's similar willingness to sacrifice his time, she adds that "this flexibility is unrealistic for teachers but critical to Rudy's effectiveness" (p. 62). While not presenting the educators as "miracle workers," Watson does describe their degree of commitment that an overwhelming majority of classroom teachers would not be able or willing to match — nor should they. To the degree that her study implies that extreme sacrifice is necessary to reach "at-risk" youth, Watson presents an image of successful urban educators as saints or martyrs. This is not a helpful model.

What about Watson's second hope, that the transformative pedagogy of the four educators can inform the practice of classroom teachers? Watson's hope here is realized, but only to a limited degree. On the one hand, she is quite successful in demonstrating how progressive teaching can motivate and engage urban, "at-risk" students. The book contains valuable insights and strategies that will benefit classroom teachers and serve as an antidote to the notion that certain students are doomed to failure.

On the other hand, there are problems in translating the model of community-based education to traditional classroom practice. Watson is herself clear about this throughout the book. For instance, she writes that the four educators can be flexible, enjoy small class sizes and frequent one-on-one contact with students, and are not required to follow specific curricula, but that it is "dramatically different from teachers, who must meet stringent standards" and face other institutional pressures (p. 102).

Urban classroom teachers like me are all too familiar with the ways in which a conservative, business model that demands "accountability" and relies on testing pressure, is impacting education. For example, within the past year I have experienced administrators observing students in a ninth grade class who were constructing floor-to-ceiling-sized totem poles as part of a unit on Native American culture. Despite students' obvious excitement, motivation, and engagement, the administrators dismissed the lesson as "arts and crafts" and lacking "high standards." They warned me that I could lose my job for such teaching. More recently, my students wrote formal letters to President Obama to express their deep concerns about the Trayvon Martin killing. When students and I created a hallway bulletin board to display the letters along with photos of students wearing hoodies beneath a sign reading "We Are Not Criminals," we were required to remove the display because it was "not part of the ninth grade curriculum."

Given the difficulties involved in teaching progressively in urban classrooms, one would hope for more information and discussion from Watson about this issue. The book would have benefited from detailed accounts of successful, progressive practices within traditional classrooms, such as are presented, for example, in the work of Duncan-Andrade and Morell (2008), Kohl (1994), Oakes and Rogers (2006), Singer (2009), and in *Rethinking Schools*. Instead, the reader is given the impression that much of what the four community-based educators achieved cannot be replicated in traditional public school classrooms. This is somewhat surprising in a book that purports to offer solutions to the crisis in urban education. However unintentionally, it denigrates the work of progressive urban classroom teachers who, while working within much greater constraints, share the same goals, employ many of the same strategies, and experience some of the same successes (and failures) as Watson's community-based educators.

Another philosophical concern with *Learning to Liberate* relates to what I would characterize as an idealist vision of pedagogy promoted by the four edcators and by Watson, in which the primary focus is on changing the attitudes of students. This becomes at times an explicitly "spiritual" approach. For instance, Watson writes that Jack Jacqua "believes politics cannot solve the problems in the hood [neighborhood], but spirituality might" (p. 148). The emphasis throughout the book on "transformative love" and education as an act of love is rooted in theology and has no relationship to the classroom. A teacher does not need to love students in order to teach them, and should not embrace the role of savior. Further, emphasis on the power of love is not transformative; rather, it serves to sustain the system through its focus on psychological rather than institutional change.

When given an opportunity to address students in YGC, San Francisco's youth detention facility, Watson herself resorts to preaching:

> I look at the students at YGC. "You see, everyone thinks this shit won't happen to em but how many grown-ass-gangstas do you know who are free, never did no time, and ballin?" A few of them shake their heads. "My friend went from being fine to hella grimy [immoral; lacking decency] in a couple of years. If you keep livin' this life, glorifying this shit," I bellow, "what the fuck you think gonna happen?!" The students are absolutely silent. I take a deep breath and calm down. "You are young," I tell them, "you have so many opportunities and I believe in you. We all do." (p. 124)

This passage reveals the key problem with an idealist approach: Most "at-risk" urban youth do not have "so many opportunities." Mere belief in them, or changes in their own attitude, are not enough to enable the large majority to overcome the structural, systemic obstacles in their paths. Only fundamental changes in the personal and social conditions of their lives will enable "at-risk" students to re-engage with school and education, and to better their lives. As Farahmandpur, Martin, Jarmillo, and McLaren (2004) argue, critical pedagogy should not be built on idealistic notions of social change that depend on moral reconstruction. Instead, it must be built on the recognition that social change depends on the transformation of historical material conditions through political and social struggle. It cannot depend on attempts to alter the psychology of students.

As Watson's book suggests, and as the practice of critical pedagogues working within traditional classrooms demonstrates, important political and social struggles can successfully transform the "historical material conditions" of typical urban classrooms into more productive and humane spaces. While Watson offers an important contribution to the literature on urban education by documenting the work of progressive community-based educators, she will do an additional service if she next turns her attention and considerable talents to a detailed examination of transformative practice within schools.

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