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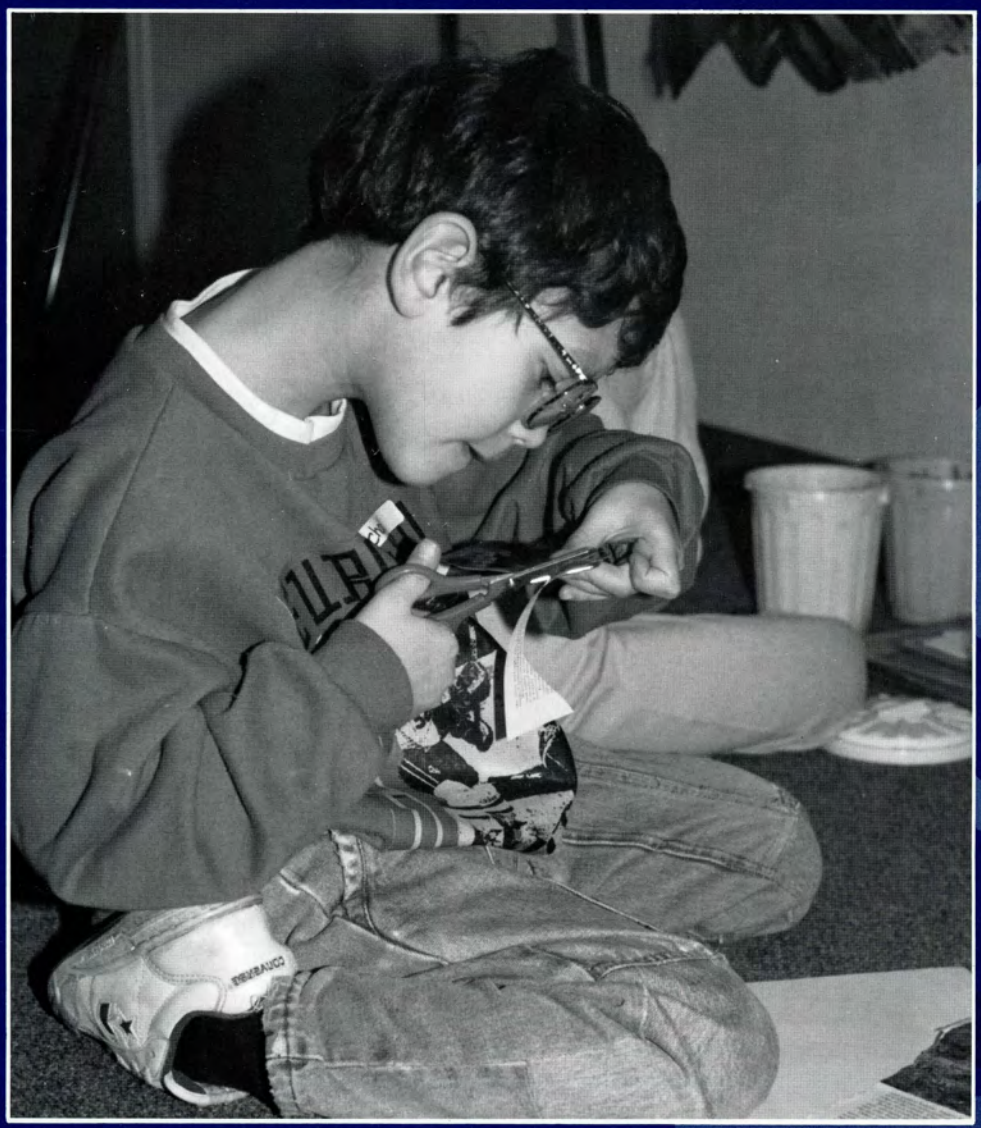

INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

Full-time Kingdom service, Santa Barbara to Kharkov

Lorna Van Gilst
• Editor •

Imagine yourself in a dusky, high-ceilinged classroom with twenty foreign students, a hunk of chalk chipped out of a hillside, and a pitted chalkboard. Your students have pens, small notebooks, personal dictionaries, and three ninety-minute class sessions with you. You have access to no textbooks, no videos, no computers, no copy machine. How will you teach?

I spent several days–and many nights–rehearsing this scene as I prepared to go last spring with several colleagues to Kharkov Pedagogical University in Ukraine. We were committed to teaching English, Bible, and American culture, but how we would carry out that commitment was up to us. We were given no other curriculum requirements, no prescribed lessons, no course objectives–just a plane ticket, a visa, and the opportunity.

At first I welcomed such freedom, such trust, such autonomy: no assignments, no papers to grade, no tests, no written evaluations. Then I realized how much more secure I would feel if I knew something about my students, if I knew how they lived, if I knew how fluent they were in English, if I knew their interests, their goals, their hopes. But I didn't, so I packed my suitcase full of Bibles, bottled water, peanut butter, and whatever handouts I could carry.

I had to settle for a certain amount of artificiality in my Ukraine lectures and classes. I had to come in as the "expert" on my chosen topics and hope those topics were pertinent for the Ukrainian students. I couldn't really simulate life experiences or plan learning projects centered around students' learning needs. The time was too short and my connection with their lives too limited.

But their director had arranged for two or three students at a time to introduce us to the city–speaking in English, of course. The students took great pains to prepare excursions for us to museums, to parks, to Russian Orthodox churches, to a day-care/kindergarten, to a collective farm. They helped us change money, maneuver through the tram and metro traffic, buy souvenirs. They had to speak in English, which was the ultimate purpose for the program.

All the while we were on those excursions, we were teaching. We were asking questions and responding to students. The students answered our queries, responding as well as possible, but occasionally saying, "It's too difficult to explain." We had to keep connecting, keep working at comprehension, keep trying to understand their lives and their perception of ours. Every moment in Ukraine we were full-time citizens not merely of the United States, but of the Kingdom of God. Every evening in our classroom Bible studies we openly professed our membership with Christ, but every hour of the day we were conscious of that profession in a country long committed to living apart from God.

There in that distant land, away from Christian school students who expect us to acknowledge Christ as Lord, we mingled with students who wanted to know why we would leave the wonders of a "Santa Barbara" world to teach in a sagging, broken land.

We didn't go for the scenery. We went for the sake of the students in Ukraine. But we went also for our students in Iowa. By living for several weeks in a land where we were definitely on display, where we stood out as visiting teachers, we were challenged to "walk our talk" every hour of the day.

Now that I'm back home, I think about those weeks of being so conscious of my citizenship in the Kingdom of God, I want that special edge of awareness to remain keenly evident in my life, in my classroom.

Whether in the Ukraine or at home, our students need teachers who live full-time as citizens of the Kingdom of God, teachers who integrate faith and teaching every day, teachers whose lives and words are so intertwined in Kingdom living that every moment of teaching is expressly one of service to the King.

CURRICULUM INTEGRATION: WHENCE, WHITHER, WHEREFORE?

Ken Badley

If you've been listening lately, you will have heard escalating talk about educational integration and curriculum integration. This talk comes from several sources: ministries of education, curriculum designers, school administrators, classroom teachers, and education professors. We should inquire about the history of this usage. When has integration caught educators' attention before, if it has? Under what circumstances did people talk about it? What have educators meant by it historically?

General Interest in Integration

Integration did not surface as an issue yesterday. Neither were educators the first to express concern for it. Political thinkers, religious thinkers, philosophers, economists, and many others have given their effort to explaining and promoting integration throughout recorded history. Plato asks this rhetorical question in *The Republic*:

> Does not the worst evil for a state arise from anything that tends to rend it asunder and destroy its unity, while nothing does it more good than whatever tends to bind it together and make it one?

With specific reference to education, similar sentiments appeared in Rome as well: "To avoid scattering, studies should be interrelated, so that the body of one's knowledge can be one . . ." comes to us from a classical Roman, Marcus Vituvius Pollio (cited by Eby and Arrowood 1940,551). The word itself first appeared in the 1600s with reference to mathematics. In 1855, Herbert Spencer used it in a reference to psychological health in his Principles of Psychology. The word integration made its first appearance in educational literature four decades later. In an 1899 master's thesis written at the Teacher's College of Columbia University, "The Doctrine of Correlation of Studies in the United States," Guy Maxwell issued his call for

> . . .the recognition of the natural relations existing among the various departments of human activity and such an arrangement of those departments for the presentation to the [pupils] that all [their] knowledge shall stand clearly in mind in its true relation to the whole and each in its parts. (Ciccorico 1970, 60)

Within a decade, John Frederick Herbart was promulgating his views that teachers must consider questions of vertical, horizontal, and practical integration when they plan how to present learning materials to students (1901).

Numerous other expressions of this interest appear in the twentieth century. John Dewey, for example, wrote as early as 1902 in *The Educational Situation* that the

> . . . body of knowledge is indeed one, it is a spiritual organism. To attempt to chop off a member here and amputate an organ there is the veriest impossibility. The problem is not one of elimination, but of organization; of simplification not through denial and rejection but through harmony. (89)

Karl Jaspers called for a joining of hands between science and philosophy so that people could find guidance along "the path to authentic truth" (1949, 179-80). Others also want to see hands joined. Kerr argues

> . . . we need to consider the types of relationships that should obtain both within and between the main areas of knowledge. . . . the theory of knowledge raises many questions

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about the relationships of the various disciplines to the development of the mind and the nature of knowledge. (1968,27)

In the introduction to *Integrated Science*, Gratz writes that an interdisciplinary approach is necessary because "in the real world of life, nature and things, there is no artificial separation of physics, chemistry, microbiology, or physiology" (1966, 4). Another educator wants to see students study "a unified cosmos" and not simply an assortment of discrete entities (Reiser 1963, 29).These brief citations illustrate clearly that integration has emerged as one of the larger educational themes of the twentieth century.

To illustrate that it remains so, I cite a 1990 report of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching titled *Campus Life: In Search of Community*. Like many books that envision a brighter future for higher education, this book calls for integration:

> Still, we believe that undergraduate experience can, by bringing together the separate parts, create something greater than the sum, and offer the prospect that the channels of our common life will be renewed and deepened.

The citation originates twenty-three centuries after Plato. Yet, it reminds us that the concern he expressed remains very much part of the intellectual landscape, especially that part of the landscape inhabited by people who focus attention on teaching and learning.

Integration in the History of Education

In surveying the place of integration in the history of education, one must select from among many movements, pressures, and features. I will focus on just two: the effects of secularization on the curriculum and contemporary criticism of the curriculum.

Secularization of Education

We begin by recalling that, in Western society, from the last years of the Roman empire until the Renaissance, the church held education within its control. Some in the church, then as now, believed that the church and proper learning had no time for each other. Tertullian expressed this view by asking what Athens and Jerusalem had to do with each other. He wanted to do away with attempts to reconcile philosophy and Christianity (cited in Casserly 1949). The influence of Tertullian and those who followed him eroded in the early church, however. By the fourth and fifth centuries Clement of Alexandria and Origen were attempting to reconcile Christianity with classical Greek and Roman philosophy. Basing a curriculum on Quadrivium and Trivium, they demonstrated an early form of scholasticism and laid the foundations for others to develop a fully-grown Christian philosophy. This development reached its zenith in Thomas Aquinas' attempt to recover Aristotle and make Greek philosophy more palatable to Western European Christians in the high middle ages. The goal of Thomas, and Thomism after him, was nothing less ambitious than the synthesis of theology with all knowledge (Hong 1956; Haskins 1923)

Into this confessionally-dominated milieu the scientific spirit of Renaissance learning and exploration came and, inevitably, did not fit. Church dogma could no longer make a significant contribution to the organization of knowledge, for it had finished its job of syntheses based on theology. Medieval speculations proved inadequate to the new task of discovering the world. And so, for some five or six centuries scholars saw it as their task to expand the stock of knowledge through science and exploration. Simultaneously, the influence of the church upon the everyday experience of ordinary people declined and, to a greater degree than had been the case for centuries, present life on earth became more important than the anticipated future life in heaven. Reason, rather than authority, became the measure of epistemological matters.

By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a new mood in the universities worked itself out as an interest in natural science and in the professions.This mood came accompanied, especially in America, by a corresponding loss of interest in training ministers for the church (Hong 1956; Tanner 1971). Puritans, for example, established Harvard and Princeton. But those universities shifted in the nineteenth century to regard the whole realm of knowledge as their proper domain. The universities allowed the sciences and philosophy to dislodge theology from its standing as chief (Tewksbury 1932; Malik 1982).The elective system replaced the fixed curriculum, and Yale, Michigan, and Virginia led the way toward offering a new type of higher education.

Simultaneous with the decline of older views of knowledge, interest in educational integration rose.This is not to argue that educators of the nineteenth century saw disintegration around them, but nonetheless an interest was beginning to take form. In the present century, this interest would blossom twice, the second blossoming including interest in "the integration of faith and learning."

Contemporary Concern for Disintegration and Curriculum Criticism

For some decades now, we have listened to expressions of concern about educational disintegration. These expressions come from parents, from teachers, and, as one might expect, from students. We would be wise to spend some time listening to some of the criticism of education, specifically to those criticisms directed at the disintegration in education so many people see in our own century. Much of the criticism has been aimed at schools in general, but some is directed specifically at subject- and discipline-based curricula. Richard Pring, in fact, argues that there is a good justification for exploring this negative angle. He writes that "a useful way to begin ... is to list ... the sorts of criticism leveled against [the] curriculum ... and thus the sorts of problem that a more integrated curriculum is intended to meet.... What is meant by an integrated curriculum depends partly upon the nature of the problems that it is aimed to meet" (1976, 100).

Attending to Pring's suggestion, I offer the following, almost random, list of criticisms directed against specialized, subject- and discipline-based curricula: "fragmentation," "disintegration," "barriers," "pigeon-holing," "artificial limits," and "frequent irrelevance to real problems" (Phenix 1964; Broudy, Burnett,

Smith 1963; Blackmer 1952; Pring 1973). Others add "hodge-podge," "products of haphazard addition," "arbitrary," "compartmentalization," "aimless wanderings in the mere bypaths of knowledge," "atomization/atomistic," "educational constipation," "a glut of unassimilated and unrelated ideas," and "elementistic" (Whitfield 1971; Chen 1941; Meiklejohn 1920; Organ 1950; Sayers 1929). One also finds the following: "undigested lumps of information," "splintering," "fissionary tendencies," "cultural and educational dispersal," the "curse of departmentalization," "shreds and patches," "a severe, illiberal limiting of education," "growing aggregation of courses," "academic islands," "mystifying," "detached," "bits and pieces of information," ossified," "mere aggregations of departments," and "triviality and isolation" (Hong 1956; Esland 1971; Bellack 1964; Henderson 1944; Hutchins 1936).

Such a list makes for interesting, albeit negative, reading and we might easily extend it. But we should take a second approach to catch the spirit of the criticism that people have directed at subject- and discipline-based curricula. Specialization in education and the subject- or discipline-based curriculum have been matters for attack throughout this century. Japanese researchers and Ortega y Gasset note the disintegration of modern education and science (Jaspers 1949; Ortega y Gasset 1944).

Rachel Sharpe comments on students' perceptions of knowledge in the type of curriculum that usually accompanies such specialization:

> School knowledge is experienced as reified, fragmented and disparate collections of unproblematic "facts." The grounds of such knowledge usually remain hidden, the procedures for arbitrating between different knowledge claims rarely being exposed to critical examination. (1980, 147)

In a similar vein, Charity James questions the purposes of arbitrarily dividing educational time into "spasms of thirty, forty, or forty-five minutes, punctuated by the clanging of bells." She follows with the question, "How do we reconcile this planned incoherence with our knowledge of the different rhythms of learning different individuals have . . . ?" (1968, 16). A well-known, conservative American critic deplored the same situation earlier in this century, albeit for different reasons. Robert M. Hutchins asked why it was "that the chief characteristic of the higher learning [was] disorder" (1936, 94). At another point in the same book, he offers us an illuminating metaphor in his attack on higher education:

> The modern university may be compared with an encyclopedia. The encyclopedia contains many truths. It may consist of nothing else. But its unity can be found only in its alphabetical arrangement. The university is in much the same case. It has departments running from art to zoology but neither the students nor the professors know about the relation of one departmental truth to another, and what the relation of departmental truths to those in the domain of another department may be. (95)

One still hears such complaints about education. Boyer notes that "diversity–not coherence–has become the 'guiding principle' in . . . academic planning." He then says that ". . . we have a few requirements which stand like 'pillars' among 'the crumbled ruins' of the past, surrounded by a sprawling 'shanty town' we call 'electives' where students randomly can wander in and out" (1980, 9). Another American voiced this indictment in 1956: "The curriculum of the public schools is a patchwork of unrelated subjects devoid of any consistent principle of order or clarity, either intellectual or moral" (Stanley 1956, v). These citations, originating as they do all over the political spectrum, make clear the unhappy situation perceived by many in education.

Contemporary Pressure for Integration

Historically, interest in educational integration has arrived in waves rather than growing incrementally. We find ourselves now in the midst of another wave of interest, the third in this century. Various constituencies are again calling teachers to several integrative tasks. They are to integrate the curriculum contents internally. They are to help students connect their overall educational experiences to life in practical ways. And they are to aid students in recognizing the patterns in their own lives and learning (Harter and Gehrke 1989, 12-17).

Recent articles and books usually point to the same four or five reasons people demand that schools and teachers implement integration in education: relevance of learning to students' own lives, rapid growth of knowledge, advances in learning theory, social changes, and flexibility needed for life in the twenty-first century.

The *relevance* argument is not new. Critics of education have raised it for centuries. Its germ is straightforward: students fail to see the relevance of many course contents to their own lives. Integration will make course contents relevant to students (Tanner 1989, 6-11). The search for what many label "practical" integration ought not to stop. However, those calling for integration on the grounds that it necessarily provides a more practical curriculum than does a subject- or discipline-based program ought to clarify their premises. At the moment, the argument remains shrouded in fog.

The *growth of knowledge* argument is not new either, though it does increase in apparent importance as the speed at which we accumulate knowledge increases. This argument rests on the truism that information increases exponentially, and no one can hope to keep up with even a specialized area, let alone keep current in several broader fields. Since no one can learn all the new knowledge being produced, learners should develop new attitudes toward learning; schools should help learners become lifelong learners. An integrative curriculum fosters the development of these dispositions more readily than does a subject- or discipline-based curriculum. Few counter the contention that the sheer volume of information available increases rapidly and is beyond any single individual's grasp. But no one has yet argued compellingly that integrative curricula provide one with superior preparation to cope with the deluge of information one faces in contemporary life.

Part of the growth of knowledge in gener-

al has been a sharpening of our understanding of how people learn. *New information about learning* is pressed into service regularly as an argument for integration in the curriculum. Shoemaker, for example, finds a rationale for integration in the increase in how much we know about the brain's needs for patterns to facilitate learning. Again, no one has shown compellingly that integrative curricula provide superior patterns for acquisition of new material than the patterns provided by subject- and discipline-based curricula. In fact, the "structure of the discipline" argument suggests that non-integrative curricula may provide more accessible information to students (Bellack 1964, Kliebard 1965, Schwab 1962).

Social changes do produce pressure on and clutter in the curriculum. To the degree that they do so, they fuel the pro-integration arguments. A variety of groups demand that schools respond to the particular need or issue they have identified. As schools do respond–to AIDS for example–the curriculum becomes burdened and fractured. In one of the more comprehensive, albeit still brief, surveys of recent work in integration, Jacobs lists the pressure/clutter cycle as a rationale for integration. Whether because of the growth of knowledge or because of social changes, new agendas and subjects continually find their way into the curriculum (1989, 1-11). And, one wants to add, old agendas never seem to find their way out again. The only way to add new contents, without removing old contents or adding sheer hours to the school week, is to weave the new contents into a section of the curriculum already there.

Even this kind of integration faces limits: how much can curriculum developers and teachers actually squeeze into and onto extant materials before the structure of these materials simply crumbles under the load? In a pluralistic society, one should expect no reduction in the number of groups whose causes warrant, according to that group at least, inclusion in the curriculum. Where incorporation integration serves as a mechanism to meet these modern pressures on the curriculum, it may work, but it cannot possibly work permanently. If pluralism is, as some suggest, simply a euphemism for the condition of a culture breaking apart, then the curriculum–no matter how integrated–cannot be expected to hold that culture together.

As changes continue to appear on our horizons, and as the speed of change increases, people will undoubtedly need to learn flexibility and habits of life-long learning. Few question this view. In fact we should recognize this as one of the commonplaces of educational thought in our times. Many use this commonplace as a premise in their argument that integrated curriculum is now needed. It may be needed, but the link between the needed responses to rapid social change and the integrated curriculum are neither self-evident nor articulated in the literature available. We probably all accept the view that change and the speed of change will continue to increase. We do not doubt that we will have to be adaptable in the next century if we are to live in the mainstream. But how configuring a curriculum along integrative or interdisciplinary lines will produce the kind of students needed is not clear from the argument. The fin de siecle induces a kind of tenuousness about the meaning of things and the shape that things will take in the next few years. We worry about the speed of change and what fruit change will bring. How will we cope? We need more than content of learning to cope with the future. Because we do not know what the future will look like, we make best guesses as to what tools and dispositions will be most useful in the as-yet-amorphous world to come. Looking at the pluralism already here, we guess that learning how to connect things will be essential in that new world.

A Larger Framework, a Larger Paradigm Shift

But can these five reasons alone explain the mounting interest in educational integration? I think not. I want to look to a somewhat wider context to explain why we find ourselves once again in the middle of a wave of interest. We should view this renewal in the context of two great paradigm shifts. The first of these saw Christianity supplanted by Enlightenment rationalism. This process began with Rousseau and Voltaire and is being completed only now as we see the final steps of secularization within schools and in civil law. This one shift is barely complete, after 300 years, and the next one is already upon us.

We live in the middle of the second paradigm shift, a fact that makes it much more difficult to analyze, but which also renders it more interesting. The economist Kenneth Boulding has stated that the twentieth century is the great transition. When he wrote that, without having watched the dismantling of the eastern block and then the Soviet Union itself, he still argued that the twentieth century was the great transition because the two great children of the Enlightenment, capitalism and communism, had both come up bankrupt. The rationalistic paradigm that had governed Western thought and behavior for three hundred years was being eroded.

One might question Boulding's assessment that capitalism has been proven wanting. Nevertheless, his idea of watching the children of the Enlightenment is a good one. I want to fuzzify his enumeration of the family members slightly and suggest that contemporary people are disenchanted with both rationalism and science. To support that claim, I point to several movements. The Chernobyl and Three Mile Island nuclear accidents, viewed in the context of the dawning awareness of global environmental destruction, mark one beginning of the end of the honeymoon with science. Shirley Maclaine's public pronouncements about the dawning of a New Age of Aquarius mark a second. These symbols, whether visual or verbal, represent a clear departure from the methods by which people of the West have looked at truth for over two millennia.

From another perspective altogether, women have raised equally difficult questions about the nature of knowledge and knowing. Is Western civilization a male construct, as Carol Gilligan has argued? If so, what have we accomplished since the time of the Greeks? What does the stock of knowledge really add up to? Feminism questions whether there is any such thing as an autonomous, neutral, objective observer. Knowledge requires knowledge.

Post-structuralists likewise object to our accepted ways of knowing and thinking. Jacques Derrida proclaims (inconsistently,

fortunately) that our notions of meaning are ill-founded. While we may count on the passing of either his ideas or his followers, we do recognize the challenge he puts to the tradition of thought founded on the twin foundations of rationality and autonomy.

A major paradigm shift in a culture's ways of thinking is likely enough by itself to induce the kind of reflection about the fundamental meaning and purposes of education, or, in this case, about integration in education. But the shift in which we now find ourselves differs markedly from the shift from Christianity to scientific rationalism. That shift, though it took three hundred years to complete, saw one dominant world-and-life view give way to another world-and-life view. The shift in which we find ourselves now appears to be the rejection of one world view. So far, no difference. But what will replace that world view remains too opaque for anyone to say. No one seems to know what the world will look like or think like in fifty years. The last shift may have caused its share of uncertainty. This shift is causing much more than its share. The last shift took centuries. This shift seems to unfold almost by days.

To invoke a metaphor from mapmaking for a moment, just as we finally have perfected our ability to map and even digitize every bit of the earth's surface, we find ourselves less able than ever before to map out our worldviews. Centuries ago, geographic maps contained large white areas to represent those places no one had charted. But the philosophical map, the worldview map, was quite detailed. Now we face the reverse. Our worldview map is full of gaping white holes. And no one seems to know who will fill those holes.

If the century is a transition of this order, then increasing interest in integration should surprise no one. Say Boulding is right about the twentieth century being a century of transition, that the children of the Enlightenment are all turning up bankrupt at this time. What would people ask for in these circumstances? Or perhaps I should be asking under what circumstances would people start to ask for integration and to use the word integration.

This is the first of a series of three articles on educational integration.

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CHRISTIAN TO THE CORE

Phil Warners

"How can we nurture and increase Christian spirituality in our children?" What a topic! Sometimes we tend to shy away from such a discussion for fear of offending or judging others. But in a Christian school we must address this topic. Let me share some personal thoughts:

1. *We must confront our children with the Word of God.* We need to hold up the Bible as the true source of knowledge and share passages that are meaningful and noteworthy. We need to have a Bible available in math class, in science class, in social studies class, in English class. We must make it a part of ourselves.

2. *We must submerge our children in the Word of God.* More than just sharing scripture, we as teachers and parents must surround our children with the words of the Bible and prayers. We must lead by example and live godly lives, but today that alone is not enough. A quiet Christian life may go unnoticed by our children in the glitzy flash-action-packed world in which many of them live. Instead, we must be outspoken for God, making it obvious to our children that we are his, and he is ours, and his love for us makes life worth living.

3. *We must allow God to thrill us.* Too often we have notions of what God can and cannot do. We need to learn to pray with hope, looking for God to perform miracles in our lives, recognizing them as miracles, and praising his name for them. Speak it! Share it! Openly discuss the wonders of God! In praying for spirituality in our children, also pray for spirituality in ourselves. Be ready for God to answer your prayers in ways that may go against what you had anticipated. His wisdom is greater than ours.

4. *Advertise what you believe.* Be proud of your new life in Christ! Carry a Bible. Have a personal theme verse for the month and share it with another person. Buy a poster. Get a T-shirt that tells of Christ. Make it obvious to the world that you have been set apart by Christ. Serve. Sing loudly. Be joyful. Pray always. Give thanks.

It is our responsibility as a Christian community not only to equip our children with the knowledge of God, but also to share with them the love and power of God the Father, the sacrificial compassion of Jesus Christ, and the driving strength of the Holy Spirit. We need this to make our school and our lives Christian.

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THE POTPOURRI PROBLEM IN INTEGRATED LEARNING

Stephen Kaufmann

"All truth is God's truth." "All things hold together in Christ." These phrases and others like them echo through the halls of most Christian schools, especially during teacher in-service meetings. Teachers know intuitively, as well as from Scripture (Col. 1:16,17; Col. 2:2,3; Psalm 119:105), that there is a vertical and a horizontal unity to knowledge. Teachers know that students learn better when they come to know the Source of the truth and the multidimensional coherence of that truth. Teachers also know that the fragmentation of knowledge and the teaching of discrete chunks of it in unrelated fashion is the great enemy of student understanding. They agree with Whitehead's assertion in his classic work The Aims of Education: "You may not divide the seamless coat of learning . . . [you must] eradicate the fatal disconnection of subjects which kills the vitality of our modern curriculum."

But translating these foundational principles into appropriate classroom practice is fraught with problems. Inconsistency, superficiality, and the absence of meaningful connections often overtake efforts at integrated learning.

Columbia University's Heidi Hays Jacobs, a leader in the study and implementation of integrated curricula over the past fifteen years, calls this difficulty the potpourri problem. "Many units," says Jacobs, "become a sampling of knowledge from each discipline. If the subject is Ancient Egypt, there will be a bit of history about ancient Egypt, a bit of literature, a bit of the arts, and so forth." Such units lack a well-defined scope and sequence; they lack a comprehensive principle to make sense of the component parts.

An Illustration of the Problem

The following reference from the upper elementary Follett Social Studies Series *Exploring Our World: The Americas* (1977) serves to make Jacobs' point. The authors intend an integrated focus: "Throughout the series, an interdisciplinary approach is followed. Although particular emphasis is given to history and geography . . . the allied disciplines of anthropology, economics, political science, sociology, and social psychology are also stressed. . . . This integrated method of presentation allows students to discover interrelationships among disciplines and to gain a more complete picture of themselves and of humankind."

So far so good. The authors' intentions and the foundational principles guiding teachers seem to be compatible. But a listing of the topics treated in one of the chapters presents a very different picture. The chapter on the southeastern United States attends to the following topics (in the order presented): land; climate; Atlanta–the largest city today; the story of the settling of Jamestown; other early settlements; a social history of an antebellum Virginia plantation; farming in the Southeast; life in Puerto Rico; industry in the Southeast today; natural resources in the Southeast; tourism in the Southeast; Cape Canaveral; women astronauts in NASA; and flags, flowers, and birds of the Southeast.

Each topic in itself is interesting and more or less important. But the principle of organization, place, fails to explain the connection between and among people, events, and place. Sadly, the chapter is little more than a list of discrete topics related to each other only by location. Teachers have no help in explaining how the Southeast as a place is signifi-

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cant for the train of events and topics covered in the chapter, and they wind up with a potpourri of disjointed material.

Macro and Micro Integration

In his classic text, *Realms of Meaning*, Philip Phenix warns us against using just any discipline as a starting point for a comprehensive overview of knowledge. Only history, religion, and philosophy are able to provide such a perspective. They are, says Phenix, "comprehensively integrative." He calls them the synoptic disciplines. They "see" the whole of reality while other disciplines appropriately focus on the parts. They form one realm of meaning among several others: the symbolic realm (ordinary language, mathematics, and nondiscursive symbolic forms), the realm of empirics (natural and social science), the realm of aesthetics (music, visual arts, arts of movement, and literature), the synnoetics realm (personal or relational knowledge), and the realm of ethics. The synoptic realm combines meanings from the other realms, says Phenix, into coherent wholes. The other realms provide insight into slices of reality; the synoptic disciplines alone see the big picture.

Phenix's argument about the way knowledge coheres is extensive and beyond the purview of this article to examine. But if one proceeds on the basis of his argument, then it immediately becomes clear why the aforementioned social studies text (and social studies texts in general) falls prey to the potpourri problem. Place as an organizing principle is inadequate to "see" all the various creational aspects needed to explain human cultural unfolding in its totality. Teachers will have to look elsewhere to do integration on a large scale. Place does not have "macrointegrative" potential.

Does this mean that place may never be used as an organizing principle in an integrated unit? No. It may be used, but its use must be limited to those situations where place has value in showing a relationship among the parts studied. For instance, I recently heard a geographer partially explain the economic condition of Haiti and the United States' political interest in Haiti in terms of its geography. The geographer explained how the mountains along the border between the Dominican Republic and Haiti effectively block weather patterns that would otherwise bring rain to the country. Hence its aridity and poverty. To explain U.S. interest in Haiti, he used the principle of "distance decay," meaning that one country's interest in the internal problems of another country is directly proportional to the spatial proximity of the two countries. Translation: Haiti is close enough to the United States for its people to attempt to reach the U.S. by boat, thereby raising all the issues (drowning at sea, illegal immigration into Florida) that have caused so much turbulence between the two countries.

Of course, place does not explain all the recent economic and political developments in Haiti. Those developments may be fully understood only when they are imbedded in an analysis of the total social and cultural unfolding of the region. It does, however, make some important connections, and is an example of a type of "microintegration" that helps to bring a part of the larger picture into focus.

Once the limited or microintegrative utility of the non-synoptic disciplines is understood, the way is open for all sorts of integration along the frontiers of disciplines. Again, Phenix's sorting the disciplines into realms of meaning is a useful place to begin the work of microintegration.

As teachers affirm the unity of knowledge, perhaps the distinction between micro and macro integration will help them to understand that knowledge unites in certain ways and not just any way. I hope this distinction will help them avoid using microintegrative organizing ideas in macrointegrative ways. Potpourri is nice when flower petals and spices are involved. Throw in time, place, ideas, and people, and the brew becomes insipid indeed.

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AMERICAN CULTURE OR "AMERICAN TORTURE"?

Myrtle Smits and Steve Bult

It seemed a long time since the inception of the class. In April Steve Bult, a first year teacher, and I, a twenty-year veteran, had first begun to work on this class. At that time we had attended a two-day seminar given by Dr. Roger Taylor of the Curriculum Design for Excellence in Oak Brook, Illinois, and were energized by his humor, suggestions, resources, and assurances that to incorporate disciplines was a phenomenal idea. We were also encouraged by our principal and by our curriculum instructor to pursue the development of such a class, beginning with an American history/literature combination. The school then gave us funds to write curriculum during the summer, to plan and design the course, and to begin our experiment into interdisciplinary teaching. We hoped to incorporate some of Howard Gardner's ideas on teaching to multiple intelligences, and so we had gathered a collection of literature, history, music, cartoons, and videos to aid us in our teaching.

It was September. We had been given a two-period time block to teach the course, to integrate American History and American Literature to pre-college juniors. The course would continue through spring, and students would receive credit for both history and English. We had only eighteen students sign up. Two years before, a new class in humanities had been cursed liberally by the students, and they were very cynical about any new class.

And what a group we had! It was certainly a heterogeneous grouping, an assortment of races and abilities, of work ethic and laziness, of determination and cynicism. For some, the upper level thinking was a challenge, and for some, a near impossibility. For some, the very fact that they were registered as pre-college students was questionable, but this was our class, and so we began.

The first day we blitzed them with paperwork: a copy of class guidelines, a copy of the nine units they were to cover, a copy of the family tree they were to create, and many books: a history book, a literature anthology, five novels, and The American Reader. Within a month, we had a student go to the new principal with a complaint that the class should either receive honors credit or be made simpler. This student had transferred from a public school known for its high scholastic classes, and she said we were more difficult than that school (an exaggeration, I'm sure). (She and her best friend dropped the class at the end of the first semester.) One student even coined the class "American Torture" rather than "American Culture."

So we stopped to reevaluate ourselves, our class, and our teaching style. First, we decided that the blitz of paperwork had been detrimental, and next year we would begin at a slower pace. Second, since part of the complaint was the fact that we gave almost entirely essay tests, we addressed that complaint separately, but we decided that we would not change the method of testing. Students used to rote memorization needed to change. This approach was consistent with our firm intention, "You must think; we will not just feed you information that you can regurgitate back to us."

But the class began to gel and by the middle of October, as Steve was discussing stereotypes of slaves, Dana said, "Oh, yeah, just like Uncle Tom and Cassie." By Christmas, they could write fair essays on the relationship of Bob Dylan's song "Blowin' in the Wind" to

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racism. By the end of the year, they could suggest to fellow classmates that what was needed was upper level thinking or a more creative analogy, or a better illustration. By June, the class had run a sausage company with characters similar to Sinclair's *The Jungle*, had held a great debate as to whether immigration was necessary, seen movies on a variety of subjects, made a video, and read six books.

And now it was time for evaluation. First, we had the students evaluate us. On the whole, the students gave us positive comments: "You made us think." "You prepared us for college." "You used creative ideas." "You incorporated the two disciplines." "Now English makes sense." "Mr. Bult and Mrs. Smits complemented each other." Yet, one student wrote, "I saw no correlation between the two subjects!"

Not only had students been somewhat cynical; some fellow faculty members had also questioned the class mid-way through the school year, suggesting that, yes, we should give honors credit; yes, we were too demanding. Steve and I often asked each other questions about class during breaks or lunch, and soon we had to respond to jokes about the class in the faculty lounge; but Steve's gentle repartee usually generated additional laughter, and by May, the cynicism there had somewhat disappeared. I must say that some faculty members were very supportive, and their encouragement was appreciated.

We were also evaluated by our new principal. He felt that the class was a great idea, that our teaching job had been fine, but he was reluctant to expand the program, suggesting that a second year might popularize the class and make the parents more aware of its value; and he felt that we needed to leave it as an optional class only, rather than expand it to include all pre-college juniors.

As to our own evaluation, Steve and I felt that it was a successful class. We did meet many of our initial goals. The students did learn to write essay tests, create analogies quickly, to read, to explore and question what they read and heard; and they did eventually appreciate the work they had done.

Were we truly interdisciplinary? In history, we had covered years from the Civil War through the Nixon presidency in conjunction with the California Framework, and I had tried to find suitable material in English that coincided with those periods. Some great literature was eliminated, but they read stories about the American Indians that I hadn't known existed. They read excerpts from Chuck Colson's writings and the Watergate tapes, which made reading seem applicable to them. We played music from each period, and intertwined both modern and old music. But we probably only scratched the surface.

We felt that our first semester, because it had been planned to the day, was more successful than the second semester, when we were not as prepared, and for which I, as the English teacher, did not have as much material to accompany coverage of such modern eras as Vietnam and the Nixon presidency. Another hindrance to our second semester was that Steve and I did not have a shared study hall, so our time to plan was limited, especially since Steve had coaching duties after school.

Would I recommend such a class to you? Of course! But you need to know that almost any new venture will have some of the same difficulties we had. Also, if two teachers are to share a classroom, each must be flexible, have a sense of humor, be willing to adjust to the other teacher, and be compatible. Although I am the same age as Steve's mother, in the classroom, we were fellow teachers who respected each other, discussed our strengths and weaknesses, and made suggestions to each other. This was very helpful during the course of the year.

In addition to the fact that any two teachers working together must respect one another, anyone beginning a new venture such as interdisciplinary study should realize that to make it successful one must devote time and money to it. We were very grateful to our school for giving us funds during the summer to develop curriculum. We also used some of our department budget to buy tapes, music, and videos, and to get some special speakers, including a Jewish woman who wrote a book about her experiences escaping from Poland during WWII. All of this helped make the class successful. For me personally, it was immensely rewarding. I always felt that if I hadn't been an English teacher, history would be my second choice, and this renewed my interest in history. I was challenged by a teacher half my age to pursue excellence, and it invigorated me to continue to explore new horizons with my students.

I have not included our specific curriculum, because it would make this article too lengthy. Dr. Taylor suggested that each class set up its own curriculum, because if teachers have designed the class themselves, they then have a vested interest in its success. His institute and the Bureau of Education and Research of Bellevue, Washington, do, however, give five-day summer institutes in writing curriculum. Our two-day seminar gave us many ideas and suggestions.

Last summer we fine tuned the class. The math in our Sausage project, developed in conjunction with Sinclair Lewis' *The Jungle*, needed to be revamped. We aren't going to invite the mayor of Bellflower to speak again because he's too much a politician and too little an educator. We are going to try again to schedule a field trip to the Henry Weisenthal Museum. We are going to continue to discuss racism, deeming it important to face bigotry, which appears even within the Christian community. We are going to give a little more instruction on how to make a video before students make one next year. The task is never completed!

THE BEST YEAR YET

Elaine Hardt

Sit back in a comfortable chair with your cup of herbal tea (coffee?) and picture this:

* your students arrive each morning, eager to begin work;

* your room is imaginatively decorated, not just cluttered with stuff;

* parents of your students are supportive and speak well of how much their kids are learning;

* your principal drops by to enjoy the classroom's atmosphere.

Is this just a dream?

No. And it gets better: you arrive each morning in calm anticipation; and you leave each afternoon, satisfied and not worn out.

How is this possible?

In a word, "themes." Specifically, an approach to teaching using monthly themes in the classroom.

Last year I made the plunge with my class of third graders, students with mixed abilities. With the principal's interest in improving students' motivation, I had an open door. Your classroom is different from mine, of course, and your circumstances are different. What worked well for me will need your own creative touch.

Are there problems?

Anything new can be risky, even for the teacher. Had I not had autonomy to establish my own themes, or had understanding administrators and parents, theme teaching would have been much harder to justify.

All the way, half the time, or once in awhile? Control or chaos? For my comfort level I decided to go for a middle ground. I included much of the regular reading, math, and spelling curriculum by working them into our themes. My girls and boys had many choices, but these were posed within the structure I wanted to use. With older students, you may opt for the freewheeling world of turning them loose to create their own learning. More freedom calls for a more flexible time schedule, more resources, and a more laid-back attitude and teaching style.

Why choose themes?

As Christians we see our Lord's hand in all of life. There is unity in God's creation. The chopped-up approach of turning from one textbook to another all day is artificial, whereas the atmosphere of themes in our classroom brings out a feeling of "family." We minimize competition and applaud affirmation of each other's unique contributions to the group effort.

A monthly theme ties together all of the curriculum. A planning form is a reminder to schedule all of the basics. Exciting extras fit into place when I elicit student input to verbally tie the loose ends together.

It need not mean more work for the teacher. Take it from me, this approach let me bring out the "ham" and have a lot of fun with the students. And yet I still held them to a high standard of education. I call it "sneaky learning."

Students benefit in many ways

The benefits for the students of the elementary school are visible and concrete. More learning takes place, along with greater effort and enthusiasm. Kids remember better. They associate with the "real world." When we're talking about putting a little fence around the flower bed by the flag pole, terms like area and perimeter take on new importance.

No more boring, non-related homework assignments. Everything assigned fits like a piece into a puzzle because you channel student discussion to consider the possibilities. Reading and research are directed. Soon "products" begin to line the bulletin board and the shelves. Every person in the classroom is engaged in the work of helping us all learn as much about our theme as possible. From time to time we stop what we're doing to analyze how we're doing. I welcome helpful suggestions. Sometimes I list these ideas on the board. When we're doing well, I make note of that on our big chart or chalkboard for everyone to see.

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Preplanning doesn't take a lot of time.

Preplanning takes place, but there's also a great deal of improvisation. I begin with a piece of paper, listing the areas of curriculum. I link in reading, social studies, math, spelling, literature, creative writing, science, along with art. I order several films or videos for my subject. I make welcome signs and a "roster" where the youngsters sign their names and their chosen "alias" for the month. Signs and posters are posted in the window by our door.

Each month of the school year begins with great suspense. No one knows what the theme is going to be until I greet the class at the door and welcome them into their "world" for the month. Then it's time to brainstorm. Students tell me what they already know about our subject. Using mapping, I jot key words on a huge sheet of butcher paper mounted on one wall. We talk about what we need to learn about this subject. The butcher paper stays up for several days while we formulate plans for research.

I play, too. Every month I take a new role. In September, I'm the head gardener of Her Majesty's Royal Garden. In October, I'm the Fearless Leader of the Safari. November finds me as the Boss of the Serendipity Mining Company.

Students choose their own roles as each month progresses. A tag board sign on each desk advertises the person's occupation and "alias."

My two "artists," Tony and Ben, hatched the idea of Activity-in-a-Box in January. It was so much fun we did it the rest of the school year.

At the beginning of each month students bring in a pop-can box, or "flat," from the grocery store. I schedule time so each person creates his or her three-dimensional scene to fit in the box. These decorated boxes go home on the last day of the month, holding the other "products" we've made.

Not everything we do fits the theme. For example, one week in October the whole school has a "Say No to Drugs" emphasis. I call this a temporary "detour," and, as soon as we can, we get back to our special subject of the month.

Work fits the theme.

Sometimes I ask students to copy some "interesting" words from the mapping and look them up for a dictionary drill. They copy one of the pertinent definitions along with the page number. This is a quiet time project and continues several days, making good use of spare minutes. Students write original sentences along the lines of the class theme, using their spelling words.

We make up work problems in math to fit the theme. We do a lot of work with the globe and a huge map of the world. We locate any places mentioned in our reading and research.

Sometimes students work with a "buddy" or with a small group. Other work is done independently. Some things lend themselves to parental involvement. Jacob brought in his uncle's police shirt while he played the part of our police officer in Day City, our own model community. He was primed to tell us all about an officer's job.

Each student has a special folder for the month, to accumulate work papers such as dictionary search, spelling sentences, or original poetry. We assemble these into a booklet with an attractive cover.

The last two weeks of the month are busy. We talk about how we will celebrate the end of this theme. I monitor students' report writing and challenge them to get their reports ready to read to the class. Creative writing in the form of poetry, letter writing for information, or imaginative stories is evaluated and copied.

The last day of the month is a celebration.

The grand finale takes place on the last day of the month. And a fitting celebration it is. It's an occasion for all of us to dress to fit the theme, bring in refreshments, and role play. For Day City in January we made an hour's video for our own entertainment. Our librarian made copies for any person who brought in a blank video. Students presented oral reports and stories to the class or to a circle of friends. They admired each other's work.

I took a low-key approach with this celebration to avoid the stress of "performing" for others. Our principal was invited by the class, and she did drop by.

Celebration day is also a time of reflection. Students make a written report telling their favorite activity, the hardest thing, or other ideas they want to include. We all take responsibility for the whole group's learning. Our goal is for everyone to get the top grade for the month. A short, teacher-made test helps me see what we've mastered. Some items are memory-related but are chosen so that students experience success.

On this last day of the month everything we've made goes home. The room looks bare. In that final quiet half-hour after the students have left, I put up a few selected items for the next day, when we'll launch our exciting new theme.

Themes are fun, and the enthusiasm is contagious. The students and I are looking forward to next month.

THEMATIC PLANNER

The "mapping" format may need some explanation. This is what each category entails.

Decor: Room walls, door, windows, my desk, counter tops
Role play: Students, teacher
Reading: Literature, our reader, poetry
Video: films and videos
Writing: reports, imagination
Math: graphs, measuring, word problems
The Box: Activity-in-a-Box ideas
Finale: plans for culmination, refreshments, specials
The Arts: art, music, drama
Social Studies: time line, historical events, map, globe
Science: biology, physical science to tie in

MY THEMES FOR THE YEAR

September - Our Secret Garden
plants, trees, flowers, insects

October - Where the Wild Things Are: On Safari
jungle animals and birds

November - Underground Exploration
caves, bones, mining, minerals, gold, gems

December - A Visit to Yesterday
old fashioned things, Christmas at turn of the century

January - Our Very Own Town
We invent our own town, location, and occupations.

February - What's Up?
Things in the air, balloons, planes, the moon and stars

March - Our State Panorama
tourists traveling in our own state

April - The World of the Sea
the ocean and all its fascinating lore

May - Hawaiian Holiday
all about our fiftieth state

INTEGRATION: A FORMAT TO IMPROVE CRITICAL THINKING

Keith A. Walters

The 1980s saw a renewed interest in classical American educational philosophy. People proclaimed that students must learn reading, writing, and arithmetic facts if America was to stay competitive internationally. Curriculums changed, yet test scores continued to go down. Many educators have worked at addressing this problem of descending test scores. Rosenblum (1987) addressed the heart of the problem by observing that the objective of formal education–meaningful learning–is to provide students with the skills and information that help them understand their current environment and with the goals and strategies necessary to help them shape their future in a manner that will guarantee personal fulfillment. Students who fail to see the connection between course content and meaningful learning will fail to internalize content material and hence will perform poorly on standardized tests, which require students to recall isolated factual material.

Many teachers, however, are reluctant to move away from instructional methods that emphasize memorization of facts. There are several reasons for teacher skepticism of change. One reason could be that when the teacher was a student he or she probably was taught in a fashion that required the memorization of facts. The success of being able to memorize great amounts of material may have proved to be a source of enjoyment and satisfaction. The teacher now wants to pass the same joy and fulfillment on to his or her students. Another reason could be the great affection a secondary level teacher has for the subject he or she is teaching. Often the secondary teachers believe that their subject will be very important in the students' future and therefore the students naturally need to know the facts as well as the teacher does. If the students do not learn the facts, a teacher may believe, the students will enter life unprepared.

Current students are growing up in the world of computers. Students now often challenge the value of memorizing facts because they know that a few strokes of a keyboard will provide them with more factual information than they believe their brain is capable of holding. As educators, we can respond by saying that we know better because we are older and wiser than our students. After all, we know that the facts have proved to be very significant in our personal lives. Students, however, will examine other adults they respect to determine the validity of the logic educators use to support their required memorization of facts. Apart from school testing, many of the facts we ask the students to memorize appear to be trivial. For example, when was the last time it was important for a real estate agent to know who was the eighteenth U.S. President or what is the formula for a quadratic equation, or who were the main characters of *The Jungle*? Thinking

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ahead, students surmise the memorization of facts is nothing more than a non-productive use of time.

What is needed is a way to transmit factual information to students so that the students will internalize the information in their long-term memory. McDonough, Rosenblum, and Stronks state that to be motivated to learn material, students need to find personal value in what is being taught. Their argument continues with the notion that personal meaning will create enjoyment and enthusiasm in learning. To create an atmosphere of personal meaning, teachers must allow students the opportunity to explore in the areas they best understand. Broad-based student exploration can occur in one of three ways: individual exploration outside of school requirements, individualized lesson plans, or integrated units.

A realistic educator will realize that individual exploration outside of school requirements rarely happens and that individualized lesson plans for thirty or more students is almost impossible; therefore, integration is the area that needs to be implemented. Unfortunately, the word integration creates a feeling of fear. Many teachers believe that integration means creating units where one person teaches students math, science, English, and history in one neat package. Most teachers will realistically contend that their training in at least one particular subject is weak, and if they are forced to teach material in their weak discipline, the students will suffer. Concern for the student, therefore, has ironically kept teachers focused on their distinctive discipline accompanied with fragmented schemes to develop students' interest. The result, for the students, is infrequent connection between course content and meaningful critical thought processes, in other words, ineffective formal education.

Integration, however, does not have to be complicated. Integration puts or brings parts together into a whole. Integration can mean having a core teacher teach his or her content while reinforcing the lesson with core content already taught by colleagues. The employment of individual class integration makes integration manageable and usable for all teachers and will result in an atmosphere where meaningful learning materializes and factual retention increases.

Constructing Proper Integrated Units

Successful integration begins in the planning stages of a lesson. Teachers should begin by creating a summary of the unit material they plan to teach the students, reviewing important facts and opinions that will be presented. This is the easiest step to complete. In fact, most seasoned teachers can complete this step simply by examining material taught in previous

After reviewing the material, the teacher must determine why it is vital for students to learn this lesson. The reason for learning the lesson should be translated into a theme. The theme must be worded so that when it is shared with the students they will realize how this lesson will help them understand their current environment and how this lesson will help them shape their future (Rosenblum).

Developing a theme can be a very challenging process. Problems occur because teachers are often required to cover material that may appear insignificant on its own but is very significant in the realm of future student learning. Since students will actively participate in learning only when they see value, teachers must find meaning in all lessons. The importance of this step dictates that teachers spend most of their pre-lesson planning time and energy working at theme development. If a lesson's significance cannot be developed, a teacher should seriously question the validity of teaching the material.

A good source of assistance in theme development is the students. Piaget reminds us that people develop their thinking skills at different levels (Stronks). What a teacher finds obvious, a student often misunderstands. The result is that detailed themes developed by teachers can often prove to be ineffective in helping students find meaning. The best strategy for theme development, therefore, is to pick a broad topical statement that allows students to fill in the details at a level they understand. When students have the power to fill in details, students feel as though they have an important role in the direction of their education and hence will become more active in learning (McDonough, Stronks).

Once the theme is developed, teachers can begin the next phase of integration by pulling in outside source material. The goal of using outside materials is to reinforce the lesson in a manner that allows the students to appreciate the appropriateness of their learning. Because people enjoy different types of activities, a wide variety of source materials should be used. Good sources for support can be found in current event articles, short stories, music, movies, personal experiences, mathematical relationships, scientific discoveries, and the Bible. Teachers do not need to be responsible for finding source materials in all areas. A good starting point in the collection of source material is your colleagues. Once you have developed a theme, ask your colleagues what they currently teach or what is related to their teaching that will complement your lesson. Use shared material to introduce or reinforce your lesson. Additionally, the proper preparation of students can provide supplementary source material. If students are taught to scrutinize the signals they receive outside of school, they will gradually begin to become proficient in matching segments of their life with the theme being taught. Encouraging the open sharing of student connections will eventually provide a teacher with the wide variety of integrated material. In addition, students take ownership of their learning in a manner they find enjoyable.

With the theme composed and several source materials gathered, the lesson is now ready for final preparations. During the final preparations, teachers must give attention to different elements of the critical thinking process. The critical thinking process involves more than simply asking the students "why." Precisely defining the critical thinking process, however, is complex. The complexity is caused by a continuum of theories. One extreme claims critical thinking is holistic in nature. This theory claims that each individual is at a different level of critical thinking; therefore, to be taught, each individual needs a unique lesson (Newmann 1987). The other extreme claims critical thinking is sequential. Beyer (1984)

summarizes this approach when he explains that critical thinking can be divided into a series of steps. Beyer claims that proper teaching involves obtaining competence in lower level techniques before moving to the higher level methodology. Between the two extremes is a variety of combination theories. Unfortunately, none of the theories has strong empirical support.

The confusion created during a study of critical thinking theory should not prevent a teacher from using critical thinking processes or integrated units. Basic critical thinking skills can be blended into a lesson through the use of five general student tasks (adaptation from Munro 1985). First, ask students to differentiate between the facts and the opinions expressed during a lesson. Second, ask students to compare the facts and opinions of the lesson with facts and opinions that influence their lives. Third, ask students to attempt to grasp the reason a teacher or author uses facts or opinions in lectures and writings. Fourth, ask students to determine the importance of a lesson. Finally, ask students to articulate generalized standards for their lives from the conclusions generated in step number four.

The critical thinking rules are stated here as a simple starting point. As the teacher becomes increasingly involved in integrating and teaching for improved critical thinking, he or she should make an effort to study and experiment with the approaches expressed in the continuum. Since the experts have yet to agree on the best approach, teachers should be reluctant to become attached to the first critical thinking process that shows moderate results. Through continual positive experimentation, student achievement will continue to improve.

Assessment of the Integrated Unit

If the shift into integration stops with planning and implementation, success will be minimal or non-existent. Many students are still concerned with their "grades." If teachers fail to assess students on the supplementary material and the different critical thinking levels, students will begin to view the extra activities as secondary in nature. As the supplementary material loses value in the students' minds, students will approach integrated activities in a lethargic fashion. Students' commitment and enthusiasm for learning will not improve and test scores will remain the same or possibly even drop.

Successful integration, therefore, must be carried into the assessment aspect of the lesson. Teachers must develop an assessment formula that balances individual effort and discovery with recall of required curricular information. The weighting of the mix should depend on the complexity of the integration and the students' current grade level. Changes in assessment do not have to be radical or complicated. In fact, initial modification to assessment can be achieved by simply proportioning test questions with the different elements of the integrated unit. Remember, the goal of assessment is to measure the amount of formal learning occurring in the classroom, not to rank individuals on their ability to memorize facts.

The rapidly changing world of the 1990s requires changes in education. Individual integration is low-risk change, but obstacles emerge. Educators may view obstacles either as an excuse to return to traditional teaching or a vehicle to provide them with information that will allow productive modifications in the theory of instruction. Future student excitement toward learning will be directed by teachers' willingness to evaluate their instructional approaches and by their willingness to conservatively experiment with promising suggestions in instructional theory. Failure of concern for student excitement will result in a continual deterioration of student test scores and an increase in the number of apathetic young people in our schools. Concern for student excitement, however, will result in classrooms where formal learning occurs for everyone present. The choice is ours.

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THE SHIP THAT LAUNCHED AND LASTED: A GENERATION OF INTEGRATION

Daniel R. Vander Ark

The teaching team has changed a few times; the course has changed from "elective" to "required" of all Grade 11 students; nothing good in it has come easy; some students and a few faculty still find holes in it and wish it would fade away; and some veteran members of the teaching team think it has been "watered down" from its earlier academic rigor. But Holland Christian's "American Culture" course is still sailing; it is still floating since its launching in the early 1970s. It is a team-taught, multi-disciplined education in American culture from a Christian perspective.

The Building of the Ship

William Blake says, "What is now proved was once only imagined." That's how this course began, with a dream, a possible resolution to a problem. Two teachers, the mentor and the intern, kept talking about the problem of students in the high school learning things in compartments, in separate classes with different teachers. The effect, often, was that in separate classes students would study similar parts of God's creation and not think about their relationship; for example, students would study battles of the Civil War in American history class, take a five-minute break before studying poems of the Civil War in American literature class, and assume the subjects were as different as economics and phonics. The mentor would add examples of what might be taught in an integrated way to enhance students' learning of this subject: a ballad sung during lulls in the battle, paintings that depicted the carnage of that war, and the churches' responses to issues in that war.

Those kinds of conversations led to a dream: that the faculty construct a course, based on some theme(s) of life, that would help students pull together, to integrate, disparate disciplines in a whole understanding that students would remember forever. The dream might have faded in fog if it were not for an opportunity Holland Christian took to apply for a grant from the National Humanities Faculty, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Receiving a $10,000 grant from this organization was the impetus to start building the ship. Like Noah and his son, the mentor and the intern heard the skeptical "What's wrong with the way the world is now?" But there was a ready core of five to eight teachers who drew designs, criticized each, and came up with a blueprint.

The planning committee agreed quickly that the course should center on basic human issues, that it should involve a team of teachers from more than two disciplines, and that it should have a history base. With the help of outside scholars funded by the grant, the committee recognized a treasure in its own back yard, a clear, defined local history: Holland, Michigan, was founded in 1847 by a Dutch pastor, Albertus Van Raalte, who led a group of pioneers to this swamp near Lake Michigan to escape religious persecution in the old country. Soon, the course took the shape of a study of 19th-century America (because many critics saw it as the uniquely American century), with the bookends of the course being a study of the local "Kolonie" and modern Holland, Michigan. Rather than studying immigration in the New England colonization, the course took the much-later immigration to Holland as a microcosm of all immigration. The end of the course, the study of the modern local community, helped students examine how Holland changed over 150 years, how Holland was alike or different from the whole American culture, and to what degree Christian values resided in or departed Holland and America.

Through more meetings, certain features of the ship became apparent. The persistent pendulum swing between rationalism and romanticism in Western culture became the heart of two major units of the course: the Enlightenment (roughly 1760-1810) and Romanticism (roughly 1810-1850). The Civil

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War became a unit in itself because the teachers came to see it as a watershed in American history between a rural and an urban way of life. The unit following the Civil War was called "The Machine in the Garden," borrowing from Leo Marx (one of the scholars who helped shape the course), whose book has that title. The metaphor catches the focus of the unit: industrialization and Social Darwinism ran over the land and people; the idea of infinite progress clashed with a new notion for Nature, that it was "a jungle, red in tooth and claw."

While the ship grew on land, the faculty struggled with a passenger list, a crew, and expenses. Raising capital after the seed money of the NHF was spent was not easy. The architects and the builders had donated their time (many after-school meetings). A visionary principal and board offered a meager honorarium one summer for a week's work for the team to plan the course into details. The money was only gratuitous, but the symbol of good faith was powerful. The results were these: the course would be one semester only, but would be given a double block of time (90 consecutive minutes); it would be elective for Grade 11 students (who studied American history and literature anyway); it would be taught by a team of five teachers (one each from art, history, literature, religion, and music); the class would meet as a whole sometimes and in small groups other times; and students would have to do projects and journals that led them to connect American history to local history, all of history to their personal history, and their faith to their culture.

The course today is essentially the same as it was constructed. The ship certainly has endured storms of doubt and criticism from a few students, teachers, and parents. Within a few years, the course became a required subject for all Grade 11 students. The content, structure, and themes of the original ship are almost the same. The resources (textbooks, materials, slides, trips) have certainly changed over the decades. The original intent that students hear lectures or presentations in large groups and then form small groups for more intimate discussions has evolved into more lecture and discussion in the large group setting. What began as a cozy class of sixty has now become two large classes of 110 each, with two separate teams of four teachers. The music emphasis of the course is now taught by teachers who are not specialists in music. American history teachers now teach a one-semester course in Grade 10 that establishes a framework for American culture. Some of the field trips to study local history have been reduced because the logistics of arranging for 220 students are almost impossible to handle.

Problems on the Voyage

The trip has been unsettling for some students, almost causing seasickness for a few. Students who dislike academic work or like the safety of one tree find looking at a larger forest boring. Some students do not participate in discussions because they are intimidated by the size of the class. Some students cannot easily handle an illustrated lecture, and they act out by clowning or criticizing. Occasionally students show they have not learned concepts or a Christian perspective and then blame the structure of the course or the teachers. Because the group is so large, some students use the lack of supervision to cheat on tests. Finally, a few students complain that the amount of homework associated with the course is excessive, a claim most teachers deny.

For the teachers on the teams, the pains have been varied. The teachers plan the course every spring and summer for the next school year, setting down a day-by-day calendar of responsibilities for each teacher; they do this planning outside the school day and for no pay. However, these same teachers believe their daily preparation is significantly reduced during the course because of all the group planning earlier. While the four teachers are in the class, they must teach while being viewed by their peers; that's not easy. The teams present material, construct tests, and evaluate work together but not without argument. Some think what students are expected to do is too easy, and some too hard. The teachers sometimes do little integration of knowledge by simply taking turns giving a talk or leading a discussion on their own speciality.

Good Sights on the Voyage

For most students over the years, the coourse has done exactly what it sets out to do: it gives a wholeness to their study of culture that is lacking in other parts of their education. First, most college students testify that this course prepared them as well as any other for college essays and tests that require them to connect what they have learned to their previous learning and apply it to new situations. Secondly, almost all alumni point to examples of their applying a theme taught in the course to what they experience every day; for example, a number of students comment years later on the difficulty of using technology well and still caring for people. Third, students in their last year of high school show they have connected American culture to their personal history by taking stances against or for this general culture based on their Christian faith. Finally, students' discussion of ethical issues related to what they have just learned in the course, both in class discussions and in required reaction journals, demonstrates that they are better equipped to make wise choices after their formal education is finished.

For the teachers on the team, this integrated learning is a form of modeling to the students that is beyond measure. When a teacher in the class asks another teacher for clarification of a term or even debates a point, students learn what learning is, a constant give-and-take where some questions don't have easy answers; students learn that making mistakes or not knowing something is all right. The team members all testify that working together is very hard but that they learn much from each other. All the team members say that they have become less specialized and more integrated, drawing on their experience in American Culture to teach in other classes and make connections to what teachers are teaching in other specialties. All of them celebrate the great discussions they have among and with the students on biblical critiques of American culture. They all like the freedom that a 90-minute block gives them to host a provoking speaker or hear a panel or visit an industry or museum, still allowing time for discussion, writing, and application.

No person can "integrate" learning for

another; Christian school teachers, though, can organize learning in a way that students will "more likely" see connections of what's "out there" with what's "in here." If Christian teachers together demonstrate learning in the lab of a classroom, students will more likely see the joy and difficulty of learning, the fact that in Christ "all things coalesce," that education is simply connecting all of history to one's personal history. D. Bruce Lockerbie in *Who Educates Your Child* ? (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980) says the Christian home "incubates a child's character" and the church" inculcates a knowledge of the creeds and doctrines." He says the Christian school "integrates every element of human knowledge and experience into a view of life that can be whole and wholly Christian" (129).

The American Culture course that was launched at Holland Christian a generation ago still rides the waves of learning, steering clear of the siren fads and the rocks of cynicism. It has carried over 2,500 passengers, most of them better for it.

American Culture: a Sampler of Topics

Unit One: Errand into the Wilderness

–Why the Dutch left the Netherlands and came to Lake Michigan

–Reading life through immigrant letters

–What the settlers sang and made

–The similarities and differences of New England settlers and immigrants to Holland

–A comparison of John Winthrop and Albertus Van Raalte

–Journal questions: Imagine you are living during the Holland fire of 1871 and write what you saw and felt. Which two things make you proud of your heritage? Which two troubled?

Unit Two: The Enlightenment

–Classical music and classical art in America

–Romans 13 compared to the Declaration of Independence

–Thomas Jefferson's views on religion, on education, on architecture, on music

–Journal questions: Describe two enlightenment characteristics you see in yourself. Would you like to go to Jefferson's school? Why or why not?

Unit Three: Romanticism

–Comparison of romantic painting to classical painting

–Lowell Mason, the designer of music for the masses

–Jacksonian democracy compared to Alexander Hamilton's views of democracy

–Journal questions: Who is the most romantic person you know and why do you think so? "I'd rather be ruled by the first one hundred names in the Boston phone book than by the Harvard faculty"; do you agree or disagree and why?

Unit Four: The Civil War

–Slavery through spirituals, art, videos, poems, and black churches

–The Civil War through letters: Lincoln's, soldiers', and parents' letters

–Abraham Lincoln from all sides: the Bible, the Emancipation Proclamation, remembered in poetry, the Second Inaugural

–Journal questions: Imagine yourself as a slave fleeing north; what is distinctive or peculiar about slavery in America? How was it defended biblically and do you agree?

Unit Five: The Machine in the Garden

–The American Dream and the broken dreams of groups of people

–Andrew Carnegie's "Gospel of Wealth" and Conwell's Acres of Diamonds

–Social Darwinism and Garland's "Under the Lion's Paw"

–Robber barons or captains of industry?

–Fewer on the farms and more in the cities: good or bad?

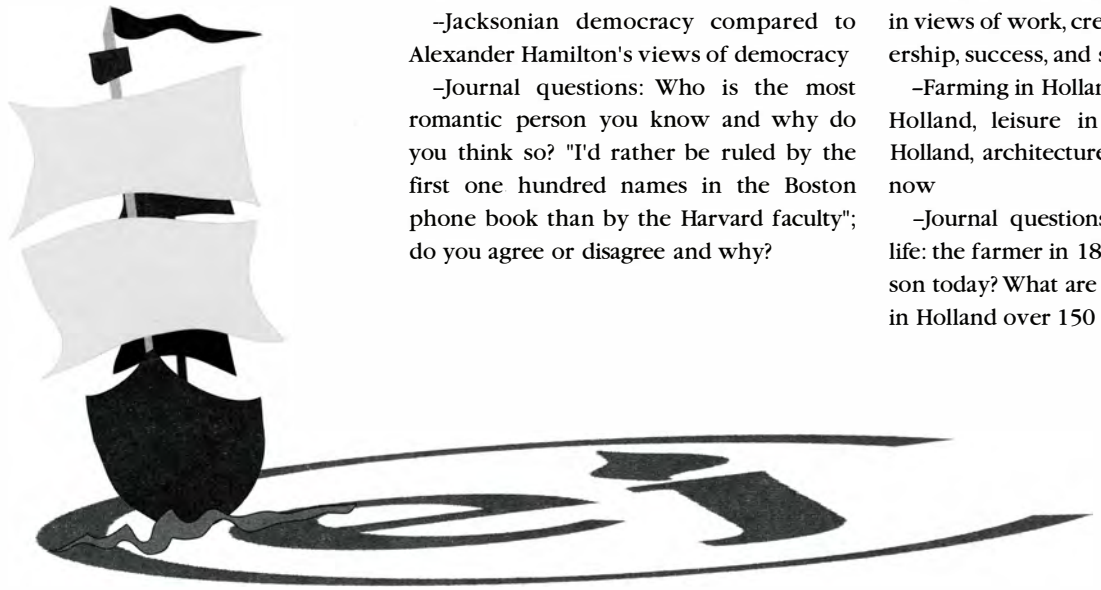
–Journal questions: Should a Christian strive to be rich? What is your dream and is it a good one? How can you tell?

Unit Six: Holland, Michigan, Today

–Business in Holland at three dates: 1860, 1920, and 1980. What differences are there in views of work, credit, expectations, ownership, success, and security?

–Farming in Holland, ethnic minorities in Holland, leisure in Holland, religion in Holland, architecture in Holland: then and now

–Journal questions: Who had the better life: the farmer in 1890 or the businessperson today? What are the three key changes in Holland over 150 years?



INTEGRATED INSTRUCTION IN THE CHRISTIAN CLASSROOM

A GLIMPSE INTO TWO CLASSROOMS

Elizabeth A. Rudenga and Bette S. Bergeron

Through thematic units, students and teachers within the Christian school setting can collaboratively investigate topics that make connections across the disciplines and permit all learners to become aware of the wonders of God's created world.

Integrated instruction allows students to discover relationships between concepts and subject areas, to become active learners, to read and write through authentic experiences, and to explore areas of interest (Bergeron & Rudenga, in press; Lapp & Flood 1994). In addition integrated, thematic, or "integral" (Stronks and Blomberg 1993) instruction not only allows students to explore and reflect upon the world that God created, but also incorporates the skills, strategies, and content that are required at a given grade level or in a particular school.

Silva and Delgado-Larocco (1993) discuss the trend within literacy education to move from instruction organized around basal readers and subject-area workbooks to one that makes use of literature units to promote learning. The renewed interest in thematic or integrated instruction reflects this shift, which extends beyond reading and writing to encompass all of instruction. In order to more fully understand this trend, we undertook a year-long research project that enabled us to actually observe thematic instruction, to participate in the activities, and to interview teachers concerning their planning and implementation.

We studied seventeen classrooms in widely varied schools. We extend to CEJ readers a glimpse into two Christian school classrooms. Space does not permit the description of all activities used within the themes; however, the focus described within the activities was consistently woven in and out of the daily experiences of the classroom.

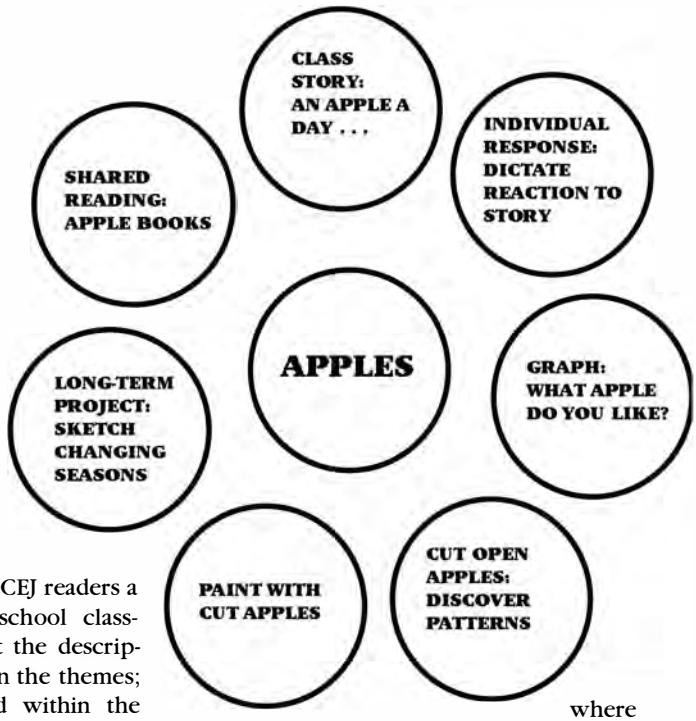
A Study of Apples with Kindergarten Students

The curriculum in Becky Kroll's kindergarten classroom revolves around themes. Becky, a teacher at Timothy Christian School with ten years of experience, collaborates with the other kindergarten teacher to plan and gather resources for the integrated units. Successful experiences, plus encouragement to continue to develop the curriculum, has led these two teachers to cultivate this approach to learning.

Becky discovers her theme topics within a variety of sources, including the kindergarten curriculum and class interests. Some themes require only last-minute preparations. Sometimes the usual, common, and even mundane events provide topics for further discoveries. For example, a few years ago when several children were interested in spiders, Becky scrapped what she was doing and quickly designed a mini-unit that cultivated the children's heightened curiosity.

Often in the fall, Becky and her students learn more about God's rich and varied creation through a study of apples. Although most students have tasted apples, know

figure 1:



where they grow, and are generally familiar with that type of fruit, the integrated unit enables them to more fully appreciate an aspect of creation that they might not otherwise investigate. Activities within the unit also permit Becky to introduce required components of the curriculum.

The projects briefly described below illustrate some of the ways in which students uncover God's wondrous creation. The specific activities within the unit vary from year to year according to such factors as students' needs and interests, time constraints, and resources available.

Sketching the trees. Becky and her students gather outside to sit on the grass or sidewalk to sketch some of the apple trees that grow on Timothy's campus. The discussion that flows from this experience allows the kindergartners to consider that each tree, unique in certain characteristics, is still an apple tree and part of the wondrous world.

The changing seasons. Becky encourages her students to observe the apple trees during the fall, winter, and spring months—to watch for changes. Students design and record information in their own hand-made notebook via pictures that they draw. Their sketches portray the seasonal changes and further reinforce their discussions of the

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diverse aspects of nature.

The unit as a whole. These two planned experiences are part of a unit that involves the children in a variety of multi-sensory activities (Figure 1). Students listen to and read books and poems about apples, sing songs, create a class story, and dictate their own ideas to Becky. The kindergartners also develop a class book that they are allowed to take home for a night, cut open apples to discover the seed pattern, paint with apples, and make graphs that compare apple colors. Throughout these experiences, Becky echoes the motif that God's created world holds many wonders that her children are beginning to discover.

Fourth Graders Learn about God's Continuing Care

At Lansing Christian School, Lisa Hiemstra (cooperating teacher) and Marvin Heyboer (student teacher) collaboratively plan an integrated unit that has a focus combining literature, English, and social studies. This format allows them to read a novel, meet certain strategies required in their fourth grade English text, and complete a study of maps. Using *Number the Stars* (Lowry, 1989) as the foundation for literacy enactments, the events surrounding World War II become the basis for accompanying projects. As a result of their investigations, Lisa and Marvin hope that students will reflect on God's care for his people throughout history.

Lisa often formulates her themes to coordinate with a piece of literature. Guided by a chart that lists skills and strategies that are taught at the fourth grade level, she integrates into the unit those required curricular aspects. She records information to indicate the introduction or review of a particular skill. Lisa uses the basal reader and accompanying materials when she believes that they meet the needs of her students or effectively present a related literary concept in an excellent manner.

Stories from home. As part of the integrated study, the fourth grade educators want to encourage students to form connections between their studies at school and life experiences outside of the classroom. For one project, students talk with at least one person who lived during the World War II era. Part of their inquiry involves the nature of God's care for those involved in the war. Students return from home with intriguing stories of God's providence in times of strife and difficulty. The narrative accounts, repeated over and over again in the classroom, give evidence of God's grace afforded to his people.

Journal response. Students respond to *Number the Stars* individually by writing in their journals. In their comments, they must write from the point of view of one of the major characters. Quite naturally, questions arise and give opportunity for discussion, as evident in the students' response recorded below (see Figure 2). Students make connections between their interviews from home and events in the story. Once again, the heart of the message is repeated—that God, regardless of circumstances, never forsakes his followers.

The unit as a whole. For two weeks, Lisa, Marvin, and the students together learn about God's providence during the time usually devoted to reading, English, and social studies. In connection with Number the Stars, students learn new vocabulary words, write a personal response journal, and read orally as well as silently. They also read trade books to gather details about student-selected events of World War II in order to write a newspaper article. Blended throughout these discussions is a reminder of God's impact throughout history.

An excerpt from a student's response to *Number the Stars*:

"I wonder why God let Peter get killed? How does God care for people who love Him? I know that God has a place for his people in heaven."

Comments for Future Planning

The vignettes extended are not printed with the expectation that they be copied in their entirety, nor are they offered as perfect, definitive examples. Rather, the stories serve to offer possibilities, to encourage others, to foster ideas, and to stimulate your thinking. You, the teacher, know your students, the availability of resources, and the required curriculum, and you have the expertise to plan accordingly. What types of experiences can you design that prompt students to more fully consider God's created world? How can you encourage students to see connections between subject areas, and the connections between school and home? As the teachers in this article illustrate, it is possible to plan and implement integrated units within curricular demands that allow students to view God's work throughout creation and history. Exciting learning opportunities await you and your students.

When Becky Kroll shares the activities of her classroom with students in a college-level reading course, her advice is rooted in reality. She recommends that novice teachers start slowly and seek collaboration with other teachers who use integrated instruction. We suggest that teachers begin with a mini-theme. For example, one teacher involved in the research project used themes on a one-day basis. You may not have the opportunity or resources to design a curriculum that is integrated in all aspects—that is not the goal. Instead, seek small ways in which you can assist students to make a habit of discovering the wonders and glories of God's created world.

We learned, in our study, that teachers who effectively integrate instruction take an active role in planning their units, seek innovative resources, involve students in the process, and discover successful ways to plan within curricular constraints.

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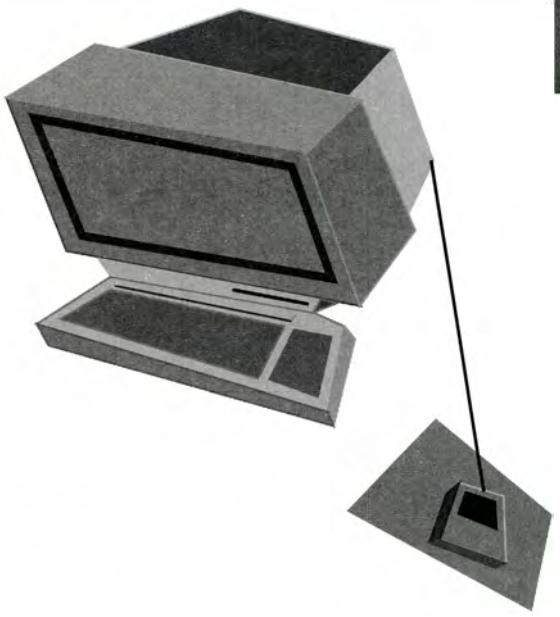
Stefan Ulstein
Media Eye

ONLINE

Stefan, Tor, and Kenji Ulstein



I now require my 11th grade students to turn in all final drafts on computer printout. We do our research online from a terminal in my classroom. Some students welcome and expect this requirement, while others feel overwhelmed. These differences in attitude come partly as a result of the computer atmosphere in the home and in other classrooms. Some students know all about their computers. Others say, "I dunno. It's my dad's. I can only use it when he's around."

In my house, I have to ask my sons how to use my computer. I can teach them to write or to evaluate information, but the technical process of getting that information is easier for them because it's part of their world.

In that spirit, the two articles that follow deal with two of the most useful computer online activities: computer bulletin boards and online library access.

Computer Bulletin Boards are the Quickest Way to Online Literacy

Tor Ulstein

The Internet, E-mail, FTP sites—these are all buzzwords in today's business world. All of them are available to the general public, but for a price. If you can't afford the prices, or are just too tight with your pocket book, may I suggest the popular alternative: Local Bulletin Board Systems or BBS for short.

No doubt in the area where you live there are several BBS's within toll-free calling distance. Almost all of them offer free access. Usually you are asked to fill out, via modem, a form requesting information about yours—where do you live? What was your date of birth? What is your present occupation?

"Why do I want to be on a BBS?" you ask yourself. Well, a BBS is a good way to exchange information about anything you want to talk about. Also systems serve as a new meeting ground for people to share their ideas, as they would in a town square. Updates and useful programs, as well as useless games, are available through the files section on your BBS. The reason I use them though, is that they're fun to use. They give us a glimpse of what is to come in the world of computer online technology.

Most people don't take the initiative because they say it's too hard to learn the systems, or they don't have the time. Some even use the excuse that BBS's are a giant underground, above ground—which in a sense they are.

Regulars do speak a whole different language, and often "flame" each other, or have "rag wars" in which the object is to post messages about the other user, calling them names, swearing at them, insulting their prowess in using computers, or teasing them about their social life. This mostly happens to friends who know each other

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from other outside sources, such as school or work.

How do you find a BBS? If you have a local computer newspaper it should have bulletin board listings in the back. There are nationwide BBS's too, but they usually charge for online time.

I found most of the BBS's I use through word-of-mouth from a friend at school. So you can ask your students what they recommend. Most BBS's have a section for BBS numbers you can call, or the SysOp (Systems Operator) has a friend that runs a board and gives you the number when you log on.

Be friendly, but not overly so. Don't give out any confidential information to any user. Try to use an online alias like "Trouser Boy" instead of your real name, or whatever name suits you. The most important rule I'd like to suggest is to pick carefully the BBS you hang out on. If a BBS has weird message bases, or a number of "seedy" users, I suggest not calling it anymore. An example of anything seedy is users talking about "borrowing games," which a legitimate SysOp would not allow on the board, or talk of "flaming" someone, or any other talk you wouldn't like to hear about yourself in general. You will have to judge what boards to use and not to use. A number of boards offer "Waraz" (copyrighted software for download), which is a federal felony, and though a free game or two may sound all right, the $75,000 dollar fine and jail sentence are not worth it.

Another point of advice is to get to know the Systems Operator to clarify for yourself what is and is not acceptable to the owner of the board.

Several types of boards are available; the most common are files BBS's. They offer shareware games, pictures, applications, and almost anything you can think of. The next is message, or online games BBS's. They offer E-mail to the other users of the BBS, and they help form more knowledgeable users and on-line games. "Legend of the Red Dragon," "Food Fight," and "Trade Wars 2000" are all common on most files-oriented BBS's.

Also common is the Christian BBS, which I highly recommend to the new user. The SysOps in my experience are very strict and won't allow any objectional material to be available to users.

When learning a board, be patient and ask questions in the message bases. Try not to bother the SysOp too much. Download all the FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions). If you really need help, you can chat with the SysOp. Talk to friends or students. Many know a lot about BBS's and may even be on the same board as you.

Editor's Note:

At the 1994 Chicago Conference for Christian educators it was resolved to open a BBS for Christian teachers. This would serve as a clearing house for curriculum sharing and communication for Christian teachers throughout North America.

Library Computers

Kenji Ulstein

Computers are increasing in popularity and decreasing in price. More important, they are becoming more common and are probably installed in a library near you so that you and your students can make better use of the library.

These new information depositories require almost no computer experience to use. The systems are designed to be easy. The librarians' educational background has paid off. The computer menus are all multiple choice or yes/no questions. No fancy programming codes. Do you understand? [y/n]

Some computer hacking punks try to break computers, though. They spend hours trying to corrupt files, download viruses, and generally make a mess. If one of them were able to crash a public library, he (almost never she) would spend hours upon hours telling of his great triumph.

The moral to this story is that it's very hard to crash the public library, so you don't have to worry about accidentally pushing the delete key and ruining the whole system, or resetting all the clocks to noon. I know. I tried it, and it doesn't do anything.

Another piece of good news is that library computer users need almost no Dewey Decimal experience. Some teachers may worry that their students will grow up ignorant of how to use the hallowed Dewey Decimal System. Let's put this in perspective. No doubt somewhere along the Ulstein family tree (a Norway Spruce) at least one Viking father worried that his sons might lose the ability to build wooden boats or hurl harpoons at fleeing Minke whales. I have lost these abilities, but I still have a life. Times change.

But the technology age has not only changed the library, it has brought it to our home telephone jacks. What makes the library even more user friendly is the fact that you can now use it at home by plugging your computer into the phone line. All you need is a modem. Modems come in different speeds. the faster the modem, the more expensive it is. The newest modems operate at a speed of 28,800 baud. The oldest run at 300 baud. Baud is like horsepower in a car, or amps on an electric motor. The bigger the number, the faster the transfer of information.

The advantage of a fast modem is that you get your information more quickly. This is especially important for business people who must transfer files on long distance lines; for them time is money. However, you can only communicate with a modem that operates at the same speed as yours, so a 28,800 baud modem won't help you much until your library gets one that fast.

Right now the University of Washington library runs modems at 2400 baud, as does my city's library.

For me, time is just time. I've always liked to buy technology that's being replaced by something newer and more expensive. That way I get the best price for equipment that's still very up-to-date. If you want to purchase a modem, you can probably find a very fast 14,400 fax modem (the current industry standard) on sale for about $100. The fax modem also lets you send and receive fax transmissions directly from your computer. That's cheaper than buying a stand-alone fax machine for $300.

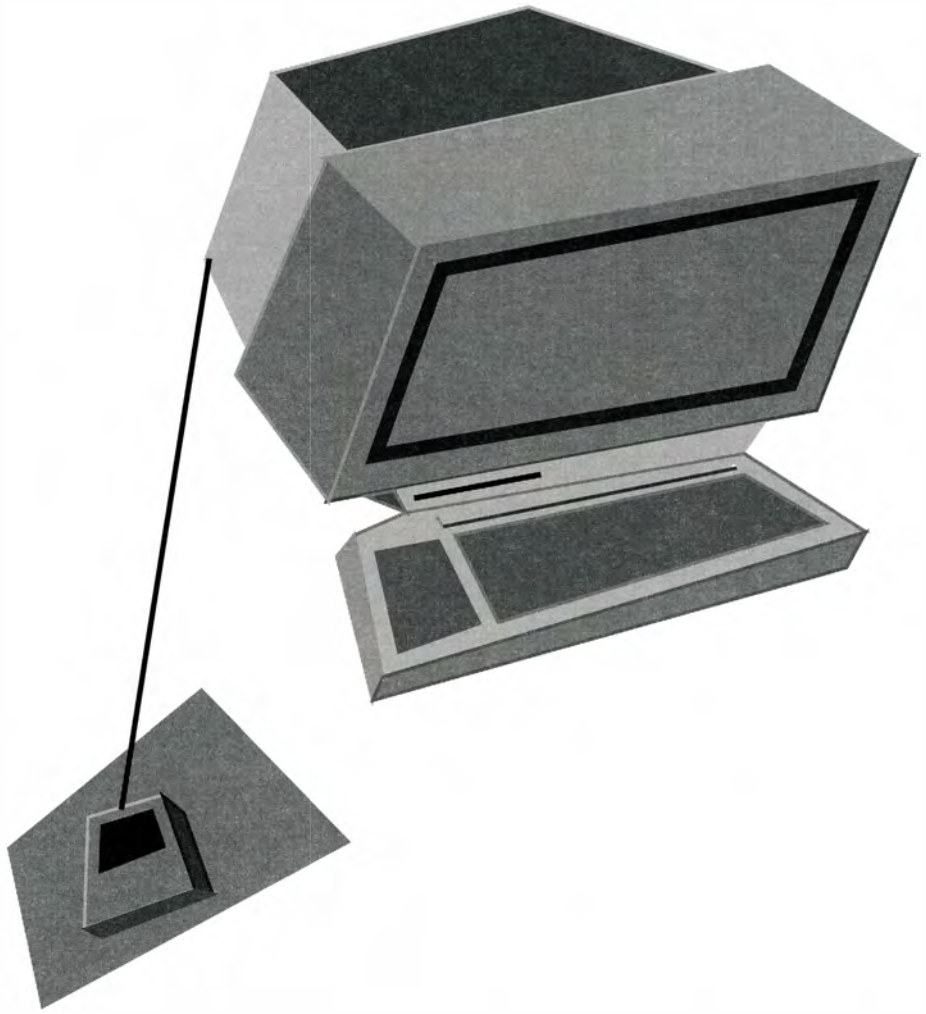
The books I try to check out are usually not in the library; sometimes they are in other branch libraries, and usually they are

being read by other users. In either case, you can place a hold through your computer, and in a few weeks or months, depending on the waiting, the book shows up at your door.

At first I felt guilty about using taxpayer dollars to send mail to my house, but when I got my first book, I found an advertisement that thanked me for using mail and encouraged me to do so more often. Apparently, mailing books directly to the user is cheaper than sending them by truck to other libraries first, and even if the libraries did send books by truck, they still would need to send you a post card informing you that they had an "item" waiting for you at the library. When I need to go to the library only to return books, I like the system, too.

Most libraries will let you use your modem to check your personal account for fines or book holds. They will also allow you to check the number of holds on an item you've ordered, so you can know if it will arrive before the deadline on your big research project.

Teachers should get online at home so they can learn all this stuff. It changes every couple of months as libraries update their equipment. And every classroom ought to have an online computer so that students can "go to the library" without having to leave campus.



Jeff Fennema

Thinking Thirteen

TRINITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL IS SPOILING ITS STUDENTS!

Jeff Fennema

Trinity Christian School is spoiling its students; just ask Michael and Sharon Tachenko. Their oldest child, Tiffany, graduated from eighth grade at this small school in Cincinnati, Ohio. TCS performed such a number on Tiffany that her following year at a local Christian high school was filled with frustration and many family discussions. The Tachenkos moved the next year. They left Cincinnati, the only home they had ever known, and they moved because of Trinity Christian School.

You see, this school had completely subscribed to the theory of integration—not so much with the academic disciplines, but with faith and learning.. Trinity had meshed scriptural principles with its curriculum. Tiffany, a product of this integration, found her high school lacking in this area. A search began for a new high school, and throughout the year Michael and Sharon "thought out loud with the kids." Their daughter didn't sense the same biblical integration she had received at her former school. The lack of academic challenges did not impress her either.

"The classes were dreadfully simple at [my high school] in Cincinnati," said Tiffany. "There really was no challenge to serious thinking. Everything was geared down so the teachers didn't have to explain much, or so it seemed."

The family's move toward another option began with a CSI (Christian Schools International) directory. They felt these schools would be closer to their goal—a biblically integrated approach to education found in everyday life, in every part of the school. After contacting several schools in the eastern United States, they chose Chattanooga Christian School (K-12) in Tennessee. The Reformed vision held by the staff, administrators, and school board at CCS initially impressed Michael and Sharon. It was extremely close, if not identical, to their own.

Tiffany described to me the initial transition period. "I know my parents came to the decision they did with a great amount of soul searching, prayer, study, and talking with people they know who loved the Lord and shared a similar 'world-and-life view.' It was a really hard decision for them. They were leaving a lot and asking us to leave all our friends and family (who were very angry with us for leaving them). My dad left a job he loved and took a large cut in pay."

Chattanooga Christian School has fully met the family's expectations. During her time as a librarian there, Sharon has seen first-hand how the school operates. She was struck by the interviews conducted for potential staff members. "A critical issue in these interviews is the teacher's understanding of the child and how he or she integrates the spiritual into everyday life."

"All the teachers are Christian at CCS," Tiffany stated, "and they all come at their subjects from a biblical perspective. The spiritual seems to be a thread which is continually interwoven through the subjects. And it doesn't seem to be tacked on as an afterthought, but rather something which is important throughout the course."

The benefits have far outweighed the pain of dislocation. Tiffany talked about the education she received in Cincinnati and Chattanooga, but she also mentioned the education received through her parents during this whole process. "It set an example for me that I will never forget. I knew they cared about the kind of spiritual education we got more than anything else. I am thankful for the value my parents placed on my spiritual education, and I know I will raise my own children with the same view. It is a strong priority for me that my own children will be educated in Christian schools."

Lest this turn into an ad for Chattanooga Christian School, we should remember that this search never would have happened had it not been for the integrated approach to education found at Trinity Christian School. If TCC had used a conventional approach to education, pasted some Scripture here and there, and tossed in a chapel once in a while for good measure, would Tiffany have questioned her educational experience in high school? Would she and her family have remained blissfully ignorant? Would they have escaped the pain that integration can sometimes bring?

Last year our chapel committee at Lansing Christian School used the theme "Do you see Jesus?" throughout the school year. One of the questions raised was, "Do you see Jesus in the classroom?" Great question! In a very simple way, this question touched on a foundational principle of every Christian school's vision statement. Do students see Jesus in math, in language, in art, in physical education? Do students see Jesus in their classroom community? I've always wondered, if we truly integrate faith and learning, if we mesh Scripture with our classroom instruction, would Bible classes be necessary?

Trinity Christian School spoiled Tiffany Tachenko. The teachers provided her with a biblically integrated education, and she would not accept anything less in her high school. Do all of TCC's graduates move away from Cincinnati? No. However, this school graduates students who have been given this educational experience, as do many others. When Christian schools send their middle school graduates to high school, it has to be gratifying to know that these kids have been given a biblically integrated education. The hope then is that they will not settle for anything less.

Jeff Fennema teaches seventh grade language arts at Lansing Christian School in Lansing, Illinois.

Eleanor Mills

Idea Bank

A HOUSE IS A HOME FOR ME

Lainie Bomhof

"I am going to tell you a story that you have all heard before. It's an old story, a true story. It is a story of how our home was made. Not the home you live in and that I live in, in Langley or Surrey or Fort Langley; but our big home, this world. It is the story of how this home was made. It is the story of how people were made and why they were made. It is the story of how, in the beginning, God made a perfect home for all his creatures, from the tiny ant to the big elephant, from the small minnow to the great whale, from the new baby in your family to your old great grandma. Listen carefully and watch the slides, to see how God made a perfect home for you and me."

This is how Jenny DeGroot, mother and library volunteer at Langley Christian School, began to tell the story of creation through slides and narration at the beginning of a primary-level cross-graded integrated unit called "Homes."

It was the beginning of a variety of activities in which a community bonded together to teach the little ones how their great, wise, caring God has provided homes for people and animals. Parents, teachers, students, community resource people, friends, and extended family all helped contribute to an exciting four weeks.

By the time the children from kindergarten to grade three had completed the "Homes" unit, they didn't know if they would prefer to live in a coop, a nest, an underground home, or up in a tree house. Children used their imaginations to find out what it was like to live long ago in castles or log houses. They compared a mud rondavel in Africa to their own homes.

Soon the children discovered that this is not a perfect world, that sin has spoiled God's original beautiful creation. They pondered what they could do to help. They also began to appreciate people whose jobs exist because of sin, as they studied the temporary homes of police officers, firemen, and hospital workers.

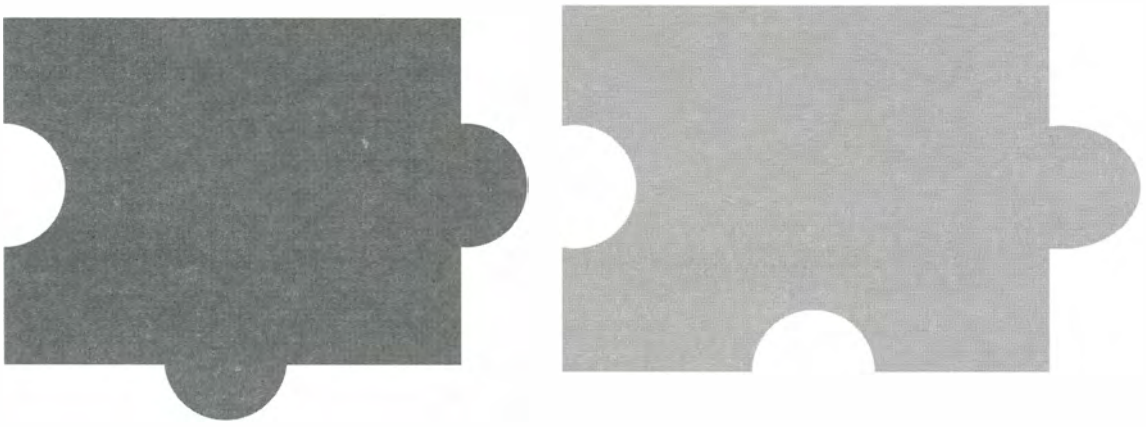
Each teacher planned classroom activities around a type of home such as forest homes, bird homes, underground homes, and ocean homes. In the days before the unit began, teachers invited friends and spouses to enjoy the camaraderie that easily developed while creating inviting doorways, bulletin boards, and activities. A lot of work in preparation? Yes! But all staff members agreed it was well worth the effort as they observed the children's eagerness to see all the different types of homes.

To culminate the unit students displayed three-dimensional homes constructed at home with their families. Over and over again, children told how families had fun together working on the project. It was a visual reminder of how God provides for us all. It was also a demonstration of how we, as an extended family, can live and work together for his glory.

Lainie Bomhof is primary curriculum coordinator of Langley Christian School in Langley, British Columbia.

THE PUZZLE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Geri Van Ruler



Geri Van Ruler teaches first grade at Sioux Center Christian School in Sioux Center, Iowa.

Several years ago my husband and ten-year-old son presented me with a gift they were sure I would appreciate: a fifteen-hundred-piece puzzle of an old red schoolhouse with young children on the playground. I was fascinated by the picture on the box, but didn't relish the idea of putting the puzzle together. They assured me that the second part of the gift was that they would put the puzzle together for me.

Maybe it's the teacher in me, but I couldn't help seeing many similarities between the process of fixing that puzzle and Christian education.

Because my son and husband were so eagerly committed to fixing the puzzle, the rest of the family, including me, soon got caught up in their enthusiasm. Wouldn't it be great if our exuberance for Christian education gave others a desire to join in our efforts?

The task of fixing the puzzle would have seemed impossible without constantly referring to the completed picture on the box top. Christian education, too, is impossible without frequent references to God's Word. The Bible is full of guidance and assurance that he who began this good work in us will be faithful to complete it. We must be even more dependent on the Bible than on a puzzle box cover.

Each of the five of us approached the task of fixing the puzzle differently, and yet, there were few disagreements and plenty of praise for whomever was successful in completing a small part of the puzzle. We were all working together, complementing each other's efforts. I have to admit that that atmosphere is something I'd like to see more of in our household. Christian education, too, will allow for different creative approaches to the same task of teaching and calls for support and appreciation of these different approaches.

Of course, the border was the first thing completed on our puzzle. It's relatively easy to find the puzzle pieces with straight edges. Christian teachers also need to begin with a framework of Christian objectives and rules or expectations for their classroom before real teaching can begin.

Sorting the pieces into different colors

was my main contribution. Someone else would quickly collect a pile of one bright color and work on getting those pieces to fit together. The bright and gifted students also appeal to most of us, and we are quick to identify them; but we are not always sure where to place them or how to challenge them. This particular puzzle had many greens and browns, and when fitting them together seemed impossible to one of us, another person tried it from a different angle. Quite often, the correct fit would be quickly apparent to the second worker. As Christian teachers we have fellow teachers and principals from whom we can seek advice. Often a fresh perspective will open our eyes to a new and workable solution when we are faced with a difficult situation. The Bible teaches that we are all vital parts of one body (Romans 11:5). We should never be afraid to seek advice from parents or a fellow teacher or be too proud to admit that, alone, we do not have all of the solutions.

As long as I can remember, my mother has enjoyed word searches, crossword puzzles, and jigsaw puzzles, making her an expert puzzle fixer. Having my parents over for Sunday dinner made the puzzle progress more rapidly. Teachers, too, can be thankful for Christian support staff: counselors, remedial reading teachers, librarians, resource room, and Talented and Gifted personnel. We should make every effort to seek their expert advice and assistance. It will make our task of meeting the needs of individual children a more realistic possibility.

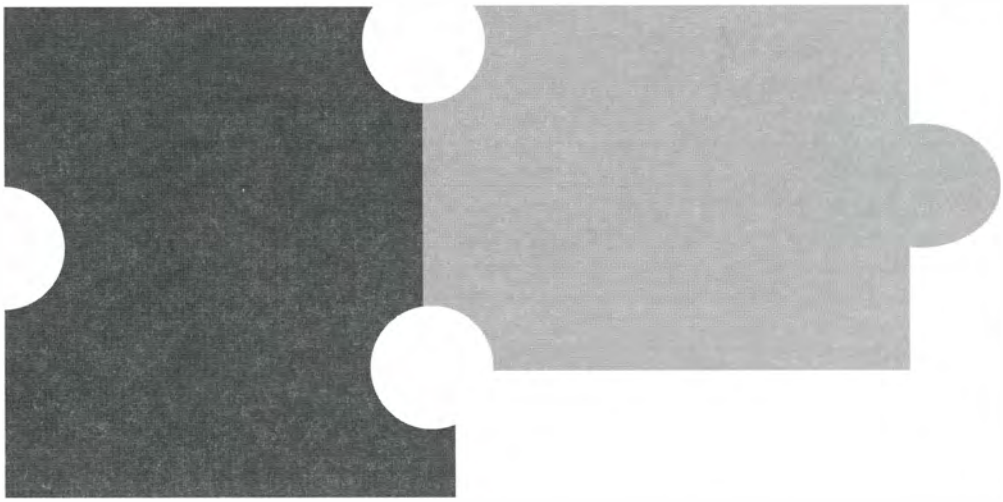
Fixing a puzzle is a non-competitive activity, probably another reason why the atmosphere at our house was so peaceful. Christian educators must work together without competition or jealousy. We should rejoice in one another's successes and gifts and realize that it is because God equips each of us with different gifts (Romans 12:6) that we can complement and support each other in the cause of quality Christian education. With God's help our students should be able to model after our caring and supportive relationships with each other.

Our family puzzle pictured many large objects: farm buildings, a horse and buggy, a rustic tool shed, and more. All of these were lying on our card table and were not complete until the connecting pieces brought them together. We teach many subjects, but they may not be meaningful until we, as teachers, work to integrate them and to bring to our students' attention the unity in God's world. Those connections aren't available in most teacher manuals and may demand extra preparation time and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I remember coming home from school as a young girl, disliking history and not seeing any reason or use for it in my life. My dad sensed this distaste and quickly brought to my attention books such as Johnny Tremain and The Diary of Anne Frank and showed me that history and literature, which I thoroughly enjoyed, were related. We need to find ways to help our students make connections to God's kingdom and their role in it.

One of the fears of completing a fifteen-hundred-piece puzzle is that one or more of the pieces may be lost in the process. With that possibility in mind, we were all very careful to watch for pieces that strayed onto the floor or elsewhere. And when a piece seemed lost, a desperate search began and no one rested until the lost piece was found. As Christian educators, we must do everything in our power to teach the child who seems impossible to reach, even if the search to meet that child's needs is very demanding.

Our completed puzzle is now framed behind glass and proudly hung in our family room. It reminds all of us of a good, rewarding experience, one none of us would have had the courage to tackle alone. I hope and pray that God will use our efforts as members of the Christian School community to further his kingdom. Then when we reflect on our work, we'll see that God has been faithful to complete the puzzle. And when you think the challenges are too great, the needs are impossible to meet, and your calling demands too much time, remember that you can't fix this puzzle alone; but without you, it wouldn't be complete.

Ephesians 4:6—From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.



QUERY QUERY QUERY QUERY

Marlene Dorhout

I have a student who doesn't like to do homework or complete assignments in study hall. If he had his way he would just play chess even during his free time. Not being a chess player myself, I find it difficult to sound genuinely interested in this game in order to reach him. Any suggestions?

You have the right idea of tuning in to your student's interests. Unless you have a desire to learn the game, though, you really don't need to play chess in order to use this valuable clue. Chess popularity in schools is growing throughout North America. According to Todd Bardwick, a USCF Master and the 1992 and 1993 Denver Chess Champion, recent studies show that chess has definite, positive effects in a young person's academic test scores. The summary of these studies showed improvements in the following areas:

Math and reading skills
Cognitive skills including concentration, pattern recognition, problem-solving abilities and logical and intuitive thinking
Self-confidence and self-worth
Communication skills
Increased attention span
Hard work ethic and commitment.

Bardwick says that one of the most important benefits of chess play for kids is that it makes a child realize responsibility for his or her own actions and acceptance of the consequences.

Perhaps this young man has not transferred all of these benefits to his school work and simply needs help in the transition. If he is twelve years of age or older, I believe you could give him the above list and ask him how he thinks chess could help in these areas. Also allow the student to explain how not making the right move can blow the game; transference to academics should be easy at that point.

Another reason may be preventing him from doing school work and spending such an inordinate amount of time on chess. Many gifted kids find chess more challenging than school subjects.

Chess can become the "carrot" for completed work or, better yet, the basis for problem-solving or story writing. Use the movie *Searching for Bobby Fischer* for discussion related to school, parents, chess moves, personalities, dreams, and goals. You also can help the student develop by allowing him to play chess with someone else who has finished the class work. Eventually, they may be the impetus for forming a chess club.

Rather than depriving this student of his fascination with chess and risking his anger and rebellion, use it so that both of you become winners in the game of education.

Our school doesn't display the American flag in the classrooms or regularly have students pledge allegiance. Is patriotism no longer taught and/or practiced in education today?

I cannot speak for all schools, but definitely the scenario you described fits my educational setting quite well. Last spring when a group of students wanted to have prayer around the flag pole, I asked permission to put up the flag for this special event. I was allowed the privilege only if I promised it would be taken down again since that neglect is the reason for no longer displaying the flag. The truth is, until then, I didn't even notice the bare flag pole. Can I blame my 1960s education, or the media's cultural and political enlightenment; or has my apathy and that of many colleagues subtly erased this symbol of national pride?

A recent Gallup poll (June, 1994) indicated that 73% of Americans think people in the United States are less patriotic than in previous decades. The poll revealed that feelings of patriotism varied by age, with the youngest adults the least likely to feel very patriotic.

Teaching the history, requiring the memorization, and conforming to the practice may or may not instill patriotism. The presence of the U.S. flag at Olympic games or on the Fourth of July continues to invite respect and national pride. However, a few times prior to ball games in Denver's coliseum, I have felt uneasy about the apparent disrespect or lack of respect for the national anthem and the American flag. Perhaps subconsciously I condone the absence of this patriotic ritual as more favorable. Maybe patriotism just isn't demonstrated in the same way anymore, but hopefully it still exists.

Most of all, though, I think it is important for us as Christian educators to see through the chaos a hope for a nation under God and to offer to our students the continued challenge of justice for all.

Last year was my first year of teaching, and I learned a lot. One thing that bothers me, though, is my colleagues' drinking. Sometimes after school, but more often after evening activities, faculty members go to a bar to drink. Even though I experienced this kind of pressure in college, I

did not expect it on my job in a Christian school. I feel very uncomfortable about this and don't know if I should continue to participate. Is this common in other Christian schools?

In college, students often drink to assert their independence and rebel against restrictions. You now seem shocked and disappointed in adult colleagues' similar behavior. Being on the job doesn't automatically change learned patterns or lifestyles. Neither do all Christians view the drinking of alcoholic beverages with disdain. Evidently this issue is a common concern of Christian school teachers; I've received letters from various areas of the United States and Canada and can personally attest to similar situations during my teaching career.

More than likely you are not the only one on staff who is uncomfortable. Peer pressure and conformity exist in adult Christian settings, too; and a young, new staff member might be particularly vulnerable, not wanting to be the "goody-goody" excluded from the social scene.

You certainly have the right to exercise non-participation in such practice. I suggest that first you clarify for yourself why you object. Is it the place, the bar, or the alcohol itself? Is it alright for other people, just not Christian school teachers? Perhaps your concern is the effect alcohol has on people, which is one of the main reasons non-Christians are imbibing less and less. A Christian school teacher should be a role model for students, both in and out of the classroom, and participating in these activities does not create the image you'd like for yourself, or the one you believe God wants of you. Therefore, even going along but not drinking would still make you uncomfortable. Whatever your reason might be, if you are clear about it, don't continue to compromise your beliefs and values, but do find alternatives.

This year, you might feel increased confidence; thus, you could suggest other places to go or even invite the staff to your home, where you are in control and can create the opportunity to have fun and relax with your colleagues without alcohol.

Regardless of others' opinions regarding scriptural warning or religious freedom, Solomon's advice not to do anything that harms your walk with God is still appropriate today. No one else can decide that for you.

THE CAUSE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Richard J. Edlin.
Vision Press, P.O. Box 1106
Northport, AL 35476. 1994.
Reviewed by Gloria Goris Stronks

It sometimes happens, in the middle of a discussion concerning needed structural and curricular changes in Christian schools, that someone will say, "We must remember, however, that a school must be a school." The statement is usually greeted with moment of silence because it sounds so full of meaning. When pressed for clarification, the speaker often reinforces the idea that the primary task of a Christian school is that students will come to be culturally and biblically literate. Richard Edlin, a native of New Zealand and presently an Assistant Director with the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), presents the cause of Christian education as much more far-reaching.

Edlin begins by explaining why Christian schools are needed. Refuting the argument that Christian schools are dangerous because they provide a "hothouse" environment for children and young people, he focuses on the fact that many Christians are so blinded by the myth of religious neutrality in modern times that they fail to recognize that genuine education cannot occur unless a values or moral basis is provided. He argues convincingly that everyone has a world view and that values are always religiously based, whether they are presented in a Christian school or a public school.

But then Edlin warns against particular kinds of Christian schools by describing a typical Christian school that has daily chapel for all students, Bible classes, and many fine Christian teachers who pray daily for their students and who try to set a good moral example for their lives. The effect of this practice alone, without a dynamic reformation that reaches into all areas of the school program, reinforces what Edlin describes as a "shriveled mindset" about the faith. The danger is that this restrictive mindset confines, for young adolescents, the idea of faith to peripheral areas such as church, while the

rest of life appears to be untouched by those beliefs.

Most of us concerned about Christian schools would disassociate ourselves from a description of schooling for a "restricted mindset." However, when it comes to explaining how a seventh-grade or eleventh-grade curriculum in a Christ-centered school differs from that of a public school we have some difficulty answering. When we are asked to explain how a biblical interpretation of learning and knowing shapes the way we instruct in seventh- or eleventh-grade classrooms, we are even harder pressed to answer. If it is true that the primary task of the Christian school is neither biblical exegesis nor moral story-telling, then what makes a school a Christian school?

Edlin's answer to this is to state that if students are to learn that salvation through faith in Christ means the refocusing of our lives in God, the Bible must have a devotional function, a foundational function, and a permeative function in the school. Recognizing the devotional function and even the foundational function of the Bible in the classroom usually isn't difficult for teachers. However, understanding how biblical teaching should permeate every part of the curriculum is more difficult, and Edlin provides interesting examples for how such permeating may occur.

Those who promote Christian schools sometimes cite excellent scores on standardized tests as proof they are providing a good general education, but Edlin says that if the vision and purpose of the school cannot be passionately articulated by faculty, parents, and board, the school is a miserable failure. He provides elements of an educational confession along with a sample confession but seems to equate an educational confession statement with a mission statement. Here he misses a step. A mission statement, I think, must grow out of a confession along the lines of "We believe these things concerning the Word of God as it relates to the special tasks of students, parents, teachers, and the community.Therefore our Christian school will be a place where. . . ."Without the mission statement, the confession statement may be interpreted in a variety of ways when it comes to schooling.

In describing ways in which the vision can be maintained among the faculty, Edlin cites the policy of the Missions and Overseas Schools Office of ACSI to require all faculty to complete a Philosophy of Education course. This on-site course requires teachers and administrators to read a selection of books and view videos dealing with questions of Christian school philosophy and vision. The course ends with the requirement that

> faculty write a short statement that outlines their own personal response to the materials they have watched and read, in the light of the school's vision and their own personal understanding. They are asked to outline briefly their own vision of education, to provide a biblical foundation for this vision, and to identify the ways that this vision drives what they do in the classroom. (90)

I was struck with the fact that Christian schools of the type with which most CEJ readers are familiar rely on Christian colleges to provide courses in philosophy of education, with the assumption that learning in that course will carry over into design for curriculum and instruction. Those of us who teach in these colleges hope that is true. However, think how strong a Christian school would be if, at the beginning of each school year, senior staff members would provide demonstrations for new teachers and engage in discussion concerning the ways in which those insights shape the structure, the curriculum, and the ways of teaching in their particular Christian school. Such discussion would not only increase the understanding of the new teachers but would reaffirm the vision of the school in the minds of experienced staff members. The stipulations for the brief paper required at the end of the course might well be used later as part of the teacher evaluation process, with the teacher demonstrating ways in which the school's vision had shaped teaching and learning in his or her classroom.

After explaining why Christian schools are needed and what these schools should be, Edlin goes on to explain how this kind of schooling can be carried out. His extensive experience with schools makes this portion delightful and informative reading. He provides a lengthy chapter on foundations for curriculum, along with a discussion of resource selection. The chapter on student evaluation warns against contemporary grade inflation, a practice that has the effect of lulling young people into a sense of complacency because of the ease with which they gain "good" grades and of developing in them an unwarranted and unhealthy sense of their own academic superiority. However, Edlin doesn't advocate a climate in which students compete for grades; rather, he attempts to set forth a biblical foundation for student evaluation. I was disappointed to see that student involvement in parent-teacher-student conferences received only a brief mention at the close of the chapter. That discussion is of sufficient value to warrant its own monograph, and perhaps that would be the most suitable format.

The book closes with a chapter concerning the Christian school in a missions context and a final chapter concerning the Christian teacher in the public school, both extremely important topics that can be touched on only briefly in a book of this nature. Edlin includes, as an appendix, Harro Van Brummelen's "Annotated Bibliography of Published Materials Related to Christian Schooling," a valuable list of works on Christian schooling, most of which have been published within the last fifteen years.

In an introduction to the book, Al Greene writes, "Here is a book that deserves wide circulation among Christians the world around and especially among those already involved in Christian schools." I echo that statement. Edlin's many years of experience in both Christian and public schools in several countries, combined with his readable style, make this a delightful book. Teachers, principals, school boards, and parents will find the book helpful in thinking about the schools we need.