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MULTIFUNCTIONAL CLASSROOM



Lorna Van Gilst
• Editor •

I still shudder with remorse every time I see Linda, and I wonder if she remembers what I did to her in third grade. In those days teachers commonly asked students to check each other's papers while the teacher read the answers. I had Linda's paper that day, and by the time Miss R. finished reading the answers, Linda's paper was so full of check marks that I was scared to hand it back.

Gentle Linda turned furious and promptly showed her paper to Miss R. A recheck proved me terribly inaccurate, and I knew that right then Linda hated me. I was mortified to be so wrong.

Fortunately, Miss R. knew that just the day before, I had grossly failed the state-required hearing tests performed by the audiologist. She explained to Linda that probably I was unable to hear her read the proper answers. But for many days, to Linda and her three cousins in the class, I was both "deaf and dumb"!

That stung, of course. Ours was a class of sixteen, and we knew exactly who was smart, who was average, and who was dumb. I could tell you yet today how each person rated in third grade.

School does that to us. School ranks us on the smart-to-dumb scale. Most of us who

teach ranked in the smart group, or at least fairly high in the middle category. Most of us liked to learn from books.

Now we rank our students, and then we try to assure them that in spite of their rank, they are all worthwhile members of God's kingdom, that they all have gifts, that they must respect each other's gifts. Some of us even minimize the value of letter grades so our students will accept their classmates and themselves.

Yet, when students get to upper elementary or high school and college, we post honor rolls and dean's lists on school bulletin boards, in newsletters, and even in the newspaper. Sometimes we even print grade point averages. The message is clear: the people on the list are smart, the rest mediocre or below.

Our students get the honor roll message we print: do what you can to raise the grade point average—even if it means playing games. So they try to case the teacher, or they cheat a little, or they focus on the gradable aspects of learning. In high school they elect courses that will get them higher grade points, and in college they put the tough courses on pass/fail so they can keep their high grade point averages, their scholarship money, and their pride.

The system is so tightly entrenched that there is little hope to undo it. However, within our individual classes we can use a variety of learning methods, even ungraded ones. We can involve our students in developing goals and using methods of learning that help them the most.

This variety does complicate the grading scale. We may find ourselves falling prey to the grade inflation trend. We may have difficulty figuring clean percentages. But forty years from now, when our students read their classmates' names in the hometown newspaper or church bulletin, will they be able to say who was smart and who was dumb and who was mediocre?

Let them be deaf and dumb to such categorical knowledge!



The Kids in the Middle: Winners or Losers?

John Van Dyk



Here's a question for you: Can a Christian school ever be a callous, cold, uncaring place? You say: "Of course not! An uncaring Christian school? Why, that's a contradiction in terms, somewhat like dry water or hot ice. A Christian school is by definition a caring community, concerned about every last one of its students!"

You're right, of course. Christian schools strive to be the sorts of places where all the kids can flourish and where none fall through the proverbial cracks. And, praise God, many Christian schools are indeed just such places.

Yet, let's restrain our backslapping and resist complacency. There is, after all, the unhappy reality of large class sizes, a demanding curriculum, heavy teaching loads, and all sorts of government requirements. These factors often make it very difficult for Christian school teachers to recognize the gifts and meet the needs of all their students in their classrooms.

Take Jim, for example. Jim teaches a fifth-grade self-contained classroom. He loves his kids and he loves to teach them. But he has 27 students! Although he has them for most of the day, he feels that many of his kids just blend in. He knows that many of them need more personal attention and care than he can provide.

Nancy is in a more difficult situation. She teaches ninth- and tenth-grade English. Nearly every hour of the day a new class of students files into her room. She sees more than a hundred students every single school day. Busy as she is with grading and correcting papers, she feels that the lives of many of her kids are passing her by.

The Kids in the Middle

Jim and Nancy are not the exceptions. Most of our Christian school teachers face similar situations. Because of the numbers and the pressures, teachers like Jim and Nancy tend to see their classes as composed of three groups: the high achievers, the low achievers, and the "kids in the middle." Now, the gifts of the high achievers and the needs of the low achievers are commonly recognized. These students receive special, often individualized attention. High achievers, for example, frequently have opportunity to participate in accelerated or enrichment programs. Similarly, low achievers benefit from remedial programs, special education teachers, and classroom aides.

The kids in the middle, on the other hand, tend to turn into a homogeneous group of "average students." Of course, teachers know that this is not true. They know that each child is a unique and precious creature, endowed with special gifts. Yet, in practice the kids in the middle represent a group of students whose special gifts are not always celebrated and whose peculiar needs are not always met. These kids move from grade to grade without much special attention. They don't stand out. Only when they either rise above this median group or fall significantly below it do they become special, individual cases. (Often they become special problems!)

Egalitarianism

What happens to these "kids in the middle"? They commonly fall victim to a spirit we may call egalitarianism. Egalitarianism encourages teachers, principals, and school board members to see students, especially

the "kids in the middle," as essentially alike with respect to ability, potential for achievement, and learning style. Again, teachers know in their hearts that this is not so. Circumstances and classroom situations, however, more often than not force teachers, though at times reluctantly, to adopt an egalitarian stance. Consequently teachers spend much time in whole-class instruction.

Egalitarianism, furthermore, leads teachers to assess students on the same basis. As a result, the kids in the middle are likely to range between B- and D+ on the grading scale. They will come out "average." The concept "average" is fundamental to egalitarian philosophy. And as merely average, unable to demonstrate their gifts and overcome their needs, the kids in the middle end up as losers rather than winners.

It is clear, moreover, that egalitarianism contributes to unhealthy conformity. Such conformity homogenizes differences and blurs uniqueness and diversity. Such conformity and uniformity surely are a far cry from the biblical idea of community in which the various diverse parts function as a coherent whole (Romans 12).

Two Sides of the Classroom

A scriptural view of the classroom requires us to recognize two interacting dimensions: community and individuality. On the one hand, our classrooms are to be communities, expressions of the Body of Christ. But we may not allow such community to degenerate into conformity and uniformity. On the contrary, individuality, too, must be acknowledged and respected. Children are unique image-bearers of God,

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each one precious in his sight, and each one endowed with God's special favors.

Neither community nor individuality may be neglected. If we stress community to the exclusion of individuality, we are likely to fall into the trap of egalitarianism. If, on the other hand, we neglect community, we fall victim to the spirit of individualism.

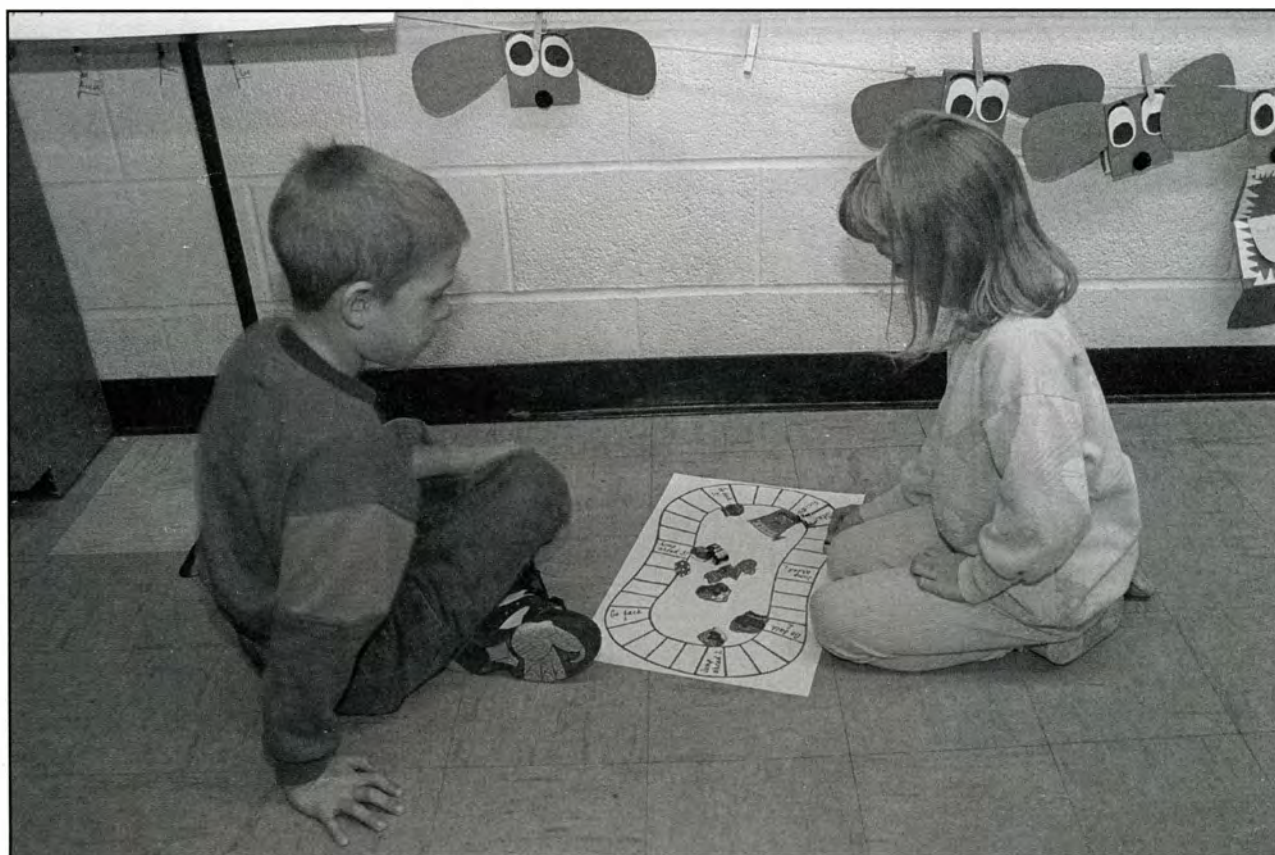
How can we avoid the temptation to be either egalitarian or individualistic? One way would be to reduce class size, so that no teacher would have more than six or eight students in a room. This would relieve the

al classroom is a place where many things are going on simultaneously. It is a place in which the teacher seeks to establish community without doing injustice to the individuality of the students.

Let's look at some key characteristics of a multifunctional classroom. We note, first of all, that this type of classroom offers a caring, collaborative atmosphere. For example, the learning of one student will affect and relate to the learning of all the other students. If Johnny fails and experiences pain, all the other students in the class experience pain.

dents, not just those of the high achievers. What are gifts? In a broad sense, gifts are all those abilities, talents, and interests that help students to enhance and advance their service to God and neighbor. Some of these gifts are academic in nature (e.g., highly developed intellectual abilities), or artistic gifts, or practical gifts. We might think of Howard Gardner's seven "intelligences" and recognize giftedness in each one of them.

At the same time, a multifunctional classroom recognizes the individual needs of all the students, not just those of low achievers,



kids-in-the-middle problem and offer a beautiful opportunity to knit a close community. Unfortunately, economic reality prevents us from seriously considering such an option as a universal solution. But there may be another possibility: establishing and maintaining a multifunctional classroom.

The Multifunctional Classroom

What, you ask, is a multifunctional classroom? As the term suggests, a multifunction-

If Johnny succeeds—especially after numerous attempts—the entire class celebrates Johnny's success (I Cor. 12:26). This kind of collaborative classroom, then, provides a safe, secure, accepting, and mutually supportive atmosphere. It is a place in which the principle "love casts out fear" (I John 4:18) is a reality.

Second, a multifunctional classroom recognizes and celebrates the gifts of all the stu-

the learning disabled, or the behaviorally disabled. What are needs? Again in a broad sense we may define needs as all the factors that prevent students from serving God and neighbor as effectively and meaningfully as they could or should. Such needs come in a variety of categories, e.g., learning needs, undeveloped artistic ability, spiritual needs, physical needs, social needs, emotional needs, and the like.

In addition to gifts and needs, much attention is given to individual learning styles in a multifunctional classroom. Children learn in very different ways. While egalitarianism has us believe that the kids in the middle are all alike, the multifunctional classroom acknowledges that the differences among these presumably average kids are as significant as the difference between high and low achievers.

Finally, the multifunctional classroom presents a diversity of concurrent tasks and a diversity of opportunity to learn. Implementing this principle will help break the grip of egalitarianism and give the "average kids" an opportunity to shine. And in any case, should our confession that each child is unique not make continuous whole-class mass teaching a highly problematic practice?

This kind of classroom contrasts not only with traditional whole-class instructional settings in which learning is largely controlled by the teacher, but also differs from classrooms heavily and one-sidedly skewed toward cooperative learning and grouping techniques.

Underlying Philosophy

The multifunctional classroom, as described above, is rooted in a biblical phi-

losophy of education. This is apparent, first of all, when we recall that a multifunctional classroom is a caring community. It is an expression of the Body of Christ practicing the fruit of the Spirit. There will be much love and prayer for one another (Rom. 12:15, Rom. 15:1-2, Gal. 6:2, Col. 3:12-16, Heb. 13:3, I John 3-4). Practicing the fruit of the Spirit will have high priority on the list of objectives in the teacher's lesson plan.

Second, the biblical foundations become evident when we recall the way in which the multifunctional classroom members view our children. Each child is a unique image-bearer of God, endowed with unique gifts and personality characteristics, and with unique learning needs. Therefore conditions must be created in which each one of God's image-bearers can flourish. The goals and objectives listed in the lesson plans of the multifunctional classroom teacher will be directed toward the growth of each individual student, not just the intellectual, academic dimensions (Deut. 6:5-8, I Cor. 13:2). In this kind of classroom, therefore, the pagan Greek dichotomistic view of children as minds in bodies will not be tolerated.

In the third place, a multifunctional class-

room recognizes and addresses the reality of sin visible in the personal and social distortions children bring with them into the classroom. Particularly in its efforts to identify and meet needs of each one of the students, the multifunctional classroom aims to encourage, build up, heal, restore, and make peace (Matt. 5:9, James 3:16-18).

Finally, a multifunctional classroom views learning as learning for redemptive service rather than for success (Eph. 4:11). In this kind of classroom, therefore, "success" is defined in terms of "performing" as a knowledgeable and competent disciple, to the best of one's ability. Success is not measured in terms of honor rolls, status, or potential to amass material goods.

Is such a classroom a pipe dream, or a real possibility? The fact is, many Christian teachers are already implementing these principles. Indeed it can be done. How? In a following article we shall explore some practical ways of addressing the needs and celebrating the gifts of the kids in the middle.



Crumbling the Stone Walls

Bärbel Kobabe

"I don't get it!" Jean shouted. She thrust her tanned arm into the air.

I nodded at her scowling face. "Just give us a minute here, Jean." I turned back to Sean.

"Sean, what function key will you exit with? . . . No, not with the Escape key. Where is your template? Look at the template up on the wall."

Sean hit the F1 key.

"No, Sean. Not Cancel, try F7."

"Oh. How do you expect us to learn all this stuff? You haven't taught us anything about it. Your class is driving me nuts."

I backed away from Sean, trying to hide the cut in my heart made by his words. "Excuse me, Sean. Jean needs help too. Get your template out in front of you. It is impossible to learn this program without it." I took a deep breath as I walked around the sixteen-foot console. Jean was slumped disparagingly over her keyboard and central processing unit.

"Okay, Jean. Let's have a look at what the problem is."

Jean drew herself up from the keyboard. She narrowed her eyes and blurted, "You didn't teach us how to save. All I want to do is save this stupid exercise on my disk. You haven't even taught us that!" She leaned back in her chair and crossed her arms.

"Where's your template?" I questioned.

"My what?"

"Jean, your template. The long, narrow slip of paper that you highlighted last time. You

have to keep that in front of you."

"I don't see why I need it. Why can't you just tell me?"

"Jean, templates are on the filing cabinet. You need to bring your template with you to every class, and use it every time you work on this program. For the time being, look up on the wall behind you. Look at F10. What does it say?"

"Uh . . . save . . . oh."

Jean jabbed the F10 key hard. I winced. I was determined not to let my frustration show. It was always agonizing to learn new software. The real problem was where to start in order to make it meaningful for the students. This graphics exercise should have been fun.

Not one student was reacting with the anticipated joy or pleasure. Neither was I. Why couldn't they just enjoy this kind of discovery learning? They had been quizzed already on the function keys.

I went to the window, took a deep breath, and turned back to the class. Sean was standing in front of me. My inner walls went straight up. I stiffened.

"You're not teaching us very well. I don't understand any of what we are doing. You haven't taught us enough of this stuff. It doesn't make any sense. I can't learn anything from you."

"You will, Sean. It is just going to take some time. Follow the instructions on the handout for the graphics exercise."

"No. None of it makes any sense. Nobody else in here likes being taught this way either. You have to teach us more. And you have not taught us enough."

His large blue eyes charged me mercilessly. I looked up at his 5'8" frame and said, "Go sit at your computer station please. I will give you a hand with it."

He started to return to his station. Then he stopped and faced me again. "I don't think you are teaching us very well."

The clickety-clack of keyboards in use stopped; Sean's frustration and my anger hung menacingly between us in the silence.

"If you don't agree with my teaching strategies, you may come to discuss them with me today at three o'clock," I said, "but don't waste our class time like this, please." I was so furious I felt steam rise in my ears.

Sean rolled his eyes toward the ceiling and then locked his gaze with mine. "I won't be back this afternoon." His hard face closed into composure.

I turned to look at the clock on the wall. It was 11:58. A flicker of something reminded me that Sean was attending the funeral of his uncle this afternoon; he had died very suddenly three days earlier in a car crash. I sensed my inner stone walls crumbling, but I was determined not to be confronted like this in my classroom. "Right. I forgot. Have you done any of the exercise?"

Sean shook his head.

"Well, you may as well go. Just make sure

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you exit the program with the F7 key and leave the monitor at the main menu. You can talk to me tomorrow at three o'clock."

I watched from a distance as Sean exited his program, removed his disk, picked up his belongings, mumbled goodbye to some classmates, and left the room.

The part of me that was real wanted to scream, "I'm sorry. I forgot about your uncle. I forgot about your pain. Come back! I want to make amends. This is supposed to be Christian teaching. This is not really my classroom; it's your classroom!!" Thoughts and accusations roared inside my head. What happened to the kind of classroom that was my goal? Where was all the control? I wanted them to consider the classroom "ours" not "mine"; I had not allowed them ownership. How could I put things into place now? Too many pieces were missing all at once. How could I back off from being controlling yet somehow "be in control" without inviting chaos and mayhem?!

The fall of tears rose from inside my heart. Twenty minutes to go to the end of class. Students were giving me harsh looks. I knew whom they sided with. "So what?" I said to myself. "I am not here to be popular."

"You are not here to cause pain either. Where there is hurting, learning will not happen. You wanted to bring healing into the classroom, prayer to the middle of teaching blocks, sensitivity, consideration, collaboration, modeling, love. You wanted to build disciples for Christ . . ." I recognized that still, silent voice.

"Go away. I'll talk to you later. Let me just get through this class. I don't want to cry now." I willed myself back to my teacher mask. The class ended without further incident; every student had a long face when they left.

One stopped at my desk and said, "Goodbye. See you tomorrow."

I nodded and smiled; I felt a bit lighter. This student was sensitive to my pain. Was it starting to show?

The afternoon ticked on. Every time I glanced at the clock during my lessons, my heart ached a bit more. Sean's face and eyes appeared. He was full of grief and pain; I had let him down. Which teacher was I imitating? I wanted to be like Rabboni, Christ, The Teacher, my Beloved. I was so far off track I wondered if I could ever get back. Maybe I had never even been close yet!

That evening, I wrote a note of apology to Sean. I asked for his forgiveness, and suggested he keep the next day's three o'clock

appointment with me if he still wanted to talk. He came, with a friend in tow.

"Thank you for the note," he said and smiled, holding it up.

"You're welcome. I am very sorry."

"It is okay."

Sean looked at me and waited. Christ's forgiveness radiated from his eyes. I dropped my edges. We talked about the course outline and the textbooks, about learning new software, and bringing meaning to what the students were doing right now. I affirmed Sean's questioning of my teaching, and admitted this was not the kind of teacher I really wanted to be; he could expect to see changes. Afterward, I followed the boys into the hall. My mind and heart were listing changes while I thanked them for coming.

First, I had to apologize to the entire class. Perhaps this would model what I envisioned the future classroom tone could be. One of student ownership and choices, with teacher as authority but student controlled, one in which I could risk backing off from having things done only "my" way. In order to do this, I had to listen, show utmost respect for the students' opinions, and allow open discussion and joint decision-making about content and learning/teaching methods.

Second, I realized I must model teacher as learner, and allow student as teacher. Self-evaluation by students would take a priority. Had I been creating a competitive atmosphere where the product was more important than the process?

Third, I had to develop a series of inventories to assess learning styles and physical preferences regarding learner comfort and sense of safety, and to sort out student talents, gifts, and needs. Then I had to put content and curriculum on the shelf so that the students and I could actually get to know each other and find out what would work. This might mean getting to know them in a social setting as well, arranging field trips, and becoming more involved in extra-curricular activities.

I had failed miserably trying to achieve my classroom dream of multifunctionalism; no wonder I had been increasingly uneasy in this class. Frustration was rising every time we met, and I ignored it. Sean made me face everything I had turned my back on in the classroom.

How could I make restitution now? I asked Christ to guide me. He took me back to my notes about the multifunctional classroom. I had jotted so many ideas in the margin of my lecture notes that I felt overwhelmed. How

could I ever start over again? We were three weeks into the semester. Was it possible to change directions? I prayed that Christ would give me his listening heart both for what he had to say to me, and for what the students had to say.

The next day, I apologized to the entire class. My mind kept telling me, "You're eating crow!" My heart prayed, "Lord, put the words in my mouth that will allow development of parts of the multifunctional classroom that I believe in so strongly."

I had to use the listening heart of Christ to hear my students, and that forced me to look at my own frustration and pain. This freed me to guide rather than to control. It freed me to do what I knew I had to do with that computer course. There was a manual available, designed so that students could learn the program at their own pace, and excel. Students were allowed ownership and choices in their learning. Our frustrations necessitated implementing changes in curriculum, as well as in myself.

Wasn't my first responsibility to build up the body of Christ in my students, and to encourage them individually as well as communally? That means I have to know where my students are—getting to know them, celebrating their joy and living in their pain. After all, that joy and pain follow them into the classroom and will dance and scream at the teacher until acknowledged.

Students do not care about content as much as they care about healing, their families, their friends, their futures, and whether or not their faith in Christ will really see them through.

The multifunctional classroom is a place where walls come down because the focus is on modeling discipleship first. Maybe the hardest part is giving up control. That means being willing to adapt, every day, every class, to students' gifts and needs. Ultimately, I want our classroom to be a place where students and teacher can leave with hope, joy, and peace, not frustration and despair.

How does my Beloved, Jesus, Rabboni, the Teacher, approach my students and me? With his listening heart. That sounds like a great way for me to start, today, right now.

The Issues in Educational Integration

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

Ken Badley

Integration in the curriculum and curriculum integration, integration of faith and learning, integral learning, educational integration . . . what are we talking about? What do we mean when we say we are integrating something? And what issues are involved when we try to implement a change in the curriculum meant to nurture further integration?

In what follows I survey the issues involved in integration. Some of these issues are conceptual and philosophical; some are psychological and pedagogical. For the most part, I do not provide my own answers here to the questions I raise, but I sketch out what I see as the contours of the whole integration question. In doing so I hope to provide to anyone interested in educational integration a framework that would help them avoid some of the headaches that usually accompany any discussion of this popular but confusion-engendering concept.

History

Anyone wanting to implement a curriculum or pedagogical change meant to bring greater integration would be wise to know a little about the history of the idea. I have been in conversations where someone thought the concept was first introduced in 1988. As a doctoral student in education several years ago, I tried to untangle the phrase "the integration of faith and learning" by examining it within the wider usage of educational integration. I discovered a concern for integration running back to educators in classical Greece. Despite differences in wording, that interest never seemed to disappear; teachers were always seeking that idea or framework that would hold the whole educational enterprise together. In the last four decades of the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, this interest grew. Educators

now would be helped if they knew some of the details of the twenty-five-century history of this educational ideal. (See CEJ Dec. 1994.)

The Problem Integration Is Meant to Solve

Recent public pressures on education have focused our attention again on the many kinds of charges against education as we have come to know it the last 150 years or so, especially the most obvious feature of curriculum organization: subject divisions that tend, in their turn, to become the organizational bases of schools.

Models of Integration

Of course not all those who talk about integration in education mean the same things by it. I have discovered dozens of distinguishable uses of the word in educational articles, books, and curriculum proposals. All these uses can be classified into a handful of models. Roughly, one might think of these models as *fusion*, *incorporation*, *correlation*, *dialogue*, and *perspectival/world-viewish integration*. Almost every mention or use of integration in educational settings fits into one of these categories.

Very briefly, *fusion* has to do with combining equal elements (e.g., English + social studies). *Incorporation* sees one element folded into a more dominant element (e.g., environmental awareness into whole curriculum). *Correlation*, of which interdisciplinarity is usually a prime example, seeks connections between two different fields with a common interest (e.g., literature and history both treating revolutionary Russia). *Dialogical integration* sees two quite different fields—usually one of them a field of practical endeavor—in dialogue (e.g., medicine or engineering and ethics). *Perspectival* or *world-viewish integration* sees the whole of knowledge and life coher-

ing through a specific world-view (e.g., Christian Schools International's style of Christian education).

The writers of many proposals for integration in education fail to reflect beforehand on what kind of integration they actually are setting out to get. Assuming that all educators use, and that non-educators understand, the word in the same way, they make their pitch, only to produce confusion.

The Locus of Integration: Where Does It Happen?

If you read a thousand articles and books using and explicitly discussing the meaning of the word integration, you would discover that less than a dozen actually address consciously the matter of where integration takes place, in the curriculum or in the consciousness of students. In other words, most people talking about integration ignore one of the most important choices about this important concept. By doing so, they fail to see how their discourse conceals and favors a certain view of teaching. They also put themselves at risk for further headaches because they may spend hundreds of hours designing the perfect curriculum, not recognizing that they cannot guarantee integrative outcomes. Anyone setting out to nurture integration must determine in advance where they think integration will occur. If they decide that the locus is the curriculum, then they should give their efforts to curriculum redesign. On the other hand, if they decide that integration takes place in the student's developing understanding of knowledge, they may decide to leave the curriculum largely as it is, and focus instead, for example, on changing teachers' dispositions regarding their own and other subject-disciplines.

This locus discussion is tied to the logi-

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cal-psychological debate. This debate has run now for several decades, with its main struggle to settle the question of what agenda any curriculum or part thereof should strive to meet: the cognitive structure of the student or the epistemic hierarchy embedded or apparent in the structure of the materials. Because the locus discussion runs parallel to the logical-psychological debate, teachers trying to implement integration can easily and quickly locate their work in a larger context.

The locus discussion also connects to the philosophical discussion of knowledge, or epistemology. Encyclopedists and philosophers have offered many schemata for the organization of knowledge over the last several centuries. How do integrative proposals fit with the knowledge organization discussion? Should we follow the forms of knowledge thesis put forward by the English educational philosopher Paul Hirst, the realms of meaning thesis of Philip Phenix, or the modal scale sketched out by Herman Dooyeweerd? Post-modern, constructivist views of knowledge also challenge teachers and curriculum developers to come clear: just what is this knowledge that will be integrated? And, again, where does this integration take place, in the curriculum or in the student's consciousness? Does accepting the second answer—student's consciousness—indicate one has given up the epistemological high ground in the battle with relativists?

Integration as a Slogan

Anyone entering the discussion of integration should recognize before writing or saying a word that he or she is dealing with a slogan. When I worked on my dissertation from 1981 to 1986, integration was hardly popular at all in North America, though it had enjoyed a couple periods of popularity earlier this century. I wished many times that I had chosen a topic more current (especially something more current with my own advisors). Now that has all changed. Integration is now perhaps the most popular word in educational language. Having established itself as a slogan, it is much more capable of engendering wry, knowing smiles on the faces of teachers when they hear someone speak

glowingly of the integrative results some educational innovation is going to accomplish.

When a word becomes a slogan, it does not lose its meaning; it actually gains meanings, it takes on new work. Integration is in that process now. Because it is expanding its range of semantic work as we deal with it, our own work with it becomes more challenging—to be precise, for example—but our work also becomes much more interesting.

Other Sources of Confusion about Integration

Integration became a slogan because it is a positive term. Like *innovative*, *creativity*, *democratic*, now reflective and other terms that have enjoyed their day in the educational sun, integration and its cousin terms and phrases have become popular for a reason. Unfortunately perhaps, like most -ion words, this word is ambiguous: does it refer to a product or to a process that can never be finished? Which of the five paradigms I identified do particular people imply when they use the term? Where do they mean it occurs? The questions continue even as the students await.

Resistance to Integration

Those who would change curricula or render educational practices more integrative will encounter resistance of various kinds. Such resistance has many roots. These include teacher comfort with existent materials, teacher vocational identity in a subject area specialization (tied to a tendency to protect curricular turf in an institution), epistemological comfort derived from strong knowledge divisions ("Good fences make good neighbors"), or comfort derived from a theological dualism that views life in two realms: the sacred and the secular.

Integrative Concepts and Conceptions

Anyone who would achieve educational integration would be wise to differentiate between the concept of integration (which most of us roughly agree is about joining things) and the agenda-laden, usually quite different conceptions of integration that drive curriculum change. We need to agree

on judgmental criteria for ranking one conception of integration over another. We also need to be prepared to differentiate conceptions of integration, which are educational ideals or visions of the good life, from integrative conceptions, which are ideas, threads, themes, traces around which we design and through which we mean to bring coherence to units of the curriculum or even whole curricula. Having made that distinction, we should be prepared to lay out criteria for judging between integrative conceptions as well.


Interdisciplinarity and Implementation

How do the integration and interdisciplinarity (IDE) discussions intersect? Is IDE simply another example of integration, or is it the only workable way to implement integration in schools. How can schools avoid the logistic traps other schools have fallen into in trying to implement IDE? Some schools have tried to implement integration by representing various subject specialties on teacher teams; others have looked for one person who already thought integratively. (Is kindergarten perhaps already integrated? Why do kindergarten students and graduate students enjoy the lowest fences between subject areas?) Schools wanting to implement integration must answer many questions, but few of them have not been answered elsewhere; and the descriptions of a surprising number of integrative efforts are available through the ERIC database (where many records listing integrative descriptors will unfortunately not be related to a particular school's ambitions).

Clearly, many questions surround educational integration. It is not as straightforward as one might wish or at first think. And its popularity may momentarily make implementation look hazardous. Nevertheless, the contours of integration are sufficiently clear, so that most schools could implement an integrative effort and count on success.

Building Bridges: Learning to Teach

Jan Gormas



Learning to teach is somewhat like road construction. In becoming the teacher that I am, I have had to take part in bridge building to overcome obstacles, surveying and analysis that would change my focus, and a constant clearing of debris to provide passage for prospective learners. It has been hard work and has required a commitment to continual evaluation and change. Along the route I have come to realize that I will always be growing and learning to teach.

"I have arrived. I am now a teacher! My dream has come true!" I only wish those had been my thoughts twenty years ago, as I entered the classroom as a student teacher. Instead, I was thinking, "What am I doing? I don't want to do this. Why do I get the big desk? Why are they acting like animals? Don't they know I am on their side and I will be their friend?" My student teaching career only confirmed what I had decided a year earlier; I didn't want to be a teacher. I was not ready to be an authority figure in anyone's life.

Although many of the memories of that experience are blurred or gone, I do remember the last day and the party to celebrate my departure. I was quite open with the kids, telling them that teaching was not in my future. They were shocked and many of them, especially students in the algebra classes, talked to me about teaching strengths they thought I had exhibited.

Nevertheless, I was off to become rich and famous. Wanting fewer variables, inanimate objects, and the power to predict and control responses, I chose engineering over law. I landed a job at General Motors and began work on a master of science in mechanical engineering. Within a couple of years, it was obvious that the specialization of engineering work at a large corpo-

ration was at best mundane and, more often than not, very boring.

A rough spot in this otherwise smooth stretch on life's road helped my progress toward teaching more than I knew at the time. I had signed up for a softball team only to discover that the other women on the team knew very little about softball, and they didn't have a coach. So I coached and played. The team went from complete chaos and even ignorance of the rules of the game to competence and even victory. However, my coaching style alienated the entire team. With only two games left, they asked someone else to coach. I understood the problem: I yelled constantly, treated players as objects, not people, and focused strictly on the task at hand. At that time, I had no idea how to build a bridge to people or even that I needed to. It was an obstruction in the road that I didn't want to deal with. It would be eleven years before I would coach again. Coaching sports is now one of my favorite settings in which to teach.

A Successful Project

After three years, I found myself teaching again within the GM Corporation. I had transferred over to the systems engineering area. I was working as a liaison between engineering and data processing, helping engineers understand the system, retrieve information, and streamline and improve their particular jobs using technology. In retrospect, when my attitude was one of helping rather than controlling, teaching was fun and fulfilling.

I remember one day working with some frustrated and distraught folks who didn't like change and didn't

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understand the "plan." That night I stayed up late designing, drawing, and labeling an illustration to help clear up a certain level of confusion over changes being made in the system. The rewards came the next day when amazing revelation and acceptance resulted. That was my first experience in bridge building.

Hiring an Architect

A tragic collapse of "materials" led me to discover I needed a competent architect in my life: I was dying of a disease called lupus. I was a very angry and bitter young woman. Life had done me wrong and people were the enemies. They seemed to be constructing roadblocks to slow me down or throw me off course. I had become very selfish and completely self-centered.

But my problem with relationships turned out to be rooted in my never having experienced true love. One night, lying in the hospital bed, I went through what I call a spiritual transformation. I decided to surrender my life to Jesus, and at that point I was flooded with joy and excitement. I believe now the source of the joy was God's love. I was a different person. The very next day I was smiling and interacting positively with people I had hated the day before. I began to see their value and appreciate their input in my life.

I believe that as a result of my decision to surrender, God built a bridge to me, loving me and filling me with a love for others. Eventually, I found the most rewarding experiences in life involve relationships, even though they are often difficult. I felt that I was given a plan and a blueprint that would work if I would work under God's direction and with his help.

Re-plotting the Route

After this major curve in my road of learning, I felt I was finally ready to be the one who got the big desk. Eleven years after my student teaching experience, I was hired by a small private high school to teach high school and junior high math, computer programming, and Bible. I accepted this assignment with great expectations and enthusiasm.

I soon realized that I was basically a novice and had much to learn. I was still fairly new at standing before a group, and I was actually far removed from much of the math I had once learned and was now teaching. That first year was like a nightmare. I had two standard answers for the

age-old question, "When will we ever use this stuff?" At first I just said, "Never." Later I came up with the answer, "Next week, next month, next year." That, too, was inadequate. It was as if I were speeding down the expressway, dashing through each section and chapter to give the next test. Although expressways have their purpose, you miss all of the "local color" unless you exit, explore, and investigate.

Memories of a friend who had an incredible teaching gift helped me at this point. Although I had been a grad student while he was an undergraduate in engineering, he would tutor me for tests in very advanced and complex material, always beginning at my point of understanding and then leading me to where I needed to be.

Making connections to students' familiar surroundings and to their future eventually became my goal. Each year we took a group of students to the computer headquarters of the Board of Water and Light as they demonstrated algebra, geometry, and computer science in operation. We observed in other settings to discover everyday ellipses. My students and I also discussed why Oldsmobile requires all employees to take a class in probability and statistics, and that helped me clarify the need and applications for learning these concepts.

Flexibility

Through the years, in experiences with my students and my own daughter, I also learned that lack of flexibility is likely to be as much a detriment to learning as it is to bridges. The longest suspension bridge in the world was Washington's Tacoma Bridge. It was a beautiful sight, but four months after it was completed, high winds began to cause it to twist, and it collapsed. Bridge engineers determined that there was not enough flexibility in the design of the bridge. The Mackinac Bridge was designed and built after this very hard lesson, and it has intermittent sections that can expand and contract, depending on the weather conditions. Flexibility allows for a variety of conditions and is a safeguard against potential destruction.

I am convinced that each student in my class is unique and special and needs me to pave the road, the bridge, or the tunnel that would clear the way for teachable moments and successful academic endeavors.

Certainly, sometimes we need to overcome difficulties, but the bottom line is forming a relationship. At some point, I stopped thinking that the curriculum was my program, students were the recipients, and I had the power to decide how well they "got it." Instead I began thinking, "This is our class and we need to work together."

In the process of changing my focus to relating to the students, I became aware that each class has its own personality. Students also have their own obstacles to overcome in building bridges to one another.

Interacting socially is very important to high school students, and they seem to appreciate and benefit from it. I remember one class that was rather small and became close-knit. One day one of the students stood up and said, "Class hug." And we gathered in a circle and hugged each other. After that, any one of us would spontaneously make the announcement, and we would gather again. What a great atmosphere for learning!

Continual Upkeep

The cables and towers of the Mackinac Bridge must be painted to deter their rusting. Can you imagine the incredible and treacherous job it must be for the workers? I understand that the job is never completed. By the time the painters finish giving the bridge a coat, the end at which they started is in need of paint.

Learning to teach is much the same. There are many variables. People are the focus, and they are complicated and unique. After a teacher puts in a year's work, perhaps reaching a class and each individual and logging some days of actual learning, that class moves on and you start over. But, each student and each class has helped upgrade my road of learning to teach. The job is never done, but the process, although painful at times, has been exciting and rewarding.

SECOND GLANCE

MISFIT AND MORNING GLORIES



"Ooo—ohh, I know!" A lanky-looking boy squirmed in his seat, anticipating the chance to answer the question.

It was my first day as teacher, and I looked forward to learning my students' personalities as well as their names.

"Yes—you, the one in the back, what's the answer?" I motioned to him (determined to teach him the appropriate way to raise his hand, after we were better acquainted).

"Is that a zit on your neck?" He blurted.

I felt all eyes on the annoyance I had noticed earlier in the morning, right in the middle of my Adam's apple.

I didn't care if the contracted teacher had problems with her pregnancy! I was supposed to stay home and be with my baby! I didn't know a thing about teenagers! I was sure when Dave, our neighbor, asked me to teach, my excuse was fail proof! How did I know he and my husband would have a little chat over the backyard fence? I would never forgive my husband, if it was the last thing I did! How could he agree to my teaching only one week before school started?

I thought I had my life planned perfectly. My son needed me and I was going to be a full-time mom. But God had something different in mind

and spoke through my husband.

Here I was, being humiliated by teenage aliens! Life just wasn't fair!

"Mrs. L.? That's okay, I get them all the time," the boy added, after he had the entire class snickering.

"The answer, young man?" I asked, coldly.

"I, uh, forgot—what was the question again?" To my horror, I had forgotten, too.

Thank heavens for the little miracles thrown into our day; the bell rang and the misfit rushed past me as I stood in the middle of the room unable to move.

He was every teacher's worst nightmare. He had designer shoes, designer pants, and a laugh that could bring a frost over the Amazon. I had to come up with a game plan.

"Excuse me—Mrs. L.?" A frail voice came from the doorway. I turned and saw a pimple-faced girl in worn clothes and torn nylons standing with a cup in her hand.

"Yes?" I choked, trying to gain my composure.

"I got you some coffee from the kitchen—I thought it might help. Don't worry about Jeff. He always has to be a clown the first day of school. You'll get used to him. See ya!" She turned and hurried to her next class before the bell rang.

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I couldn't help it—my eyes filled with tears, and I walked to shut the door while I drank my coffee and prayed.

"Lord, I'm scared to death! Just because I'm a professional doesn't mean I understand teenagers! Please help me—and help me figure out what I'm doing here!"

I sipped my coffee and reviewed my lesson for the next class.

At the time, I felt the hurt and disappointment, all rolled into one. But I did trust God and my husband, and thank goodness my pockets (so-to-speak) were stuffed with God's promises!

The verses "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you (1 Thess. 5:16, 17, 18)" were especially helpful. I had learned them before, but now I had reason to practice them.

Ten years ago, on my first day, I was humiliated. But now I smile. I was sure I had a lot to teach those kids, but they ended up teaching me.

Tanya, the young lady who brought me coffee, I later learned, was from a dysfunctional family and had many problems. But never did it stop her from placing a flower on my desk or smiling at me when I told her I loved her.

Her classmates made fun of her clothes and rolled their eyes when she joined their class from the special education classes she nor-

mally attended. I know it bothered her, but not once did she discuss it on our many "after class" talks.

Once, when she had a small blossom pinned to her blouse, I mentioned how much I loved morning-glories. The next day she brought me a bag just packed with morning-glory seeds!

Jeff, the boy who raised his hand and embarrassed me, ended up being my buddy. While he always got into trouble and seemed to spend more time in detention than anywhere else, he always had an adventure to tell me about his friends or his computer discoveries.

I still smile when I think of the day he tried every argument in the book to convince me that a person really could type faster with two fingers rather than ten. I looked at him and relayed to him wisdom I suddenly remembered having heard: "Typing is like riding a bicycle, Jeff. You will never forget it, but you will never get good enough to go no-handed." The class roared.

"That's bad, Mrs. L., really bad," Jeff smiled.

Though I haven't taught school now for several years, I had an opportunity to see Tanya the other day—she now has a son of her own. And I still miss Jeff; he was killed in an auto accident five years ago.

When I pulled into my driveway this morning after dropping off my children at school,

I burst into tears of thanksgiving. For there, lining my fence, were the most beautiful blossoms of purple and pink that I had ever seen—my morning glories!

Only God knows what the future holds, both in our lives and in the lives of those we influence. But surely, we should praise him for using us, if we let him, to plant seed and perhaps get a glimpse of the results in full bloom. Abraham Lincoln, D. L. Moody, and many more famous people once had a teacher. . . .



Channeling Emotional Problems in the Classroom

Pearl L. Elmer

Children with emotional problems in the classroom can benefit from the use of the Multiple Intelligence Approach. For children with emotional behavioral disturbances, learning can be frustrating, confusing, and not always successful. Frequently, teachers discover that methods for helping a child's behavior and reducing failure experiences are not always effective.

The problem lies in the area of weak behavioral control and lack of self-esteem. Some of the children in a class may refuse to work on a particular project. Some yell out and remark, "I hate this work." The students seem to be tired of the sameness of the work. Others attempt to work at a skill and then get frustrated. They show their frustrations by tearing up their papers or accusing another person of bothering them. The children seem to test the limits of their own behavioral systems and those of their teachers.

These children definitely need much love and care from their guardians and from their teachers. Donald Painting uses a phrase appropriately directed to the objective of this plan: "From impossible, to tolerable, to lovable" (179). To become self-governable is a desirable goal for Christian children with emotional problems. With God's help they will be able to achieve self-disciplined lives.

Most children enjoy creative writing activities. Through the medium of writing, children can improve their emotional behavior and self-governing abilities. Because writing can be an asset to channel feelings and behaviors, the students will interact, expressing themselves through positive writing activities.

Alfred Binet and others attempted to

measure intelligence by 1) assuming that intelligence was a single entity, and 2) assuming that intelligence could be measured by a single paper-pencil instrument. By these assumptions, Binet was tunneling his ideas through to a single way of perceiving. On the other hand, Howard Gardner claims a pluralization of intelligence. His intelligence theory indicates that there are seven intelligences, maybe more. Gardner believes that "any topic and any concept can be approached in a number of ways, and that optimal teaching makes it possible for the largest range of students to learn about the range of human knowledge" (Lazear vi). The Christian teacher should seek out the strongest intelligence mode of each student.

Gardner's and Lazear's research stems from the fact that various people perceive reality in various ways. They believe that each individual has strengths and weaknesses with potential to develop further. Children can use their strong areas to develop their weak areas. For example, one who is strong in music but weak in the area of learning multiplication tables can develop a song, then sing the multiplication tables. When using a multi-modal approach of many intelligences, children will not fail because the teacher can give them many areas in which to succeed. For emotionally disturbed children, success can draw them toward positive learning.

Children can experiment with various forms of writing: poetry, letters, menus, journal writing, mind mapping, and story writing. Campbell and Dickinson maintain that "each student must have opportunities to explore creatively their areas of interest and strengths and, at the same time, learn

academic skills through many modes" (Gardner, *Frames*).

This action plan is intended to improve intra- and interpersonal problems of the mildly emotionally-disturbed child. Learning through one's strengths in order to improve in weak content and social areas is positive learning. Christian teachers must see the importance of channeling feelings and moods into imaginative creative expression. Children's emotions can work for them in positive ways, particularly through creative writing.

Daily Individual Goals and Self-helps:

1. Children can channel their outbursts by quickly grabbing a piece of paper and by writing words about how they feel when they do not like something. They can also write verses of Scripture, which will remind them what God desires in their life.

2. Each person has a marker and tablet at their desk to draw doodle lines representing how they feel at certain "emotional" times. Gardner says that "sometimes doodles suggest a freedom of thought." The doodles sometimes serve as a tremendous release (Gardner, *Scribbles* 231).

3. Each pupil has a check-off chart for self-evaluation. (The teacher assists each pupil with the self-evaluation.) When the child does well, the teacher reminds the child to mark his or her chart.

4. Each child is encouraged to write in a daily journal to reflect feelings and new knowledge. David Lazear states, "Journals can involve different modes of reflection including writing, drawing, painting, sculpting, role-playing" (118).

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Interpersonal Goals and Activities:

1. Create a story while listening to music. Share it.
2. Drill language skills with a partner.
3. Draw colorful pictures of different stages of a story. Then explain the story through the pictures.
4. Act out and sketch pictures of vocabulary words with two others. Quiz each other on meanings.
5. Write a story in which a lie is told; let the lie affect the way in which two characters relate to each other (Idea from Policoff 53). Then discuss it with a group.
6. Make a message to encourage someone each day. Place the message in the person's message box.
7. Make a Venn diagram of like characteristics of two story characters. Discuss and explain it within your group.
8. Write a script to act out a story you have written. Use puppets or act it out with three others.

Intrapersonal Goals and Activities:

1. Write a poem each week on "Who Am I?" or "What God Thinks about Me."
2. Write an autobiography on "My Life to Date."
3. Draw a picture of how you feel at dif-

ferent times in the day. Discuss this with a partner.

4. Write on your self-evaluation chart what you did best today.
5. Write a prayer to the Lord in your journal.
6. Evaluate/write your reactions to others in the classroom.
7. Make a grid-chart of your moods at the end of a period or end of a day (Lazear 116).
8. Write a story about one of your moods. Illustrate it.

At the end of two weeks, the children can organize and combine all of their creative writings into a class booklet. Each person should have a job in contributing and compiling the booklet. This final activity makes the pupils more aware of their intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences.

For teachers who have students with emotional problems, teaching with a multiple intelligence approach eliminates student frustrations in learning. By using many avenues of learning, a teacher can unlock the door and help a child learn through his or her strengths.

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Sample Lesson Using the Seven Intelligences
by Pearl L. Elmer

Lesson Topic: Creative Writing Project

Objectives:

1. To write creatively about something the pupils feel and know.
 2. To channel emotions through creative writing groups and activities.
- Outcome Objective: to make pupils aware of their creative abilities, feelings about various moods and people, and personal feelings in order to control conflict and emotions.

Learning Activities Integrating 7 Multiple Intelligences

1. Music: Pupils will choose a mood picture and then hum or sing a tune about the mood of the picture.
2. Visual/Spatial: While humming a tune, each pupil will draw lines on drawing paper describing the mood they feel in each picture.
3. Linguistic: Pupils will write ten words to describe the mood in the picture.
4. Intrapersonal: Pupils will look inward and draw upon their own feelings and moods in order to understand themselves better. Then each one will write a poem or story with their ten descriptive words.
5. Math/Logical: Measure and cut out a frame from poster paper to display their creative writing.
6. Interpersonal: Pupils will share their creative writing in a peer group. Give constructive comments.
7. Bodily/Kinesthetic: In small groups, pupils will draw about the creative writing or dramatize the writing. They may choose a small object to glue on their picture frame as a symbol of the mood of their creative writing.

Assessment Procedure:

1. Peers evaluate and share ideas.
2. Writings will be read aloud to the class for comments.
3. Teacher's evaluation will be based upon effort and thought.

Materials: Mood pictures for motivation, marking pens, poster board, glue, scissors, ruler, pencils, writing paper, drawing paper.

MEDIA EYE

Selling It in New York

Stefan Ulstein



For those who follow the intrigues of academia, the current scandal at Bennington College in Vermont serves as a bellwether. Begun in 1932, Bennington's philosophy was that learning comes from doing, rather than endlessly analyzing. In its heyday in the 1950s, the writer Shirley Jackson ("The Lottery") was one of many distinguished writers who taught literature and composition there. Bennington was never a big school, in fact its enrollment never topped 600, but it has exerted a tremendous influence over American letters. As writers shared and defended their work, a tiny college produced literature that people read.

Plato said that academia was engaged in a battle between philosophers and poets. Their modern-day counterparts, according to an October 23, 1994, article in *New York Times Magazine*, are the high-theorists (philosophers) and the writers, composers, filmmakers, and other makers of metaphor (poets). Like many colleges and universities, Bennington has in recent years moved away from the making of metaphor and the process of learning for its own sake, toward the conversion of higher education to a trade school where students are prepared for the working world. All of this was shattered recently when a new president sacked a third of the faculty and abolished tenure. Some faculty, she believed, had lost the desire to "sell it in New York," and were settling for the comfortable life of the academic recluse.

Bennington is a microcosm of academia, and Christian schools would do well to consider the

implications of its battles, especially as they have to do with the teaching of media studies. As the culture becomes increasingly oriented toward media images, future generations will either become participants in the making of metaphor, or they will continue to be passive consumers of media culture who occasionally punctuate the air with cranky outbursts of ill-reasoned criticism.

Looking back on the early part of the twentieth century, when the printed word defined cultural mores, we can see that Christian colleges had little impact on the creation of literature. In fact, many Christian colleges were hesitant even to read cutting-edge books, let alone encourage their students to write them.

In England, C. S. Lewis and his Inklings—an informal writers' group—argued, critiqued one another's writing, and turned out significant works of literature that affected the whole culture. Little of that happened among North American evangelicals. In this age of mass media, it would be a tragic mistake to lose yet another chance to get in the game.

When I teach media seminars for teachers, one of the most common questions I receive is, "How do you get away with teaching about current films and television shows? How do you keep your job?" These teachers are well aware that their students are slurping at the trough of modern media, that they have VCR's and cable, and that their parents are often willfully ignorant of what they are seeing. Yet in one such school, the board has instituted a ban of

Madeleine L'Engle and is considering a similar ban on C. S. Lewis. That such school board members have graduated from Christian schools and colleges is a heartbreaking disgrace. If all those years of Christian education can't produce school board members who understand the use of metaphor in literature, who needs Christian education? Certainly not anyone who takes literature seriously. If they completely misunderstand literature, how can they lead students to understand it? If they can't do better than that with imaginative literature, which has shaped culture for centuries, how will they lead students toward understanding and participation in the mass media, which have existed for mere decades?

As a literature, writing, and media teacher for the past twenty years, I have studiously avoided much of what passes for "higher education," in both Christian and mainstream schools. Several years ago I decided to forgo the pursuit of advanced degrees and simply read and write instead. With a teaching job and a growing family I figured that I couldn't afford to do both. Although I make almost no money as a writer, I'm probably ahead if you figure in the high cost of graduate school compared to the minuscule wage increase an advanced degree brings in a Christian school. But that's not the point. Somehow, I wanted to do—at least on some small level—what it is that I am supposed to teach.

Inhaling the intellectual flatulence of literary theories like deconstructionism is a poor substitute for actually sitting down at the keyboard and writing something of one's own—even if the result is mediocre. A hack is only a hack, but at least he's a hack trying to be a writer. A critic who has never produced anything is on boggier ground.

Teaching and writing about media puts me on the boggier ground. I can write about film from a consumer's point of view. I can analyze it using fancy terminology, but if I've never produced a film—and I haven't—what business do I have teaching about it? My training as a media teacher mainly consists of seeing many films, reading about them, talking about them, and sometimes talking to the people who made them.

Studying film theory has never been as invigorating as interviewing a director or actor flush with excitement about his or her latest work. As a film critic for a local newspaper I get to do that fairly often, but whenever I do I'm painfully aware that few of my teaching colleagues have any real expertise in media except as distant observers. If some of the fine teachers I've met were to write film reviews for a daily newspaper, they'd probably be fired for having seen the film in the first place, if not for having a divergent opinion about it.

How do students in modern Christian schools see their teachers in relation to the

world of media? Do they see them as cranky naysayers, or simply as third-rate talents criticizing what they themselves could never produce? I've met many students who see their teachers as bright mentors shackled by overcautious school administrations. Will our students become the school board members of tomorrow, ignorantly shaping the curriculum with the censors' scissors?

It is not enough simply to sit back and criticize. Some among us must be encouraged to go out and produce. Those with the talent and persistence to do so must not be summoned before Torquemada to defend every scene or every line of dialogue.

Schools and colleges have always been full of upheaval. Martin Luther was well within the parameters of university debate when he nailed his theses to the cathedral door. Unfortunately for everyone, the pope didn't like the give and take of academic debate, so the church fell into schism, polarization, entrenchment, and war. Luther would have had an easier life if he'd stayed safely within the realm of academic abstraction.

The question for schools today is whether to fight battles over tenure, propriety, and the comfortable status quo, or to go and "sin boldly" by producing, then examining and debating. If we choose the latter we may actually make a difference.

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Selling It in New York



IDEA BANK

Reluctant Writers

Rick Binder



Eleanor Mills
Editor

Mark* and Leroy* experience "blank page" writing syndrome. They stare at the blank page, unable to get their ideas written down. The occasional idea that does get expressed on paper is unorganized, poorly sequenced, and lacking cohesion or unity. Their attitude conveys, "I've never written anything well, and I can't write anything of length."

Objective and Process

My objective for this activity was to lead the class, especially Mark and Leroy, through a process of listening to ordered information, placing it on a visual chart, and then constructing sentences and paragraphs for a

rough draft, eventually producing a final good copy. I wanted them to achieve success easily, to see that they could improve their writing.

Listening and Taking Notes

During my explanation, I gave the students the subtopics to write on their summary sheets. I elaborated on the subtopics with simple points in note form on the chalkboard. The students listened well as long as things were kept simple. For example, I demonstrated how they could write about Jacob's life using only six subtopics. They could see the whole piece in front of them

on the summary sheets.

Drafting

After the notetaking, they put the notes into sentences and then into six paragraphs. Mark and Leroy showed little struggle with writing, although it took them longer than most others.

Final Draft

Preparing the final draft in handwriting or typing was icing on the cake for them. This was the longest, most detailed piece they had ever written.

*Students' names have been changed.

Life of Jacob

Subtopic: Birthright

- Oldest gets the honor and birthright
- Twice as much as others
- Oldest son can sell it
- Can be taken away by dad

Subtopic: The Trick

- Jacob deceives Esau
- Esau sells birthright
- Jacob still needs blessing
- Isaac deceived = bless Jacob
- Esau mad, Jacob runs
- Laban, Haran

Subtopic: The Dream

- At Bethel "ladder"
- God renews his covenant. Gen 27.
- Promises land and children

subtopic: "Deceived"

- Cheated by Laban
- Marries Rachel after Leah, after 14 years
- Jacob gets back at Laban
- Jacob gets wealthy

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Getting a Kick from Meaningful Learning

Jeff Fennema

The Trinity Youth Indoor Soccer League has forced me to reevaluate my theory of how students learn.

I remember my junior high years as "skills and facts" learning. The teachers would teach us skills and facts, and we would display our mastery of these skills and facts in the form of worksheets, quizzes, or tests. Once a set of these items was complete, we would move to the next. It was logical, orderly, and sequential. It made sense.

So what does indoor soccer have to do with learning theory? As a soccer coach I have watched successful teams operate over the past few years. From peewee leagues to world cup play, I've always attempted to determine why a certain team is so good. If I could figure that out, I tried to implement that element into my own coaching.

Certain sports teams have been haunted by a rival nemesis in the past. The NBA has recently provided a string of examples: Detroit and Boston, Chicago and Detroit, New York and Chicago. One team just couldn't figure out the other and therefore continued to lose to them. It happens in other sports. In football it has been Cleveland and Denver, Kansas City and Buffalo, Tampa Bay and everyone else. Well, Chicagoland junior high soccer has its examples also. One of them is my school and a neighboring school.

Regardless of the strategies or tactics used against them, our opponent players seem to play with a skill level and understanding that our players do not appear to possess. So I ask myself, "Why are they so good?" The answer is

the Trinity Youth Indoor Soccer League.

This league, sponsored by Trinity Christian College, was created in February 1989 with just over 100 participants. Initially it was a sports activity designed for the students from nearby Christian schools. Now in its seventh year, the membership has exploded to over 400 students from area public, private, and Christian schools. Parents volunteer as coaches, and the kids just play the game.

Through playing the game, these students develop and test meaningful soccer skills. Skills become meaningful because of the context in which they are used. Each player, consciously or subconsciously, possesses a personal goal during each match: it could be passing the ball successfully to a teammate, dribbling around a defender, or scoring a goal. Players must find ways to reach their aspirations. Once a strategy works, the players own that skill. It becomes theirs, not because a coach told them how to do it, but because it has become meaningful. These players have experienced "hands-on" (or "feet-on" in this case) learning, and it makes sense to them.

Stronks and Blomberg claim that "effective learning requires the active and dynamic involvement of the learner" (131). This particular learning theory has been developed and supported over the last twenty years. It propels learning beyond "the 'banking model' in which teachers 'deposit' information in the heads of passive students" (130).

I could teach my students the elements of a persuasive essay, just as my textbook

demonstrates. I could have them fill out worksheets or take a test to show they have memorized these components, but that would be "akin to demanding that they display skill in wielding a knife and fork without offering anything appetizing to eat" (Mullins 5). Most teachers know that a student-composed persuasive essay should follow, and it should hold meaning for the individual. Arguing Shakespeare's genius may please the literary intelligentsia, but protesting the dress code may prove more inspiring to the student.

In *A Vision with a Task*, Stronks and Blomberg emphasize active, participatory, responsive learning in the classroom. Passive learning is an oxymoron. True learning is dynamic and meaningful. Jesus taught his listeners to act upon what he had said. He did not settle for just mere telling or showing; the Great Teacher inspired.

I once believed that "skills and facts" teaching was the most pedagogically sound method available. That was the way I learned in junior high; it was good enough for me, so it should be good enough for my students. Yet in an effort to figure out why a particular soccer team kept beating us, I stumbled upon this idea of meaningful learning. Moving away from the safety of "skills and facts" teaching has been an arduous process, much like the many steps of mourning (denial, anger, acceptance). However, when students engage in meaningful learning in my classroom, teaching becomes more meaningful to me.

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Teach Initiative Through Extra Credit

Karen B. Orfitelli



Would you like to eliminate your students' day-before-report-cards, panic-stricken requests for extra credit? There is an uncomplicated, educationally sound way of doing it!

This simple technique has been the vehicle for many students to improve their grades, share fascinating new information with the rest of the class, and learn the wisdom of taking the initiative (Proverbs 3:13).

Here's how it works: At the beginning of the year, I tell my students there will be no last minute extra-credit projects to improve their grades. Instead, every two weeks (or more), I will offer extra-credit opportunities to any student who would like to take advantage of the opportunity.

The projects appeal to many learning styles and abilities and nearly all my students have found at least one project that interests them during the year. The results? Not only have students improved their grades, but they have done it through their own initiative. In addition, the rest of the class has benefitted from the new information.

Here are a few ideas that are surefire successes:

1. Bulletin Boards

Because I have three bulletin boards in my classroom and many blank walls, students have opportunities to use their artis-

tic talents. The board they design must reflect or extend an aspect of the unit we are working on. The student designs the board on paper; I approve it and provide the materials. During our study of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, one young man researched and drew full-color posters of U.S. military planes and vehicles used during the war. The other students found it fascinating, and it sparked interest for others to speak with their grandfathers who had been in the war.

2. Written Reports

This project is a typical, two-page research report that will give the class more information about a topic. The topics vary because class discussions are not always the same. For instance, when we studied the poem "Loo-Wit" by Wendy Rose, several students did extra-credit reports on the Mount St. Helens and Pinatubo eruptions. Everyone, including me, learned from the new information!

3. Oral Reports

Some students prefer to research a topic, take notes, and do an oral presentation. One year during a study of ancient Israel, one of my students researched the materials and workmanship of Solomon's palace. Anecdotal reports about authors are also popular. There's one catch to this project—the students are not allowed to use an encyclopedia!

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4. Cooking

Whenever we study a piece of literature from a different country, I offer the students an opportunity to find a recipe from that country, prepare it at home, and bring it in to share with the class. One of my students found a recipe for a wedding cake that was made during Old Testament times. She shared background on Israelite weddings, and then we each sampled a piece of cake.

5. Music

Students who excel in music enjoy this extra credit opportunity to write a song or play an instrument. During our poetry unit last year, one student put several famous poems to music. She recorded them at home and then played her tape for the class. There's no end to the variations on this project! Students are also free to explore the music during a certain era and share tapes of the music with the class.

6. Models

For the "future engineers" in my classroom, I offer extra credit for a model of a place or area that we are studying. The medium can be the student's choice—salt dough, Legos, sugar cubes, or dioramas with miniature furniture—whatever they are comfortable with. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories "The Speckled Band" and "The Hound of the Baskervilles" lend themselves well to having students reconstruct the scene of the crime. Also, relief maps are popular.

7. Crafts

This project is aimed at students who would rather do anything than "write a report." Art projects or handicrafts related to whatever we are studying are popular choices. Opportunities to make beaded projects or model teepees when we study Indian literature have been well-liked. You'll be surprised at what ideas the students come up with. During our study of "The Village Blacksmith" I discovered that one of my students had a forge in his backyard where he and his dad fashioned tools. When he brought samples into class, we were all fascinated. And he was thrilled to show off his talent!

8. Art

Poetry can often be translated into art. My artists have often chosen to interpret a poem or a portion of our literature through an artistic medium. Poems with lots of imagery are often the easiest, but students have drawn scenes from short stories or novels. One young lady who wanted to be a fashion designer researched and drew fashions from the 1960s, and another made photo copies of women's fashions during World War II.

9. Costumes or Souvenirs from Other Countries

Many of my students have traveled or have relatives who brought home souvenirs from other countries. If we study a piece from a place where someone has visited, the students are encouraged to bring in authentic souvenirs or costumes from that country.

10. Interview

This project is a classroom favorite. Students may interview experts in different fields related to what we are studying. The "expert" may be a parent or friend, and students may audio/video tape the interview or write it out. During our study of *Flowers for Algernon*, the class became interested in how the human brain works. A father of one of my students happened to be involved in doing brain research, and she taped an interview with him for the class. The students found that the tape answered some of their questions, but it generated far more. Our "brain man" came in as a guest speaker and wowed the class.

Develop your own ideas—skits, dramas, commercials, the list is endless. And, don't be surprised at the number of ideas your students come up with. They'll take the initiative every time!





Like Markers on a Highway

Ken Kuipers

I just finished an article by a former school principal who is no longer in school administration. In the article he reflected on his running feuds with his faculty, which went on throughout his administrative career. As he put it, "The teachers believe I will not punish students adequately; I believe we punish students too much." By his recollection, the teachers were quick to say, "Throw the kid out," while he was left with a sense of responsibility to educate all students. In the article he referred back to a couple of instances in which he worked hard to make a place in the school for students who had really deserved to be expelled.

After many years of such conflict with his faculty, he decided to go back to a case where years before he had argued to make a place for a certain student in the school. Teachers had resolutely resisted. He wanted to know what difference his advocacy had made in the life of this student, and later looked him up. The former student claimed that only a couple of teachers had made an impact on him—the principal for overlooking some of his faults and working at higher goals with him, and an elementary teacher who went to great lengths to see

that this student had every opportunity to learn.

These two teachers were able to overlook his many faults and believe enough in him to challenge him to develop himself fully. In his words, "The rest of the little weasel teachers are like the markers on a highway when I'm on a bike. I've already seen a thousand of them, and I'm gonna see a lot more." In one sentence, this young man swept his teachers away from his memory. They somehow all stood in a row like signs on the side of the road, never quite intervening or touching his life.

How often we put the need of the institution before the need of the individual. At times we have no choice but to do so. But punishments that are first of all concerned with justice or the needs of the institution can cause the individuals to punish themselves with guilt or overfocus on denial of their own guilt, refusing to accept blame for their activity. How much better wouldn't it be for the student to be able to focus on correcting the problem behavior in the first place?

I can't help but think of two passages of Scripture that relate to this example.

The first is Luke 15:2: "But the Pharisees

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and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." The second is John 8:11. Jesus was finishing a conversation with the woman who was caught in adultery and he asked, "Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." In these two verses, we are confronted with two very profound descriptions of who Jesus is and what his attitude is toward us. While these phrases could easily be considered unimportant, they are anything but incidental. They are indeed profound and very fundamental to who our Savior is. If we indeed miss the centrality of these two comments, then we could be missing the rich meaning of the gospel message. To know Jesus as one who "welcomes and eats with sinners" and one who "neither condemns" us is to know the full meaning and joy of the gospel.

Once affected by this kind of grace, how much more should we be affected in our attitudes toward those we work with every day. If Jesus could welcome brokenness and even share a meal with the broken ones, how much more shouldn't we welcome those who are disruptive, unruly, undisciplined, and overly impulsive. We ought not have such perfect institutions that there is room only for the compliant ones. Rather, we must welcome the difficult ones without leaping to levy punishments as our first response. Perhaps then our students will be able to focus on improving, correcting, and connecting with us rather than passing us by like so many mileage markers along the highway.

God help our schools to be such places of grace and acceptance.

The Teacher

by Janice H. Stroup

To touch a little hand,
To hold it close to me;
To love and guide and understand
The trust and joy I see.

To touch a little mind,
To teach and help and show
A little person how to find
The things he needs to know.

To touch a little heart,
To talk and laugh and share;
And just to have a little part
In moments brief and rare.

To touch a little life,
To show a child the way,
Is what I ask, O Lord, of life;
To teach, to touch, today.

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QUERY QUERY QUERY QUERY



Marlene Dorbout

We as teachers are encouraged to use cooperative learning in our classes, but I still find grading this group work difficult. Often the good student does most of the work and actually shares the grade with the weaker student who didn't really contribute very much. Some of the kids complain. Personally, I don't mind this teaching method; I just don't like trying to grade the work fairly. Any easy answers?

First of all, I believe that students have the right to know just how or whether they will be graded on the group's work before they begin. The teacher may opt to have the work be part of a student notebook or portfolio, along with other individual assignments. At other times the work remains ungraded, but the information or knowledge gained may be required for individual testing later. Some teachers offer a bonus if all members of a group achieve a desired grade. This incentive is intended to encourage adequate test preparation in the group; that practice, too, can backfire and put undue pressure and resentment on individual team members.

Cooperative learning can be challenging to all types of learners, but only if groups and rules are formed carefully, not allowing kids to receive passing grades for no effort. The teacher as facilitator is busy during the period, ensuring and prodding the proper discussion and analysis to complete the task. This role is probably what you like about his method of teaching.

Many teachers spend an excessive amount of time in grading with points for individual and group progress, written and oral contributions, effort and behavior. Personally, I think such overly-concerned and conscientious grading could kill the joy of learning to work together.

A colleague came back to school last fall, bragging about all the money he had earned during the summer doing odd jobs such as painting and mowing lawns. He added that the "beauty of it is, it's all tax free." That comment really irritated me since I know it's not. He's cheating the government and proud of it, and at the same time teaching as a role model in a Christian school. Should I confront him, report him, or just ignore him?

Many teachers have summer jobs, often claiming they can't make a decent living if they don't. Interestingly though, at an inservice last year, unanimously our faculty agreed they would not give up their summers for higher pay. So we in this profession do consider our summer vacation as one of the perks of the job. Some teachers need it for relaxation; others, for extra income which, yes, is taxable.

The irritation with your colleague probably escalated with his bragging. From the comment you quote, I am not certain whether the teacher was being satirical or just ignorant of the law. I'll assume the tone of voice determined that, but possibly you could have misinterpreted. You could have alleviated any doubt by casually asking if he knew that all income is taxable.

My husband and I have a friend who actually didn't know that his wife, a hairdresser, was required to report her tips to the IRS. When informed, he changed his ways. Ignorance is more easily forgivable; and there is a chance this colleague doesn't really know the truth. Cheating on income tax is stealing, but sometimes teachers feel they have the right to compensate for their assumed lack of proper salary. That reasoning

is also a kind of ignorance.

If a student is caught stealing or cheating, teachers feel compelled to confront and dish out the consequence, but with a colleague, peer pressure tends to squelch what otherwise seems an easy decision. I suspect that many job-related items, such as pens and notepads, are taken from the school under the guise of "rights" and overlooked as "no big deal." Obviously these summer jobs, which amount to a considerable sum of money, become a big deal. The issue, however, is still cheating.

Before approaching your colleague, make certain you understand the basis for your being so upset. Then, with no malice or jealousy, just a sincere effort to "right" a "wrong," confront him in a concerned, Christian manner. If you do not, I predict your irritation will continue to fester and perhaps even be a deterrent to a good working relationship.

I am a new teacher in the third grade. I have a student who is absent almost every Monday. I've called the mother, a single parent, to ask about this problem, and she tells

me her son just really doesn't feel well. The child makes up his work and is a good student, so the principal says not to make an issue of it. He's sure the boy just needs some adjustment time because of the recent divorce and change in schools. I don't really feel comfortable ignoring this situation. What do you think?

I think you have a right to be concerned. The avoidance of school on a Monday morning sounds like an excuse to stay home with Mom, either for his or his mother's needs. Divorce and a new school certainly justify this young man's trauma, but staying home won't alleviate it. Giving in to him establishes an unhealthy habit.

Dr. Barton Schmitt, director of generation pediatric consultation at the Children's Hospital in Denver, says the pain that children feel in the school avoidance syndrome is no less real than a physical illness, even though the causes are often psychological. Your principal is probably trying to be understanding of a difficult family situation, but Schmitt says that daily school attendance is

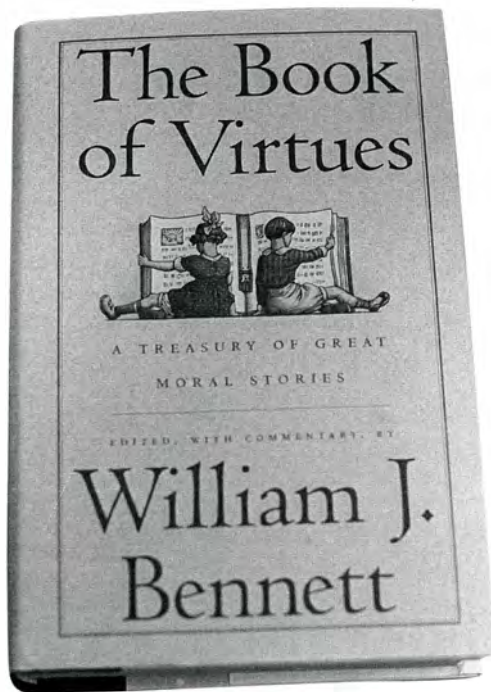
the only way to rid the symptoms and that parents (and teachers, too, I'm sure) need to stress that school is non-negotiable.

Mother more than likely is upset also; perhaps she wants him home as much as he wants to be there. Call her and set up a time to get together. Perhaps if both of you are comfortable with the idea, you could make a home visit, bridging the gap between the boy's safe environment and your classroom.





Steve J. VanDer Weel
Editor



Book Reviews

The Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories

William J. Bennett, compiler and editor

New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993. 831 pp. \$30.

Reviewed by Steve J. VanDerWeele, Professor of English, Calvin College (Emeritus)

On first thought, it may seem strange that an anthology should be not only on the best-seller list for weeks on end but also a nationwide number one best-seller. But, of course, *The Book of Virtues* is more than an anthology; it is an agenda. The agenda is a noble one: to facilitate the work of parents and teachers in providing a moral education for our children and inculcating in them the habit of virtue. Robert Coles speaks of the book as "a carefully selected collection that fills an aching void in this secular society." *Time* suggests it "ought to be distributed, like an owner's manual, to new parents leaving the hospital." *The New Republic* reviewer says of it that it "compels respect . . . [it is] a model of how such a project should be done."

Evaluating such a project—a collection of stories and other selections all classified under the headings of ten virtues—requires a variety of observations. There is both a right and a wrong way to celebrate it, and a right and wrong way to set forth its limitations.

Anthologies are always useful. They provide, efficiently and conveniently

between two covers, a wide array of materials on a given topic. But some things jar in this collection. When in the section devoted to Responsibility the stories of the three little kittens and of Orphan Annie are juxtaposed with an excerpt from C. S. Lewis's "Men Without Chests"—a quotation that Bennett discerningly designates as "one of my favorite passages in all the literature about education"—one cannot help asking the question, What is a book?

The anthology does have unity, and it does have focus. Using the following categories, the editor has assembled a wide range of traditional materials: Self-Discipline, Compassion, Responsibility, Friendship, Work, Courage, Perseverance, Honesty, Loyalty, Faith. Hans Christian Andersen, Aesop, biblical narratives, the Grimm Brothers, Greek mythology, and Jewish folk tales are well represented. We encounter animal tales (hens, roosters, bees and ants, mice and frogs, three little pigs, camels)—truly charming stories for the right time and place. We read of tin and wooden soldiers, good and wicked daughters, of children who slam

doors and those who close them gently, of Horatio Alger narrative formulas. There is poetry, too—though much of it is verse, with undeviating meters and obvious rhymes. Some of it is close to doggerel—no fewer than seven selections are by Edgar Guest. We also get excerpts from letters, speeches, and essays—some of them fine, indeed, as well as patriotic songs and familiar hymns. In its stated purpose—to recommend the life of virtue to the young—and in its selections, it is a book we are dealing with, though one not without eccentricities.

One of the eccentricities arises from the redefinition of some of the works when the program requires that they be classified one-dimensionally under one of the virtue headings. Ulysses emerges as an example of courage. He was known among his peers for his cunning. Dante placed him in *The Inferno* for neglecting his role as father and king and for loving adventure for the sake of adventure. The story of Ruth and Naomi loses its depth when treated merely as a story about friendship. The poem "Mending Wall" is not really about friendship either; it is about the barriers we create between ourselves at every level of human relationships. And "Ozymandias" is really about the fatuity of arrogance rather than about self-discipline. Frequently, then, something is lost in the classification. Moreover, some nuances are ignored. Hilaire Belloc could hardly have been that serious about advising children never to eat between meals.

My difficulties with the project, though not with the stories themselves, are two—one relating to the relative importance of the virtues Bennett chooses, the other raising questions about the pedagogical effectiveness of his strategy.

As for the first of these, practically all of the Virtues and the selections used to illustrate them represent conventional morality, "divine truisms" with which no one can disagree. Chekhov responded to his moralistic critics by asking, "Does one really have to prove that stealing horses is wrong?" Moreover, the virtues recommended are the minor virtues—the virtues Pollonius recom-

mends to his son Laertes. These Virtues will make us prudent; will they make us truly wise as well? With several exceptions, they fail to engage the reader with the higher reaches of ethical wisdom and moral sophistication. They lend support to the Book of Proverbs but will give little help with the complexities of Job or Ecclesiastes. Edmund Spenser chose the categories of holiness, temperance, chastity, friendship (also in Bennett), justice, and courtesy—a comprehensive virtue in the sixteenth century—for treatment, and held aloft as well the quality of magnanimity. The New Testament fruits of the Spirit (Bennett cites them, 742) are of a still higher order.

My second difficulty concerns the way the anthology employs literature. Call it perversity if you wish, but human nature does not relish head-on instruction, preferring to be shown rather than being told, although wise parents are not chary about doing lots of telling. C. S. Lewis admits how he resisted the direct, didactical approach in his education: "An obligation to feel can freeze feelings." It is the glory of literature that it mingles teaching with delight. "Poetry must be gently led," says Sir Philip Sidney. Great teachers, such as the Jewish rabbis, taught by indirection, relying heavily on stories. Our Lord was a master at teaching with counter-questions and the relevant parable: "A certain man had two sons..."

If literature is to work, it needs shared wit and imagination, together with the reader's involvement. The enchantment of the tale must be given freedom to do its work. Something of that enchantment is lost when the editor tells us, in this introduction to the story of Chicken Little, "To avoid foolish cowardice, refrain from too much mountain-making out of mole-hills," or, "Devotion is a two-way street between friends, as this Oscar Wilde story reminds us."

The book has its high points. It is genuinely enhanced by the editor's brief essay introducing each of the Virtues. He has recourse to Plato and Aristotle, Josiah Royce and Kierkegaard, America's founding fathers and the prophet Jeremiah in his discourse

expounding these virtues. And the introduction to the section on Faith (741-742), the most Christian in its approach, is very well done in its brief scope. Among other observations, the editor there reminds us of the Tao, that complex of attitudes, beliefs, and commitments designated as Natural Law.

Bennett is right as well in resisting the contemporary practice of diluting the stories, of making them innocuous in a misguided attempt to shield the children's psyches from life's harshness. Again, with his project he is inviting children to the pleasurable and profitable activity of reading. He is inviting them to forgo (the list is mine) excessive television, nonsensical computer games, the lure of popular entertainment, and the pursuit of information of the quiz-show variety in favor of reading literature, where language reaches its highest level and moral power.

Find a way, then, to let children "discover" the book. And supplement the contents with, say, some of Katherine Paterson's stories, stories that challenge children to respond to the ambiguities real life often hurls at us. And pray for the quiet working of grace, indispensable in the acquisition of moral maturity and highly amenable to the assistance available through the insightful discernment of the well-told tale. In brief, use the book in a wiser sense than the editor envisions its use. The enchantment remains on many a page.

Book Reviews

Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life

by Joan D. Hedrick

Oxford U. Press, 1994, 507 pp. \$35.

Reviewed by Eunice Vanderlaan, Caledonia, Michigan

Hedrick's lengthy biography is a fascinating study of Harriet Beecher Stowe and her societal, political, religious, and familial background. Stowe grew up in a New England parsonage, lost her mother at the age of five, received a rigorous education along with numerous siblings in a household governed by Calvinistic religious principles, taught a female academy curriculum that was strikingly academic for nineteenth century women's education, married clergyman Calvin Stowe, and reared seven children.

Stricken by the death of her baby in 1849 and driven by anger she felt on behalf of others at the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, Stowe could not keep silent. Efforts of Protestant clergy in their pulpits and synods to defend property rights of slave owners under the fugitive law especially infuriated her. "... I have felt almost choked sometimes with pent up wrath that does no good," she wrote her sister, Catherine.

Stowe focused this internal energy in her famous book *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which yoked religious and secular realms in its narrative, powerfully addressing an entire nation. President Lincoln is said to have greeted her in 1852 with, "So you're the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war!"

One can picture the lanky president and his diminutive guest, but it's difficult to imagine the impact of her book, which sold 10,000

copies in a week, 300,000 in a year, and provided instant celebrity status for its author during an era when women were to be quiet at home. Summoned in 1853 to speak to a gathering of 2000 admirers in Glasgow who had opened the meeting by singing "Old Hundredth," Stowe sat behind a lattice screen in the "women's gallery" and listened to her husband read her speech to the crowd.

Her critics thought a woman should not even know such evil as she described in her book, much less write it down, and some said she could not document the cruelty she had related. Stowe responded by writing *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853) in which she marshalled legal evidence of brutality that shocked her readers even more than her novel had done.

Joan Hedrick shows Stowe to be the daughter of her times and thoroughly human: her concept of black people remained less than full-dimensional; she felt threatened by a black female author's ability to write her own story and refused to help the woman; Stowe's children gave her anguish; and she spent money foolishly.

She was, however, profoundly informed by her religious convictions and could not stifle the prophetic voice within. That makes this biography of particular value to us in our secular age.

Had the biographer more carefully researched the development of Calvinism,

she could have avoided the caricature she draws of its doctrines and strengthened her conclusions. As it is, the deepest roots of Harriet Beecher Stowe's moral indignation are never adequately explored.

Middle and high school educators will find a helpful tool in Hedrick's detailed notes, bibliography, and textual description of nineteenth century marriage, home life, education, medicine, social custom, and religious and political realities. Because Hedrick wisely recognized that the dominant theme periods of Stowe's life coincided with a chronological order of chapters, she organized her material accordingly. This gives her big book a convenient accessibility for research and class preparation.

READER RESPONSE

Bucking Bolt's Book

Dear Editor,

With eager anticipation I headed to Florida with John Bolt's much recommended latest publication, *The Christian Story and the Christian School*. As my reading progressed so did my disappointment.

Bolt's first two chapters are a thought-provoking insightful analysis of our present society; the middle chapters, using extensive quotations from a wide range of authors, deal with a series of theological issues prevalent in church communities and awkwardly transferred into school issues. The telling of "story," although set up in the earlier chapters, does not receive its real grounding until chapters five and six. And this is where I have my most serious objection to the thrust of Bolt's arguments. He fails to distinguish between story as content and story as process. Although he is articulate in demanding that our children hear a relevant covenant message, he fails to delineate a clear distinction between story as medium and story as message. A book for Christian schools must reflect Christian content as well as Christian pedagogy.

As I read, I tried to imagine whether Bolt was thinking about a Christian college, a Christian high school, a Christian elementary school, or all three. I can't imagine the regular use of story as a teaching methodology for reaching fifteen-year-olds, alongside methods of group learning, Socratic presentation, and peer tutoring. Perhaps occasionally, but certainly not on a regular basis.

I agree with Bolt that the instructive words of Moses to the people of Israel remain relevant today: "... do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children

after them" Deuteronomy 4:9. However, both Moses and Bolt fail to address the craft required to present the Christian story effectively.

It appears that Bolt's appeal to an old method should be re-stated. We all agree that the biblical narrative of history needs to be told from a God-directed point of view. The question is, "How should the story be told?" Indeed, a picture is worth a thousand words. Yes, the story needs telling in the Christian school, but the method need not be a story. Or, to state it in another manner, the content of the story must be told over and over in many different ways, but not necessarily in story form. Professional Christian teachers need to explore all the instructional methodologies available to imbed deeply the salvation story in the mind of each student. It requires a teacher who has a keen awareness of the uniqueness of each student and has mastered a wide array of instructional strategies. Each strategy is a medium for access to the heart and soul of the student. Each strategy is a potential medium for telling the story. Bolt's emphasis on story as story is unnecessarily restrictive. I am in support of the content but find the suggested process to be very narrow in scope.

Ironically, if story is so powerful, why did Bolt choose to write from a cognitive logical point of view? Where was his own story of God directing and God leading? Is it possible that, for us to develop a disciplined Christian mind, the story route is not the only route?

Given that Bolt is onto a good idea, and that modern communities lack interconnections, I do believe that there are many avenues for telling the Christian story. The story has value within trusting relationships.

Students who have developed trust with teachers are willing to listen and discuss. The type of personal insight Bolt would have us share needs to be shared around a campfire, on a bus trip home after an exciting event, and over coffee following a play rehearsal. It also needs to happen in our homes and occasionally in our classrooms when the methodology fits.

Christian parents and teachers must reflect on the presence of our God in their own lives and in the lives of their parents and grandparents. We need to be able to trace the work of a covenant God through the many events. We need to see a God who always provides joy because of the eternal hope and vision. We need to give thanks for the past, enjoy the present, and anticipate the future with confidence. This story needs to be present whenever we gather as families, Christian friends, and Christian school communities.

I applaud Bolt for raising the covenant story to the forefront of our consciousness. Our students must hear the message. They must hear it well. Christian teachers must master pedagogical variety. Our students deserve it. I urge that teachers reflect extensively on the medium, or rather, the media!

Jim Vanderkooy, Principal
Hamilton District Christian High School
Ancaster, Ontario

NEWS

THE KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE TO OFFER EDUCATION DEGREE

Edmonton- The King's University College, a degree-granting Christian post-secondary institution in Edmonton, Alberta, has received official accreditation of a proposed Bachelor of Education Degree program. Subsequent to review and positive recommendation by Alberta's Private Colleges Accreditation Board, the Provincial Government recently approved the program, which the college will begin offering in September 1995.

The after-degree program in elementary education will accept students who already hold a degree in arts or science (B.A. or B.Sc.), and consists of two years of study, resulting in a Bachelor of Education degree (B.Ed.). The college will enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Minister of Education which will qualify graduates for a provincial teaching certificate. The

certificate will allow them to teach in a public, separate, or private school in Alberta and most other jurisdictions in Canada and the United States.

The King's University College is the first private institution in Canada to receive accreditation for an independent education degree program which will lead to general teacher certification.

Having recently moved to a new campus in suburban Edmonton, the college enrolled over 500 students this year in arts and science degree programs. Its mission is centered on a Christian philosophy of education. The college is expecting significant growth in the next years with expansion of its existing course offerings and the addition of this new program. Initial intake in the B.Ed. program will be thirty-five students per year.

School Administration Position

Use your experience and expertise to help establish a new Christian School philosophy, policy, and educational standards.

Statesville Christian School is a new ministry located at the largest and fastest growing evangelical church in Statesville, North Carolina, 45 miles north of Charlotte. The school seeks an experienced administrator or an administrative lead teacher to direct and coordinate all phases of initial and future development, with the goal of opening for the 1995/96 school year.

Applicants must have administrative or teaching experience, a minimum of a B.A. in Education, a clearly articulated philosophy of Christian education, and leadership skills.

**Contact Barrett L. Mosbacker at 704-847-2385 or
800 Fullwood Lane, Matthews, NC 28105**

Compensation is negotiable, based on qualifications and experience.

ICS WELCOMES FIRST FEMALE FACULTY MEMBER

Dr. Sylvia Keesmaat, the first faculty member in Biblical Studies and Hermeneutics, was inaugurated at the annual convocation of the Institute for Christian Studies, on Friday, November 4, at Knox College Chapel, Toronto. Nearly 200 people gathered to celebrate this milestone in the Institute's life and to witness the graduation of 15 ICS students.

Keesmaat's inaugural also represents another important first for the ICS. She is the first female full-time faculty member. She joins a faculty comprising eight full-time male professors and one male adjunct professor. Keesmaat, who recently completed her doctoral degree at Oxford University, spoke on "Fruit in the Wilderness."

CORRECTION

Steven Timmermans, author of "Inclusion of Students with Special Education Needs in Christian Schools" in our October 1994 issue, would like to correct an error in information he received and cited on page 3. The corrections are italicized in the version which follows:

As the parent of a child with Down Syndrome who had greatly benefited from mandatory public special education, Ms. Will lost confidence with the special education system as her son moved *toward* adulthood. Despite years of special education, she *feared her son would fail to find employment.*

