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The sickness in schooling: The healing of education

Sipes, Stephen Ricky, Ph.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1994

THE SICKNESS IN SCHOOLING:
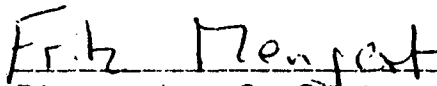
THE HEALING OF

EDUCATION

by

S. Rick Sipes

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

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1994

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SIPES, STEPHEN RICKY, Ph. D. The Sickness in Schooling: The Healing of Education. (1994) Directed by Dr. Fritz Mengert & Dr. Svi Shapiro. 284 pp.

The purpose of this study is to offer a qualitative, phenomenological examination of American public schooling within the metaphorical context of sickness and healing. The rationale for the study is that the schooling structure itself needs to be viewed metaphorically in terms of sickness and healing.

The procedure used is a personal case study employing the qualitative narrative methodology. The results of the study offer alternative practices for compulsory schooling. The conclusion suggests more community and home-based educational opportunities as a solution to many of the problems of contemporary compulsory schooling.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the

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Date of Final Oral Examination

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> First, get well; then, get back to work.
> -Fritz, Mengert

The above words are simple enough on the surface, but they belie the depth of the dialogue in which they occurred. They were spoken one afternoon while my dissertation advisor and I were discussing recent aspects of the chain of events that had transpired in my life as a teacher. They were mentioned in conjunction with his view that there are two types of people in the world-- "those who are sick and those who are getting better" (Mengert, 1993). I had been commenting that I needed to get back to work with writing my dissertation as well as resuming my career as an educator. Fortunately for me, Dr. Mengert must have sensed that I was still in need of the healing process and uttered the above words. Since then, they have become a type of impetus for me to look inward and to begin to heal myself of invisible, but very real hurts; to get back to work; and, to move on with my life. During that process, which is still in progress even today, I began to detect a parallel with the inward journey to heal myself and the journey of many teachers involved in the schooling process with

whom I worked. As I struggled to regain what had initially led me to teaching, I discovered that other teachers had also lived through similar experiences. Many of them shared stories of the empty and drained feelings of alienation, isolation, and disenchantment of spirits burned out from within. It occurred to me that many of us in the "teaching business" were in need of healing and that the language of illness and health seem to apply quite appropriately to the language of schooling and education. This study, then, will attempt to address issues involving the sickness and wellness of schooling and education, as well as their participants, with the hope that we can all get well and get back to work.

The main idea that I will try to address in the study is the idea that there is a "sickness" in schooling and that healing is needed to cure the sickness and to achieve "healthy" schools, teachers, and students. The importance of language in examining the sickness and how it can aid the healing process of education in the school setting will be emphasized. Ostensibly, we must develop the language to begin thinking about the problem, for as Maxine Greene (1988) asserts, "thought after all, grows through language; without thought....there is little desire to appear among others and speak in one's own voice" (p.3). That "voice" is also the major theoretical framework and backdrop for the dissertation. It is the

phenomenological journey of one high school English teacher engaged in a struggle with the school principal, superintendent, and finally, the local school board during a two year period. I am that teacher and the journey is mine. As part of that phenomenological process, the journey continues even now as I write this sentence and subsequent sentences, and as I "experience the experience" of recalling the past and of creating this dissertation. This structure will be contexturalized with the assertion that schooling in its present form resembles a state of sickness and needs to be studied as such. It is also my intention that the study represent a compilation or a type of culmination, if you will, of my graduate education at UNCG without which my awakening to new concepts of consciousness and conscience (especially pertaining to the educational paradigm) might not have come to be.

Since the rationale for the study is that schools are not "well" and that a new language is needed to discuss and understand the ailment and the treatment, developing a new language to broach the study is essential. It can help us to open up new discourse, or as Heidegger (1958) said, "to rid ourselves of the habit of always hearing only what we understand" (p.58). Of course, what we understand is that public education is in trouble. One

contemporary writer, in revealing the pulse of American attitude toward public education casually claims that many Americans now believe that "public education drifts somewhere between catastrophe and disaster" (Kaplan, 1992, p. 4). Consequently, maybe we should adhere to Heidegger's advice and allow language to "speak itself as language" in helping us to "find the right word for something that concerns us, carries us away, oppresses us, or encourages us" (Heidegger, 1958, p.59).

With this idea in mind, the language of healing will be developed and utilized extensively as the overlay or lens with which to examine the components of the study. Even though many of the observations and assertions can be applied to all levels of public education, my study focuses on and emphasizes the high school level. Two reasons for this are: 1) much of the previous years of schooling from kindergarten through middle school are to get the students ready for high school; and, 2) since I spent six years teaching at the high school level, I can be most accurate if I use high school as my model. This attempt at a scholarly creation is written primarily for other teachers, both novice and veteran, with the hope that they too will become more aware of the healing metaphor in education and that they will become energized participants in the movement to help cure the sickness in schools.

Ultimately, it should be the goal for all of us as teachers to promote ideas which focus attention on the healing needed in today's public education system rather than to merely dwell on the disease. From this point, we can begin to take steps to promote health both for the participants (some say prisoners) in the schooling process and for the structure of schooling itself. It is not my aim to demolish the governmental institution that attempts to educate the American public, but rather, those malignant, anti-educational practices and policies within that institution. However, since there is a distinct possibility that the healing process will be slow in coming, I do plan to offer the only alternative to compulsory schooling that seems viable at this time, namely, an endorsement of a mass return to home and community-based schooling. I hope to begin this process by lending language as the lens to view the disease and to help effect a cure. While I do believe that the impetus for the cure must come from outside the structure, I agree with Postman and Weingartner (1969) that no real revolution in American compulsory schooling will occur without the support of the teachers. They assert that "there can be no significant innovation in education that does not have at its center the attitudes of teachers, and it is an illusion to think otherwise" (p.33). Therefore, this study is largely for

teachers to examine, both novice and veteran, with the hopes that they will see that the health and the very lives of their students are drowning in the wake of a sinking ship called compulsory schooling. If this document has a function, then, it would be to help teachers better understand the reality of the sickness in the schooling process; to see through the "appearance" of government's successfully handling the education of our children; and to become engaged in the ongoing debate of which Gatto (1991) advocates.

The dissertation will be divided into four chapters. The first chapter will contain a brief grounding of the study, along with a short historical account of American public schools. Since large amounts of information are available on this aspect of education in America, I have tried to concentrate on events and issues relative to the rationale of the study. Phenomenology will be addressed in this chapter as well as epistemological issues. Also, to give a student voice to the study, references will be made in this chapter to an interpretive inquiry I conducted with students participating in a high school dropout prevention program with the hopes that their comments and viewpoints will give a taste of authenticity to the contentions of the paper. Finally, the phenomenological characteristics to the study will be introduced in this chapter and will be a reemerging current throughout the paper.

As current writers on research and scholarship suggest the importance of giving an identity to the researcher and the writer of the words, I hope to accomplish this framework by writing in first person and using personal experience in examining the dichotomy of schooling and education. (Curry, Wergin, 1993) Consequently, I begin this phenomenological aspect of the dissertation by following Buber's (1958) suggestion of naming myself and also by relating the story of one teacher experiencing the sickness in the schooling process and who becomes sick himself. It is my intention that this line of thought will be an underlying foundation throughout the study and will offer some emotional resonance to the scholarship of the paper. Some of the questions to be considered are: When, where, and how has the school setting become sick? Who or what is responsible for the situation? Is the ailment improving or worsening? And, what is needed to produce change?

Chapter Two begins by addressing the sickness in schooling from various viewpoints. The discussion of "language" and its importance in identifying and examining issues is broached here. Schooling issues are discussed within the context of the sickness and the healing metaphors. Definitions for the sickness in schooling will be introduced, as well as the language of healing as

a metaphor for education. A distinction will be made between the terms of "schooling" and "education" with the assertion that they are not synonymous, even though they are usually used interchangeably by teachers, students, administrators, and the community at large. Finally, the scope of social and political issues involved in schooling will be examined in this chapter with an emphasis on the way language and the teaching of language affect students' coming to knowledge. What is school really like for the students and teachers? Important authors cited in this chapter include Purpel, Macedo, Freire, Greene, Horton, and others.

Chapter Three continues the healing language as a metaphor for education and how it is needed to overcome the sickness in the American schooling process. Important divisions in this chapter include: "Looking Inward: Taking the First Steps Toward Healing;" "It's Not Allowed;" "Education as Healing: Issues of Truth;" "The Student/Teacher Relationship;" "Pitiful to Be Critical;" "Rules, Routines, Repetition, and Rituals;" "The Sadness of Self-Love and Self-Interest;" "Issues of Faith in the Healing of Education;" "Sharing, Wholeness, and Connectedness;" and, "Aesthetics, Heidegger, and Time." Authors in this chapter include Purpel, Heschel, Fox, Goldsmith, Jaffe, Siegal, Heidegger, and Buber.

The fourth and final chapter concludes my personal narrative of a teacher in conflict with the schooling process as well as the discussion of how the healing metaphor in education can do much to improve many of the present problems in schools. I hope to pull together the threads of the study in a way that will culminate my phenomenological journey with the research as well as offer ideas and methods of how the healing metaphor in education can work. Questions to be considered in this chapter include: If I were creating my idea of a healthy school, what would it be like? Why is the concept of compassion so overshadowed by the competition language in school curricula? What is the role of Truth and honesty in the schooling process and how is it perverted to the detriment of the students and teachers? Why are grades given such paramount importance over admirable human qualities such as compassion, honesty, and cooperation?

A discussion of how the idea of "story" and the importance for the consideration of orality in the high school English class is offered in this chapter. Finally, the chapter offers an idea of where my journey with the study has left me personally, and how it is shaping my actions for the future. Throughout the dissertation, the work of Purpel (1989) is extensively referenced and serves as an impetus for many of the ideas in addressing the

seriousness of the sickness in schools as well as offering

inspiration for the notions contained in the "healing curriculum."

GROUNDING THE STUDY: APPEARANCE VERSUS REALITY

Life would indeed be easier to fathom if things were always as

they appeared to be. In that ideal setting, reality and appearance

would be Truth; and, the present deceit, disharmony, and confusion

that pervades the planet would be nonexistent. It would be an

ethical life, one in which people would possess notions of duty,

cooperation, truthfulness, and moral goodness. It would be a world

of Platonic idealism. Alas, the dialectic of Plato's analysis of

appearance and reality leaves us with the "reality" that may not

necessarily be the "truth." Moravcsik (1992) offers his

interpretation of Platonism by explaining that:

> Interest and utility within such an ethics is relative to the
> proper ideal. It is not as if there were some basic things that
> are in our interest beyond any controversy and that we need to
> formulate ideals within this framework. The priorities are the
> other way around. First, we need to select an ideal, then define
> what is useful relative to it. (p. 97)

In compulsory schooling, the "ideal" of education is often

"languaged," but the reality is that schooling is little more than

the self-serving utility of those powerful few with the most to lose if people actually became educated. So, the appearance of propagandized notions of education becomes the most important and the most expensive (in tax dollars spent) part of the compulsory schooling process. As a matter of fact, the U. S. Senate and President Clinton just put into law the "Goals 2000 Educate America Act" which will cost taxpayers $647 million to reform schools (Feldman, 1994). No cost is spared to give the appearance of children learning in healthy environments when, in reality, the exact opposite is true. Schooling is not only failing in preparing our children for their futures, I believe the process is so flawed that it is actually causing our children to become sick with stress, peer pressure, self-doubt, confusion, and indifference to almost everything except self-gratifying activities.

Over two decades ago, scholars were writing about the inherent insidiousness of a compulsory schooling process that was then, and still is, grossly inadequate in preparing students for much of anything, but especially failing in readying the country's citizens to actively participate in a democratic society plagued with a plethora of worsening problems. Postman and Weingartner (1969) labeled schools "sick" even then and called for change. Describing the schooling process, they write that:

If it is irrelevant, as Marshall McLuhan says; if it shields
children from reality, as Norbert Weiner says; if it educates
for obsolescence, as John Gardner says; if it does not develop
intelligence, as Jerome Brunner says; if it is based on fear, as
John Holt says; if it avoids the promotion of significant
learnings, as Carl Rogers says; if it induces alienation, as Paul
Goodman says; if it punishes creativity and independence, as
Edgar Friedenberg says; if, in short, it is not doing what needs
to be done, it can be changed; it must be changed. (p. xiv)

So far, though, the changes that have occurred since then have
been cosmetic; merely to alter the appearance of the sickness.
There has not been any change in the sense that the students are
receiving any innovative strategies for survival. Indeed, the
schools have become places of violence, intimidation, coercion,
control, negative peer pressures, prison-like atmospheres, and
worse; they have become places where democratic ideals of
freedom and independence are often squashed; where notions like
creativity and imagination are thwarted; where values such as
love, compassion, and cooperation are avoided; and, where spiritual
truths from the ages are outlawed and illegal.

Is it possible that genius is a human quality inherent in all of
us, rather than a quality distributed over the range of a bell curve?
Is it possible that the reason students become so disengaged in the
schooling process is that they are not allowed to become truly
involved in their own education? I believe so. They are given

neither the freedom nor the time to really become interested in anything; to become passionate with a project or a new course of study. But how can they? Schooling consists of fragmented and disjointed subject matter forced upon students by the state within 50 minute time slots, driven by the ever-present bells and buzzers. As Gatto (1992) remarks, "nothing is ever finished in my class nor in any class I know of" (p. 6). For him, the bells and buzzers "inoculate each undertaking with indifference" (p. 6).

The schooling structure may give the appearance that education is going on, but the reality of what students actually do in classrooms is a more valid picture. As Postman and Weingartner (1969) write:

> Well, mostly, they sit and listen to the teacher. Mostly, they are required to believe in authorities, or at least pretend to such belief when they take tests. Mostly, they are required to remember. They are almost never required to make observations, formulate definitions, or perform any intellectual operations that go beyond repeating what someone else says is true. (p. 19)

Students are not even allowed to ask the type of questions that might bring them closer to notions of true knowledge and of their own realities. As Postman and Weingartner (1969) assert:

> Once you have learned how to ask questions-relevant and appropriate and substantial questions-you have learned how to learn and no one can keep you from learning whatever you want

or need to know. Let us remind you, for a moment, of the process that characterizes school environments: what students are restricted to (solely and even vengefully) is the process of memorizing (partially and even temporarily) somebody's else's questions. It is staggering to consider the implications of this fact. The most important intellectual ability man has developed- the art and science of asking questions-is not taught in school! Moreover, it is not "taught" in the most devastating way possible: by arranging the environment so that significant question asking is not valued. (p.23)

Postman and Weingartner (1969) go on to say that they do not "think it unreasonable to suggest that there are many influential people who would resent such questions being asked-in fact, would go to considerable trouble to prevent their being asked" (p. 57).

Gatto (1992) writes that the compulsory schooling process is nothing more than a "jobs project and an agency for letting contracts" (p. 19). He says that " we cannot afford to save money by reducing the scope of our operation or by diversifying the product we offer, even to help children to grow up right" (pp. 19-20). He calls it the "iron law of institutional schooling-it is a business, subject neither to normal accounting procedures nor to the rational scalpel of competition" (p.20).

Indeed, schooling is all about money. While education can be relatively cheap, schooling is very expensive. As Gatto (1992) relates, the cry for more money to be spent on schooling benefits

only those people who are "going to make a great deal of money if growth can be continued" (p.70). With this idea in mind, I have included a truncated list of bills that are presently being discussed in the special session of the North Carolina General Assembly. The House & Senate Bill 18-Save Our Students Programs Funds appropriates $10 million for the Governor's SOS program; House & Senate Bill 19-Family Resource Center Grants appropriates $4.3 million to identify at-risk families and create a family resource center nearby; House & Senate Bill 22-Coach and Mentor Training Funds appropriates $250,000 for coaches and mentors; House Bill 41-Metal Detectors appropriates $350,000 for metal detectors in public schools; House Bill 56-Intervention/Prevention Grants appropriates $40 million for students at risk of academic failure; House Bill 58-Apprenticeship Program Grants appropriates $700,000 to local schools for apprenticeship programs; and, Senate Bill 42-Alternative Schools Grants appropriates $30 million for grants to school systems for alternative school programs.

In addition, the government insists that the children be indoctrinated to obey "authority." House Bill 50-Safe Schools/Respectful students is a resolution that supports teachers maintaining authority in their classes and for parents to instill

respect for school authority in their children; and, Senate Bill 41- Teach American Values that requires the public schools to teach "respect for the laws" of North Carolina and the United States, etc.. All this governmental legislating (at the expense of the taxpayer) to create an appearance of successful schooling merely veils the reality that Gatto (1992) discovered in his own teaching experience, that "truth and schoolteaching are, at bottom, incompatible, just as Socrates said thousands of years ago" (p. 5).

This appearance versus reality dialectic is the tension that grounds this study as we must push aside the elaborate, cosmetic veil shrouding the reality of the sickness within and see how imperiled our children and our society have become from the government monopolized schooling institution. In the present study, I address one of the symptoms that can surface with regard to the schooling sickness by recounting a personal experience with this schooling mentality of control, manipulation, and intimidation. I start the journey, though, by first identifying the voice behind the study.

DEPARTURE: ENTERING THE THRESHOLD

In order to "name" myself, I would say that the story that most impressed me as a youth was the one of the young King Solomon in the Bible choosing wisdom over riches. As a thirteen year old, I too chose wisdom over wealth as my goal in life; but I departed from that goal in my twenties. Now at age forty and thinking back over my life, it has become crystal clear that the times in my life that I made decisions with money as the determining denominator, I took well-trodden trails that invariably led me to dead-ends and quagmires. When I made choices simply because I wanted to do those things or because I truly thought that those activities would bring me some peace of mind or happiness, I found that while even those paths might contain obstacles and challenges, they just as invariably led me to new opportunities and revealing vistas. I felt good about myself and what I was doing.

When I chose ten years ago to pursue the path of being a teacher, I most definitely had to retrace my steps from the dead-end street of material acquisition. When I did, my journey toward self-knowledge and self-realization began. Today, I can take a quick look back from time to time, usually at turning points in the trail and be rewarded with pleasing images and assurances that I'm on the right path--that is, the right path for me. Writing this

dissertation is an important new trailhead along the journey and I hope that the process of its creation shows me even more about myself. Already, it has helped me to understand the paramount importance of Truth: thinking about truth; speaking of truth; writing about truth; knowing what truth is; but most importantly, being truth. For example, Heschel (1973) writes that Kierkegaard felt that "truth may prove useless if it does not shape the thinker's existence"... and that "truth consists not in knowing the truth but in being the truth" (p. 104). Meister Eckhart echoes this idea when he concludes that "people ought to think less about what they should do and more about what they are" (Fox, 1988, p. 64). Also, Heschel (1973) tells us that love and Truth go together hand in hand and "are the two ways that lead the soul out of the inner jungle." He also says that "love offers an answer to the question of how to live. In Truth we find an answer to the question of how to think. It is impossible to find Truth without being in love, and it is impossible to experience love without being truthful, without living Truth" (p.127). I have learned that Truth is foremost an enigmatic paradox that calls out to us, yet remains hidden for us to find, but that it does exist. Much of this dissertation is about Truth and what is true.

Other elements of "who I am" include my love of vigorous exercise, especially if it is outdoors, preferably in pristine places. Indeed, I have difficulty thinking of a way that I would much rather "go" than to be in a full, all-out, wide-open sprint-- body sweating; heart pounding; blood surging; lungs straining; legs and arms pumping; and then, just falling over dead. And, as my last breath vaporizes, my spirit is set free from his bodily constraints and soars rejoicing into the Cosmos. And, why not? Does not being fully alive take one from the darkness and shadows of the Cave into the celebration of the sunlight and then back to the edge of the Cave once more? Isn't life a circular journey from the womb to the world and then back around again to a spiritual exit?

Another aspect of who I am is how music mesmerizes my mind and soul, so I especially enjoy the times I can 'break away' and try to write music and words and play my aging Yamaha SG 360 acoustic guitar. Recently, when I read Heschel's and the Baal Shem Tov's (1973) opinion of the proper place of music and song in the universe of things, my heart and spirit took a quick leap of joy, because I knew that the healing process had begun for me-- that there could be a song in my heart again. The reassurance I felt at that moment convinced me that I could finally say that I was on the road to "getting better.

PATH OF PERILS

Before I begin my narrative and phenomenological journey of a teacher in conflict, I must relate to the reader that just going back through five file folders full of notes, documentation, and testimony has not been an easy process. Even though it has been close to a complete year since the apparent end of the ordeal, reliving the events brings back many of the same emotional and physiological symptoms I experienced during those stressful weeks and months. Fortunately, time does heal (at least in this case for me) and the intensity of those emotions and physical ailments are diminishing to the point where they no longer cause me much concern. Alas, that is not the case for at least two other teachers I met during this time who had experienced similar conflicts with their principals. Neither is in education presently nor do they have any intentions of ever returning. I mention this merely to make the point that this narrative is told as a qualitative approach to scholarly research. It is to emphasize the possibility that the story of one can also be the stories of many, just as the quantitative approach suggests that the statistics compiled on many can be used to interpret the situation of one. My contention is that the qualitative approach can have as much

validity as the positivist measures and is deserving of equal consideration as a methodology in research.

Having said that, probably the best place to begin my story of a teacher in turmoil would be to recount one of my very earliest conversations with the new principal who arrived at the high school at which I had been teaching for five years, in August of 1991. I was nearly two-thirds through with my doctoral program at the university and was eager to complete the degree in a timely and successful fashion. I had made arrangements with the former principal and his staff the previous year to have a schedule that would allow me to leave a few minutes early once a week to take a particular graduate class at the university. Everything had been previously worked-out and approved.

The new principal, however, adamantly refused to allow me to leave to take the class. I asked her why and she frigidly replied, "Because I said so." I had no choice but to "go over her head," to get permission. That was when the trouble began, and I did not have a moment's peace of mind for the next two years until I was finally granted a transfer to another high school in the system. Even then, it only occurred after enduring a grievance process that took five months and accompanied by recommendations by two school board members that I be granted a transfer.

I think it is important to note to fellow teachers here that if you ever have the misfortune to get an assignment under a principal who possesses a resentful nature toward teachers trying to improve themselves, I strongly suggest that you immediately begin your search for a school where the principal does appreciate and encourage the teachers to aspire for self-improvement. Also, if you ever find yourself in an agonistic relationship with a principal whose main agenda is "control," be acutely aware of the exact place of the teacher in the hierarchy of power. Otherwise, prepare yourself for what can be a game in which all the cards are stacked against the persons with the least power and influence in the school hierarchy, namely the students and teachers.

The sickness in schooling can manifest itself in just such a situation as the one above. When I use the word sickness here, I mean sickness to be defective and unsound. (Jaffe, 1980). "Schooling" is all about wielding power and control and very little to do with the noble aims of becoming educated. I contend that in schools where controlling and manipulating takes precedence over allowing freedoms to flourish, the situation is defective and unsound, and therefore, sick. In my case, the principal felt she had lost some control over one of "her" workers. This attitude became quite clear when she stated to me one morning in August of 1991

that teachers were people that needed to be "monitored and controlled." As it turned out, she did what she could to make life as difficult as possible for me and to show me who was boss.

Such an attitude cannot be healthy and as she directed it toward other teachers at the school, it became clear that it was like a stab with a poisoned dart. Even when the surface wound was gone, the hurt, frustration, anger, and demoralization remained deep within. I counted five times in an eighteen month period that a teacher left her office in tears, dismayed and bewildered at the harshness in which they had been treated. The sickness in schooling is never more prevalent than in situations like these where the leader of the school, namely the principal, inflicts wounds and hurts as part of the management of the school, all under the pretense of "running a tight ship." The sickness in schooling is aptly addressed by Purpel (1989) who says that he just does not "know how to respond to people who knowingly and willingly try to keep people from being free" (p. 30). I have to echo that sentiment and I just could not understand an administrator (i.e., the principal) who viewed her job as exactly that; to enforce as many control devices as possible on the teachers (e.g., signing in and out to the minute each day; being confined to our classrooms at the end of each day; and insisting on unnecessary and lengthy

"mandatory" faculty meetings). The daily confinement to our rooms became the most ludicrous of situations as one teacher actually started calling the office to ask for permission to go to the restroom. Meanwhile, others would stand outside their doorways to try to communicate with one another, but always making sure they had a "lookout" in case she suddenly appeared to check up on them. It was a pathetically demoralizing scene in which to find oneself. It was hardly the vision of Purpel (1989) where teachers and students can interact in an atmosphere that is "right, just, and loving" (p. 30). Another saddening aspect of this scenario was that despite numerous complaints from parents, students, and teachers, the school system superintendent remained firmly in the principal's camp.

My first clue that I had entered a path of peril was the admonition of an assistant principal at another school in the system who was also in the same graduate class as I. One afternoon, he mentioned to me in passing that he was happy that I had finally been allowed to take the class, but felt sorry for me at the same time. He explained that since I had "won one" over the principal, she would never forget it and it would be wise for me to be on my guard at all times. I remember laughing and joking about his concern, remarking that no one was that bad and that all I had

done was to take a graduate class that had already been approved anyway. He replied that I was right; she wasn't that bad; she was worse. Still, the truth of his statement did not register until much later. That truth would turn out to be that for the first time in my life, I would be singled out and emotionally stalked and persecuted by someone. In this case, it was the principal of a high school.

The next confrontation with her was shortly afterward when I had to leave a faculty meeting early to get to the graduate class. I was called in to her office the next day with her assistant principal there as a witness. She accused me of trying to disrupt her meeting and creating dissension among the staff because of my early departure. I was warned not to let it happen again. She said other hurtful things as well that left me in an emotional whirlwind as I left her office. I had never been browbeaten quite like that before and it left me with a surge of emotions ranging from rage and indignation to confusion and hurt. As I mentioned earlier, as the months went by, other teachers at the school had similar experiences in her office.

Other scenarios were played out during the year which included being denied (for no good reason) the opportunity of attending a highly touted professional workshop; being falsely accused of driving over the grass at the school with a carload of students;

called from my classroom during a third period class and verbally abused for twenty minutes which included being challenged professionally and philosophically concerning my actions and abilities as a teacher; subjected to an anomalous and seriously skewed observation process (which was later used against me in my summative evaluation and finally in a grievance proceeding before the school board); falsely accused of not fulfilling my duties as a club sponsor; required to adhere to an aberration of a Professional Personal Development Plan (PPDP) (which required me to perform three pages of repressive and unnecessary duties, one of which was to be videotaped five times per nine week period and then called in to the principal's office to be critiqued; to finally being accused of unethical administering of an English End-of-Course Test. As each scene was played out, my health, both emotional and physical gradually began to deteriorate, so that by the time I formally filed a grievance procedure against her, I was becoming depressed and physically ill.

As this little drama was played out, the sickness in the schooling process became clear. All the actions of the principal, the superintendent, the other "downtown" administrators, the school board members, and the attorneys were motivated merely by the driving need to "control;" to maintain the power structure of

the administrators against the teacher; and to disallow any notion that the "system" or any of its players could possibly be at fault. Indeed, this concept became glaringly clear when one of the attorneys for the principal and superintendent made the statement to the school board members hearing the grievance that the issue was not about who was right or what was the fair thing for them to do. Rather, they (i.e., the school board) must decide in favor of the principal and superintendent because if they did not, every teacher who "whined" or "complained" about some action of the principal would be filing grievances for every little thing, and all they would get done would be to hear countless grievance proceedings. She made it clear that the issue was not about justice or the rights of anyone involved. The school board *must* support the administrators who were "in charge" of the actions of the teachers. I was shocked to hear such a statement during a proceeding that I thought was affording me at least the semblance of justice and fairness. On the contrary, the school board members were blatantly being instructed in a formal proceeding by legal counsel to make sure they voted in favor of the administrators regardless of those administrators' falsehoods and persecution tactics. The process shattered my naive notions that justice would be served in the "due process" of the grievance procedure.

Actually, as I sit here at my desk and go back through the many pages of notes and documentation of all the principal's and superintendent's actions against me, I am just flooded with the single emotion of just closing the door on all of this and forever letting go of one of the most disturbing periods of my life. With that in mind, I intend to keep my comments on the whole affair brief. And yet, I feel that if relating any of this to other teachers, both novice and experienced might help them in any way with their own teaching situations, I am willing to do it. Still, going back through the hundreds of pages of details would be tedious to all, so I wish to summarize the events involved in the formal grievance process, its final outcome, and a type of critical reflection of the whole affair that can somehow put it all into a proper perspective.

First, it must be noted that the grievance process was a five step procedure that had time stipulations to which all parties were supposed to have strict adherence. If the administrators did not follow the guidelines and the time constraints, then those actions would supposedly void their rights and position in the matter. The same was true for the aggrieved party. The travesty of this whole due process procedure was that the principal neglected an entire step in the procedure and the central office administrators breached the time constraints twice during the

process! Thus, without any question, they were guilty of voiding their rights and position in the matter. As you will momentarily learn, it did not matter that they did not adhere to the school board's standards and mandates for a fair hearing. As a matter of fact, the administrators made up the rules as they went along and had the attorneys to back them up at every situation. I believe it is fair to say that teacher rights in this scenario would be an oxymoron as I still feel that my rights as a professional educator were basically nonexistent, never really considered, and ultimately were squashed with a guiltless indifference both to my position as a tenured professional and to my feelings in the matter.

At any rate, the first step of the procedure was my verbal communication to the principal that there was a "problem." She had five days to respond to that concern. If I was not satisfied with her response to that complaint, I was to then communicate formally in writing to the principal of my concerns. Once again, the principal had five days to respond in writing to this level of communication. At this point, the process should have ended because she breached the grievance instrument by neglecting to respond to this stage. What I received instead was an ultimatum that I agree to a date and time for her to immediately observe me in the classroom or she would come "unannounced within the week."

When I suggested to her in writing that such an observation by her at this time would not be appropriate considering we were presently engaged in a formal grievance process; that it would be difficult for her to give me an objective evaluation under those circumstance; and, an abeyance of any observations would be the fair thing for the time being, she attempted to get me to say that I was refusing to be observed (teachers are not allowed to do that) which, of course, was not what I was saying at all.

Level Three of the grievance was a meeting to be scheduled within five days of the principal's communication with me and involved the superintendent and other certain other central office administrators in an informal meeting with me (even though everything said in the meeting was formally taped recorded and later transcribed).

I stated my case in that meeting hoping that the superintendent would call off the principal and allow me to get back to my job of teaching students. Unfortunately, nothing was accomplished and it was on to Level Four.

It was at this point that the second breach of the grievance procedure occurred as the administrators failed to comply within their five day time constraints and kept me waiting for two weeks for the hearing before the school board. The process should have

been voided at this point and a ruling made in my behalf, but it was not. Instead, after hearing my side and the principal's side of the story, the school board voted in favor of the principal and superintendent. I was bewildered and confused at how the facts of the case were ignored and a decision was made in favor of the administrators.

Finally, I took the issue to the fifth and final level where it became clear the administrators had pulled out all the stops to make sure they would win. Even the seating of the participants was a clue as to what I was up against. I found myself and my attorney sitting as if in a courtroom as a defendant. But, rather than one judge in front of me, there were eleven! In a U-shaped arrangement, the attorneys, the central office administrators, the superintendent, the school board members, and the principal were all together. It was clear to me at that moment just how skewed the whole process was against the teacher and how little chance I had of even a semblance of equitable due process. It turned out, however, that at least two of the school board members in this hearing were willing to acknowledge the facts and ostensibly awarded me a two to one favorable ruling. In other words, I won the hearing! But no, it was not meant to be. The chairman of the school board who was sitting in on the hearing and who was not

supposed to be involved in the voting process, chose to exercise his right to vote and voted against me to create a deadlocked decision. At that point, the attorney for the school board asserted that a tie goes to the administrators. At least, this is the story I was able to piece together from comments by my attorney and school board members.

Since the details of hearings such as these are not open to public scrutiny, one might conjecture that rather than forums for fairness and justice for teachers, they might instead be cesspools of dishonesty and corruption against those with the least might, regardless of who is right. I have certainly drawn my own conclusions in the matter that this is exactly what they are.

At least, I have the piecemeal knowledge of what actually happened behind those closed doors as two of the school board members were so disgusted with the way "justice" was meted out, the information eventually leaked out to me. I am thankful at least for the knowledge that my claims of being unjustly accused and harassed by a principal out to "get me" were taken seriously by some of the school board members.

Of course, I had the notion that I would pursue the American path of litigation and be vindicated in court. However, as I studied similar court cases of the recent past, it became glaringly limpid

that it is rare that a teacher ever wins court cases against principals, superintendents, and school boards. It is the nature of the situation. It was true for Socrates and it is still true today. The court system is just an extension of the power that drives the school system, (and vice-versa) and for judges to rule in favor of a teacher is to rule against the very system of which they themselves are a part. In addition, when I discovered that it would cost me a minimum of seven to ten thousand dollars to take my claims to court, I realized I was too poor to pursue justice in court. That level of justice was reserved for only those with adequate financial means, and as teacher with a teacher's income, I just did not qualify. I finally realized that it was over.

All the support from my students and their parents, my colleagues, my former principals for whom I had worked, and community members had no effect on the outcome of the proceedings. The "due process" was a travesty of justice and there was nothing else I could do. I had lost when I knew I was in the right. I became despondent, distraught, and depressed. I was adamant, however, about not returning to my job to suffer anymore at the hands of a mean-spirited nemesis. So, my only option was to take a medical leave of absence without pay for the remainder of the school year which I did. I was granted a transfer to another

high school in the summer of 1993, and finally, several months later with the support and encouragement of friends, I was able to shake off the disappointment and sickness and began the process of creating this dissertation.

So today, looking back at the events, I must say that I am thankful it is indeed in the past. I am thankful for the support of people like Fritz Mengert and others who offered their understanding and sympathy in a time of significant personal disquiet and disappointment. I am glad that I was encouraged to approach this dissertation in a qualitative and phenomenological format that would not only address scholarly issues in education, but would serve as a type of catharsis as well. And finally, I am glad that I still have the desire to be a teacher, to be part of what I consider to be an honorable and noble profession. I hope that I will continue to get better and stronger having experienced the trials of this ordeal and get back to work with renewed resolve and vigor. While this concludes the main narrative of a teacher in conflict with the power structure of the schooling process and which certainly serves as an impetus in my discussion of the sickness in schooling, only occasional threads of this theme will weave themselves along through the fabric of the dissertation. Even then, they will only serve to validate firsthand the assertions

and hypotheses of the study. Unfortunately, schooling has become an unhealthy process for many of us in American society. Hopefully, the healing of education will become evident through the discourse of this dissertation and maybe one day it might somehow play a tiny part in diverting schooling's present momentum of malaise toward a time of enlightenment and rejuvenation.

THE ORIGINS OF THE SICKNESS

I suppose it is possible that the epitome of the teaching process was played out thousands of years ago by Socrates and a solitary student on a beautiful, sunny day as they reclined under a shade tree and engaged in thought provoking dialogue. I suppose it is also possible that the teaching process has been going downhill ever since. Certainly, what we have in present day schooling in America is far removed from any semblance or notion of what the Greeks once envisioned as education. That education involved an appreciation of beauty, art, dialogue, wholeness, connectedness, and a search for what is true in us and the universe. Inherent in the roots and tacit in the discourse of this philosophy of what it means to become educated was the idea of interdependence of all things in the universe, as well as, a sense of reverence and awe in that universe of creation.

Conversely, education today has become an embodiment of the type of thinking that began in the seventeenth century which emphasized much of the opposite of those attributes of education listed above. As Charles Cummings (1991) reminds us:

> In the Cartesian-Newtonian consciousness prevalent since the seventeenth century, the world was viewed as a collection of separate, independent entities. These could interact according to fixed laws, in a disconnected way. Contemporary western culture still operates from the assumption that the separate individual self has value in and of itself quite apart from other individuals. To speak of interdependence goes against the strong current of privatization in our culture. (p. 62)

In addition to this, the sense of education being a time for wonderment and reflection has been lost in the frenzied pace in schools and society. This unfortunate scenario is aptly summed up by Cummings (1991) when he tells us that:

> The hectic pace which most people maintain in our post-industrial culture is inimical to a spirit of reverence. Reverence is not born in haste but in moments of quiet wonder and appreciation. Hasty living has no time to pause, no time to ponder the beautiful. Haste is blind to everything except the deadline it is rushing to meet; whatever gets in its way is likely to be run over without regret. Haste is intrinsically irreverent. Because of our hyperactive style of life we seldom reverence the simple experience of being alive in a wondrous world. We skim the surface of life rather than experience it in all its richness and depth. (pp. 81-82)

Ostensibly, this pace along with the disconnectedness of Newtonian thinking has been with us in America schooling and society since the turn of the century. It has its origin in the wealthy industrialists' efforts of that period to prepare a workforce for a life of performing tedious, repetitious, mindless tasks in institutionalized, noisy, frenetic factories with the understanding that questioning, inquiring minds would not be tolerated. Schools reflected that direction by placing students in perfectly straight rows, forcing them into irrelevant, timed routines of repetitious memorization and testing; keeping them sedentary and controlled as much as possible; disallowing freedom of dissent and creativity when they could get away with it; rushing them from class to class and from building to building in jammed hallways to the cacophony of ear-piercing bells, buzzers, and horns; feeding them institutionalized food at a frenetic pace in straight rows upon rows of cafeteria tables; and, of course offering a curriculum of disjointed subjects without any regard to the needs and interests of the teachers and students, or even society, for that matter.

That picture is still largely prevalent in contemporary American schooling even though efforts to change it have been going on for at least thirty years. The decade of the 1960s

attempted to bring a new direction to American schooling, but as

Purpel (1989) explains:

> The 1960s were not a time of widespread radical changes in public education. The changes that were adopted were well within existing frameworks of traditional goals and objectives of the in-place system. The reforms that were enacted did not challenge the notion of requirements or the importance of disciplines but only represented minor organizational and conceptual approaches to how these requirements were to be met. (p.14)

The mindset of the previous sixty years was little challenged

by these developments. However, the aspects of the 60s movement

that did seem to threaten the culture were:

> . . .those few programs that did have deeper social and political significance. These were programs that connected to and highlighted issues of existing social and economic inequalities, particularly as they affected the poor and the nonwhite (e.g., open admissions and preschool programs). Another threat emerged from programs that seemed to threaten the conventional power structure of the schools (e.g., community involvement, school integration, student rights, and alternative schools). . . . What was not seriously challenged in the numerous reform efforts and community struggles, however, were the basic goals, purposes, and curriculum of the existing educational system (Purpel, 1989, p.15).

Purpel feels that the gains that were made have diminished

since then and "the language of growth, potential, daring, and

challenge has become muted: a sense of infinite possibility has been replaced by timidity, expansiveness by caution, long-range thinking by the bottom line, visions by quotas" (p.15). Much of this part of the sickness stems from the Tyler model (1949) which concentrates on objectives and goals and the evaluation process connected with those goals. As Purpel says, "the model is a very powerful tool for those primarily interested in efficiency, order, and control" (p. 144). Unfortunately, that paradigm has left us with a present day system which offers only that for students and teachers. If it can not be measured, assessed numerically and quantitatively, then somehow students and teachers are not engaged in learning and teaching. This is exactly the position that the principal took during the time I was called out of my classroom and backed into a corner. When I attempted to explain my philosophy of student dialogue, choice, and opportunities for the students to have some control in what and how they were to study, she became irate, and refused to even consider any aspect of what I was saying. She insisted that I had a "serious problem" with my teaching and threateningly said that she was "going to have to do something about it." Her mindset reminded me very much of Purpel's analysis of the dynamics of the Tyler model of teaching. Purpel relates that:

The so-called Tyler rationale, so resonant with our traditions of pragmatism, engineering, reductionism, and control, is so pervasive in the thinking of the educational profession that it qualifies as perhaps the most dramatic instance of cultural/professional hegemony in the field. It seems literally inconceivable to most educators to conceptualize education in any other way! (pp. 48-49).

My firsthand experience with this mentality causes me to absolutely concur with this conclusion. Too often when educational leaders today cry for a return to the traditional curriculum, that beckoning merely means a:

. . .rejuvenation of very superficial, conventional courses in American history, science, English, foreign language, and mathematics, which stresses knowledge, retention, homework, and mastery of material rather than a serious effort at developing intellectual curiosity and gaining insight into significant ideas. (Purpel, 1989, p.19)

As Purpel goes on to explain:

The basic design of the American schools has been set for nearly a hundred years; and through a number of variations, the basic themes are amazingly constant across this time era and our nation. Elementary schools tend to stress the acquisition of basic study skills and attitudes-reading, writing, arithmetic, memorizing, respect for authority and order, etc. At some level there is a transition to a departmental organization. Sometimes this takes the form of areas of learning that suggest their strong connection to traditional disciplines, as is the case of language arts/English and social studies/history. Sometimes the transition is more organizational-students may go to specialized classes in

science or art or music. At any rate, sooner or later the conventional secondary school curriculum with its sacred and eternal five subjects will appear. The mighty five are, of course, English, history, science, mathematics, and foreign language. These are usually supplemented by electives and 'extracurricular' activities such as music, athletics, and art, but the sacred five are dominant in virtually every secondary school in America. (p. 146)

So where this leaves us is an institution that is so stagnant and unresponsive to the needs and interests of the students and teachers, it has become an unhealthy environment, a sick environment, if you will, that breeds apathy, frustration, and increasing levels of violence and sexual misdeeds and misconceptions. It has become an institution that so emphasizes control of the students and teachers that one might wonder if the public education system exists merely to support the positions of federal, regional, state, and local administrators and bureaucrats-everyone except the students.

Why are the schools not more student-oriented? The situation seems remarkably similar to the description of many malfunctioning American hospitals Ron Anderson gives in Bill Moyers's Healing and the Mind (1993). Anderson states that:

Traditionally, hospitals have been organized for doctors, for auxiliaries, for insurance companies-everybody but the patient. They've taken on 'the total-institution format.' The total institution is like a concentration camp or a jail or even a

place that was created to service a need, but that is overwhelmed with volume and stress and strain and people not dealing with their own feelings. Public school systems may be the same way. (p. 31)

THE TECHNICAL/INDUSTRIAL PARADIGM

Part of the sickness begins with the technical and industrial paradigm of education in which the language for control of the workers and production is predominant. The technical/industrial paradigm as a lens to view the world in general and educational curricula specifically is insidious at best and devastatingly destructive at its worst.

I feel that a critique of the educational institution is not deleterious in that the dialogue would hopefully open the infected wounds and sores of traditional schooling processes and transform the patient into a mode of healing. I believe as Purpel (1989) claims that "one can be passionate about the value of education and still (or because of that) be highly critical of the schools" (p. 67).

Actually, a large part of the problem is schooling's concern for acculturation which, according to Purpel (1989):

> . . .does not reflect a commitment to moral or esthetic excellence or a commitment to nourish the imagination or the idealism of our students. . . The changes that are being urged are designed for more efficiency, a sharper focus, and more directed energy at meeting predetermined (and largely

unexamined) specific, concrete learning goals. This focus is perhaps best expressed professionally in the strength of the 'effective schools' concept and the strong interest in the instructional approach called 'time on task.' Politically, this emphasis is expressed in the widespread use of competence tests, which basically are techniques designed for continual monitoring and control of teachers and students. . . These ideas are, in part, borrowed from industrial language and techniques- -'quality control,' 'accountability,' and 'the bottom line.' They also employ many concepts from logical positivism, such as the idea that the educational process is to be divided and broken down into constituent, observable, measurable parts which are used as criteria for selecting techniques and methods, as well as a basis for evaluation (control). (p.18)

It is not as if the schooling process is not succeeding at all. It is succeeding quite well in what Purpel feels the culture actually expects the schools to do, "namely to acculturate, socialize, sort, and indoctrinate" (p.19).

The idea that no real healing is going on in the schools is evidenced in a variety of ways. But is it possible that healing is not really intended and the sickness is part of the whole schooling idea? I feel that the notion of the "hidden curriculum" leads us in that direction. Purpel describes the hidden curriculum as referring to:

. . .the values, attitudes, and assumptions toward learning and human relationships reflected in the school's policies and practices. A major theme of this criticism deals with the school's role in 'reproducing the culture,' in sorting out the candidates for class and caste system through its various

testing and classification systems. The school's hidden curriculum also includes ways in which students learn to be obedient and passive, to work at meaningless tasks without complaining, to defer their pleasure, to value achievement and competition, and to please and respect authority figures. (p.20)

The language of schooling at the moment is, as Purpel tells us, the technical and bureaucratic language of "control, task, and engineering" with little understanding of "the language of ideology, religion, and meaning" (p. 24). It seems to have practically none of the language of healing and wellness.

He goes on to say that:

> . . .personal exchanges and decisions in schools tend very much to be rule and power bound rather than negotiated individually. The permeating assumption is that the student accepts school policies and practices and does what the teacher says. Those few students who dare to ask for exceptions are barely tolerated; perhaps they may be seen patronizingly as 'cute,' but more often they are quashed ultimately not by persuasion and deference to principle but by the impatience of a force that has vastly superior firing power. Tanks are very effective against the slingshots of complainers, whiners, nitpickers. (p. 47)

The same mentality holds true for the teachers who might choose to question or challenge the fairness or morality of an administrative decision. In my case, it became clear after the smoke and dust cleared from the mortar fire from those very tanks did I realize that I had been trying to defend myself with pebbles

from a slingshot and a paper shield against a foe with fire power vastly stronger than mine.

This is just another aspect of the sickness in the schooling process. If one does not conform, that person is somehow wrong and in need of "correction." This situation is similar to Purpel's statement concerning the "urging of students to work hard and do well in areas in which they have little or no interest or ability is a way of encouraging mindless, instrumental behavior" (p.56). Maxine Green (1988) seems to resonate with this idea when she discusses conformity. She cites Ralph Waldo Emerson's call "for self-reliance and resistance to bland conformity." She quotes Emerson's, 'Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity' (p.34).

Purpel (1989) says that:

> . . .we cannot allow the educational process, which has at its deepest roots a concern for meaning, to become instead a mechanism for pursuing a way of life we already know is rich with the possibilities of despair, absurdity, and destruction . . As we have stressed over and over again, it seems quite clear that the schools' major preoccupation is with perpetuating a system based on the individual, competitive struggle for material success. This goal, however, is masked in the

rhetoric of concern for knowledge and truth, and hence the schools do not even pretend to seek higher truth, higher meaning or wisdom. (p.60)

Until we can begin to change this trend in education, the sickness will only continue to worsen.

If we move our focus just momentarily to the global scene, we quickly perceive the precarious precipice on which the world is now balanced. We, as educators and as human beings must begin to see this paradigm in its unadorned appearance. We must look beyond its glittering array of consumer products and see the reality of its sickly visage. The world's rainforests are being daily decimated; the earth's protective ozone layer is oozing away; vast amounts of sewage and industrial waste products are being dumped into our streams and rivers; and, even the air we breathe becomes so bad at times that we are encouraged not to breathe it. Our globe is on the brink of unprecedented, catastrophic demolition and it is fueled and driven by decades of emphasis on the scientific/technical paradigm as the best and only way of viewing the world.

There is an undercurrent of disease which lies beneath the shimmering surface of products and their consumption. It is the hidden impetus in our capitalistic culture and it is omnipresent as

the "hidden curriculum" in education. Society hides it behind the guise of the benefits of collective consumerism. Education hides it in the language of "objectives and outcomes." But this undercurrent is really about profit and control and especially, who profits and who controls. Schooling is also all about power and control and who gets to wield that sovereignty. Purpel (1989) mentions that schools have acquired a need for "control mechanisms" even to the point of having an "obsession with control" (pp. 48-49). He elaborates on what this mentality has done to the schools and to the schooling process:

> The need for control produces control mechanisms, and for the schools this has meant a proliferation of tests- a kind of quality control mechanism borrowed crudely and inappropriately from certain industrial settings. We control the curriculum, teachers, and staff by insisting on predefined minimal performances on specified tests. . . . Another industrial concept that impinges strongly in educational institutions is the emphasis on management, particularly in the concepts of productivity, quotas, planning, and engineering. It is routine for schools to expect teachers and curriculum workers to operate within a framework of a cycle of activities determined and revised by a process of predetermined objectives and continuous testing. (p. 48-49)

My new awareness of this situation is leading me toward a more limpid understanding of the pervasiveness of the word curriculum when describing what schools are presumably teaching

and the actual reality of lessons learned, both overt and subtle. Of course, teachers, principals, and other administrators have their notions of what curriculum is all about, but it seems we are all greatly influenced by the industrial/technical paradigm and we all pursue the system's "main objectives" in some fashion. And yet, in the classroom, this grand curriculum "symphony" is too often individually orchestrated in such capricious and disjointed decisions that society's symphony somehow becomes a communal cacophony.

The hidden curriculum of the industrial/technical paradigm, though, is an even deeper, devious current of dissonance which manages to "drown out" even the noblest intentions of the teacher. The discord probably originates as far back as classical Greek times with Aristotle contemplating on the nature of curriculum and what should or shouldn't be taught. As Kliebard (1985) reminds us, the great inculcator himself had trouble placing emphasis on studies that might provide utility in life; or, moral, aesthetic, and ethical studies; or, those which stretch the limits of what we might be able to know. But as the 20th-century American curriculum began to emerge, a plethora of social and political issues began to surface which altered and diverted the course of a curriculum that was originally supposed to aid

mankind's quest for the meaning of life. Instead, school became a vehicle to solve some of the societal problems like labor unrest, urban vice, government corruption, and a generally acknowledged fragile society of undesirable European immigrants (Kliebard, 1985). Seemingly, this idea that school is the place for problems to be solved rather than values to be considered has led to the entrenchment of the technical/industrial model.

Eisner and Vallance (1974) discuss this idea of "curriculum as technology" and its role as a problem-solving process. But even more, it speaks the language of the scientific/technological production. As Eisner and Vallance relate, "the focus is less on the learner or even on his relationship to the material" than the idea that curriculum is a process to produce "whatever ends an industrial model education system might generate" (Eisner & Vallance, 1974). A list of indicative words and phrases of this model might include accountability (the contemporary public schools buzz-word); cost-effectiveness; efficiency; evaluation; objectives; goals; tests; scores; input; output; discipline; behavior control; cultural capital; control; and, a host of others. While Eisner and Vallance (1974) discuss other orientations to curriculum such as the development of cognitive processes; self-actualization, or curriculum as consummatory experience; social

reconstruction-relevance; and, academic rationalism, it is strikingly clear that the industrial/technical curriculum is the most "self-confident" and the least apologetic.

Indeed, the idea that education needs to be more than Small's "completion of the individual" (Kliebard, 1985) but rather a process to promote "efficiency" has been with us for a century and appears to be gaining momentum. As Wirth (1977) relates, the industrial educational movement is all about manual training, commercial and agricultural knowledge, home economics, and trade-training courses. But the real issue is whether the curriculum should dissect the educational path of students and force them toward either the technical/vocational preparation or toward the path of learning how to become a true human being.

Presently, many schools in North Carolina are "hot" for Tech-Prep which proposes to do just that kind of curriculum dissection. In the Tech-Prep model, either the public school student plans for a liberal arts college experience or a vocational/technical school direction. It is either one direction or the other and it does not appear that the paths are allowed to integrate or interweave. So, the technical/industrial paradigm continues to reign as the preferred curriculum with the undercurrent of control for the "power players" that perpetuates the schooling sickness.

For me, the most insidious quality of the industrial/technical model is its ability to practically eradicate individual voices with the pervasive "public frame of mind." It is also becoming increasingly clear, as well, just how a minute fragment of our culture is able to create this controlling force in our society and in our schools. Unfortunately, the schools have become the absolute best perpetrator of this subliminal message from the group that can probably be best described as the capitalist social class. The moral horror of this phenomenon is that it has acquired such a momentum in the last century that even with a new awareness of it, an impetus powerful enough to alter or even slow its course of societal subjugation is not presently evident. On the contrary, it seems as though the very policies that dehumanize and limit individual freedoms are increasing.

Even though Bowers (1987) says the curriculum discussion is not about a complicated rationale for addressing the problems of individual freedom and empowerment, I think it is. While we laud the language of objectives, outcomes, and products, malignant entities like standardized testing continue to escalate and take on even more importance. End-of-course testing and SAT examinations can be and usually are used to limit, classify, categorize, and segregate students and teachers. Seemingly, the

end result is a very defined social class structure that effectively separates the capitalists from the workers and keeps the powerful in control and the socially weak impotent and apathetic toward social injustice.

The technical/industrial curriculum concentrates on "competencies, objectives, and goals" that certainly sound worthy, but too often sacrifice the individuality and the uniqueness of the student. Students have little opportunity to engage in any type of self-actualization process in a paradigm where the "body of knowledge" is to be deposited into the minds of students. As Freire (1970) tells us that when students have to mechanically memorize narrated content, they are, in effect, being turned "into 'containers,' into receptacles' to be 'filled' by the teacher" (p. 225). He elaborates by saying that the "more completely he fills the receptacles, the better a teacher he is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are" (p.225). Freire continues by explaining:

> Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the 'banking' concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. (p. 225)

Hidden in that body of knowledge, of course, are the rules and policies of "control" which efficaciously prepare the student population for the subsequent social subjugation to come. This technical/industrial paradigm creates a plethora of questions for me. For example, just exactly who has the most to gain in perpetuating these hidden lessons? What is the future picture for public education in America if the technical/industrial model continues to dominate the educational policies and direction? If it is in the best interests of the socially powerful capitalists to control society through this type of curriculum, then how can the demise of the country's schools be aiding their cause? Just exactly how are our personal freedoms being controlled now and in the future from these curriculum forces? Is there not already an erosion of freedoms as students are begining to be subjected to the presence of armed, uniformed policemen stationed in their schools; random personal, locker, and classroom searches; random metal detector searches; and, drug and gun sniffing dogs patrolling school buildings and campuses?

While this scenario does not appear very encouraging, I refuse to allow the power and the pervasiveness of the technical/industrial paradigm with all of its overt and subtle lessons to totally overshadow my existence and experience as a

teacher. Several personal goals have surfaced in the wake of my becoming aware of the nature of the sickness in the schools. One of my top priorities for the future is to strive more assiduously than ever to be a *compassionate* teacher. The students somehow intuitively sense something sinister is being done to them but lack the language to understand the dynamics of the disease and even the rudimentary skills to express their feelings of frustration. They only know that school is mindlessly mundane, tedious, and joyless. There is rarely ever a reason or opportunity to engage in a festive or celebratory activity, and they hate it. And yet, to rebel against it offers little relief and even less hope for a free and rewarding life as an adult. They have "learned" the lesson well that they need the diploma. All teachers need to have compassion for their students as they struggle to deal with the conflicting messages of the technical/industrial paradigm. It can be a despairing dilemma for many students and most of them are equipped with only minimal insight into their plight. As far as personal teaching strategies are concerned, I will continue to try to use every resource possible to help enrich the students' school experiences. I plan on being more vigilant of the lurking hidden messages I might be conveying as I perfunctorily attempt to accomplish the "objectives" of this technical/industrial

curriculum. More than ever, though, I want to somehow personalize the students' school and classroom experience so that he or she would leave me with a greater sense of understanding of the material learned and why it needed to be learned. Also, I hope I can create assignments that will lead the students to accomplish projects that will actually have some value for them. And finally, I feel a growing desire to be more of a force in helping students discover themselves as unique miracles of Nature and that their existence is somehow divine and has worth in the world.

WHAT THE STUDENTS SAY: PERSONAL NARRATIVES

In this section, I hope to offer a glimmer of insight into what students involved in this schooling paradigm might be saying and feeling about their individual situations. With this notion in mind, Casey (1990) asserts that "the social relations of research are transformed when teachers are presented as subjects in their own right, not as mere objects of research." She also goes on to say that "the recent burgeoning of personal narrative research in the field signals a profound change in the ongoing debate over education. To give the stories of ordinary teachers equal status on the public agenda with government reports is to transform the very terms of the argument." I agree with Casey and would like to

suggest that this concept might not only be true for teachers, but for students as well. Students should also be presented as subjects rather than objects of research and in the growing field of personal narrative research, their stories should also have importance and should also be heard.

Purpel (1991) stated in class lectures that when educational issues are being discussed, it is important to consider the notion that there are "no educational issues, only social and political issues." Too often that seems to be the case. Too often, the very language used to discuss and to define educational issues is a political vocabulary and rhetoric that labels and de-personalizes students; effectively squelches their collective voice; and, merely exacerbates their antipathy and frustration with school. Some examples of that political language and vocabulary might include those terms which let the students "know" that they are not successful students.

With that in mind, I would like to pose the questions of what it means to high school students to experience being considered a "potential high school dropout", a possible future "juvenile delinquent", or as the contemporary jargon labels them, "at-risk" students. Also, what is it like for these students to experience a relatively novel, alternate program for finishing high

school? Finally, what it is like for these students to "experience experiencing" their lives as at-risk students. I will attempt to do this by following the lead of Casey and others in their efforts of approaching educational research from more of a historical, narrative, or qualitative point of view and to present the personal narratives of a small group of high school students as they try to "get through" this very sick, political maze called school. The object of this narrative then, is to not only examine and evaluate "at-risk" students' feelings toward and experiences with a "dropout prevention" program in which they were presently enrolled, but also, to contexturalize their experiences within the industrial/technical paradigm which perpetuates the schooling sickness so effectively.

The program is named the Extended Day Program. I was a teacher in this program for three years, teaching an average of 10-15 students for 4 hours/night, 2 nights/week. I collected the personal narratives from a series of recorded interviews. The interviews were conducted with three students in three sessions as well as a fourth interview with a total of ten extended day students participating. The total time of the interviews was three hours. They were all held in a regular high school classroom over a two week period. This narrative consists of an introduction of the

extended day program and its "formal objectives"; the responses of the students to the interviewer's questions, together with a discussion of those questions and individual student circumstances; and an interpretation of the students' experiences with the program.

Apple (1982) addresses the issue of "curricular form" or the manner in which the curriculum and the school day is organized. Of course, the school day is very much like the factory workplace, complete with simple, technical, and bureaucratic control. It is embodied in tardy and hat policies; frenetic hourly changing of classes; disjointed, uncoordinated teaching of subject matter; and, a pervasive feeling of isolation and alienation for both teachers and students. Apple discusses these forms of control, the "process of deskilling;" and the "separation of conception from execution" which inevitably adversely affects certain students and repels them from the very thing the political paradigm insists they must "earn"--- a high school diploma. The impetus of the Extended Day Program is to offer a viable and practicable alternative to the regular day school program for those students considered "at-risk" to quit high school. The language of the program description reminds one of Huebner's assertion that "it is far easier to proclaim the individual and to then fit ourselves into a prepared

slot"--"to put on someone else's alternative school." (Huebner,1975) The "proclamation" of the program then is to provide high school dropouts and potential drop-outs with the opportunity to overcome their "individual" circumstances and difficulties and to complete the requirements for a high school diploma. Apple (1977) describes this approach as a bureaucratic "clinical model" which: 1) labels the children, (at-risk, underachiever, etc.); 2) places the "blame" on the person or group rather than the institution; and 3) takes the action to "change the individual rather than the fundamental structure of the social setting."

The Extended Day Program is designed to be of service to those students who: dropped out prior to high school graduation; require a flexible curriculum because of scheduling conflicts or course overloads; must combine schooling and employment; exhibit the need for smaller classes with individualized and personalized instruction; need alternative opportunities for attending school; have been suspended from the regular school program; or of course, have been identified as potential drop-outs. In order to accomplish these objectives the approach of the program is significantly different from conventional day school. Some of these elements include open enrollment throughout the school year; credits earned

from successful employment; provision for participation in enrichment as well as extracurricular activities; classes scheduled in late afternoon and evening from 4:00 until 8:00 to accommodate the working student; assistance provided in job placement; emphasis on individualized and personalized instruction; low teacher-student ratio; vocational course offerings which emphasize job preparation skills; graduation requirements consistent with those for conventional school programs; and students afforded access to courses at community colleges.

Of course, there is still political language couched in this description of the program, but it seems to attend to Apple's concern with curricular form. (Apple, 1982) At this point, it could be argued that there is a plethora of social problems and political factors that lead to students' disenchantment with school other than just the way school is structured. In this narrative, however, only a limited number of issues will be examined. These issues arise from personal inferences from selected readings and the comments from the interviewed students themselves. Seemingly, the list begins with the social and cultural attitudes and experiences the students bring to the classroom.

This heritage affects the very core of the school experience, namely attendance. Previous poor attendance in

regular day school is a frequent denominator for a large number of the extended day students. Attendance is adversely affected when students associate with other at-risk young people; when the use of cigarettes, drugs, and alcohol begins; when students cannot overcome difficulty communicating and relating to "normal" students encountered during the day program; when authority figures seem to evoke deep resentment from the students toward authority; when a job and money take precedence over an education; and when school essentially represents a tedious, unsuccessful, lonely, or socially isolating experience. These issues were the main ideas covered in examining why students decide to participate in an extended day program. Also, in an attempt to obtain an idea of how the program is actually meeting the needs of these students, I asked a series of specific questions concerning the daily format and routines of the program.

The initial question that began the interview concerned the concept of the extended day time. Classes are held in four hour sessions with a twenty minute break, but actual instruction time is nearer to two and one-half hours. For this time, students receive credit for a full week of school for that particular subject. At this juncture, I want to offer an aside to the reader and suggest that we attempt to contexturalize the students' comments and

situations within the rationale of the sickness in schooling hypothesis. I personally feel they embody the struggle of many students trying to cope with "getting through" school.

The students were first asked whether they preferred the three hour extended day set-up or the five 50 minute classes of regular day. Amy, one of the students interviewed is in extended day because she had to leave home and support herself. Her mother and stepfather often did not "get along" and she "couldn't take it any longer and had to get out." She found a job during the day but she still wanted to graduate with her friends and extended day offered her that chance. Amy felt that the longer sessions gave her more time "to go at her own pace and not be rushed all the time to finish her work before the bell rang." She also felt that "she was more likely to get individual attention with the longer sessions."

Jeff, who is a senior expected to graduate in May also felt that the three hour class "slowed down the rush of day school" and gave him time to "just sorta relax and take his time with the work." Jeff is in the program because of past failures which left him needing credits to graduate on time but with no opportunities during regular school scheduling to make them up. In addition, he is taking a full six period course load during the day. He stated that he "would kinda like to see a setup like extended day for

certain classes during the day." When asked to elaborate, he said that he "could get into the subject better without jumping up to change classes all the time."

Finally, Beverly, who is also expected to graduate in June stated that she "don't care one way or another." She makes herself quite clear when she says that she just wants "her piece of paper and get out of this dump." Beverly quit school when she became pregnant and then returned after a few weeks out. She then had various problems and confrontations with other girls at school and went on a home-bound program. She wasn't doing well with that situation and decided to try extended day. So far, she has been able to comply with the demands of the curriculum and appears headed toward an on-schedule graduation. One serious complication for Beverly is her premature baby which requires constant attention and monitoring. This makes keeping her afternoon schedule with extended day especially trying as well as staying focused on what she is supposed to be doing while she is there.

The students were asked what aspect of extended day they liked the most. The answer was the same for Jeff and Beverly. They especially liked the "bonus time" concept of the program. The bonus hours are offered to those students who arrive on time for class, who don't have any tardies from break, and who stay until

the end of the class and don't leave early. In essence, those students receive five hours of instruction or the equivalent of five classes of regular school for basically less than three hours of actual instructional time. One teacher in the extended day program labeled the setup "the K-Mart blue light special" because it was "such a good deal" for the students. And yet, it is a common occurrence for students to fail to comply with at least one of the conditions regularly which causes them to miss their "minimum hour requirement" and fail the class. Jeff and Beverly couldn't offer much of an explanation for the problem except to say that the students "probably just don't care much about passing or getting out of school."

Amy's favorite aspect of extended day school was that it was less stressful than the daytime school curriculum. She liked not having to change classes and going to the lockers several times a day. She didn't like "the mess of people in the halls" and having to rush from class to class to keep from getting tardies.

The next question focused on the size of the extended day classes compared to the regular day program. Since one of the main objectives of the program is to provide smaller numbers in class, most of the night classes have less than ten students per class. All of the students interviewed, except one, liked the

smaller classes. The one student who did not like the smaller classes of extended day said he could find a seat in the back of the larger classes and sleep and "nobody won't bother me." Also, he liked "not getting called on" in the larger class. He said he liked the fact that the "teacher didn't seem to notice him as much" in the larger day school classes. As for the students who liked the small classes, they seemed to enjoy the extra attention they received from the teacher. Amy particularly liked the more relaxed, "laid-back" atmosphere. She felt that the teachers during the day "yelled" more at the students and it was probably because there were too many students in the class and the teacher had "to stay on top of the kids to keep them in line."

When this idea was mentioned to Jeff, he agreed and added the regular day teachers "throw more rules at you" and "you feel like you're in prison all the time." He added that even though the classes were longer in the extended day program, the time seemed "to go about as fast as the shorter classes" because "you sorta get into the stuff you're studying and you get more done." He also liked the smaller classes because he didn't have to worry about other students "hogging all the teacher's time and not being able to get a word in edgewise." He felt less pressure about being right in his statements in the smaller extended day classes because there

"weren't any preps around making fun of what he was saying."

In order to get a clearer idea of how the students compared the two school experiences, the students were asked to talk about the most noticeable differences in the two programs and to share their feelings of the two experiences. Amy had the most reaction to this question. She felt the biggest difference between regular day school and extended day was the fewer number of students in extended day. She liked the "quiet, empty halls" and she liked being able to go to the restroom "without that mob of girls in there" and having to be late for her next class just to use the restroom. For her, day school was "just a big mob of students rushing everywhere to keep from being late for class," and with extended day "all you have to worry about is getting to class on time at 4" and she liked "keeping it easy like that." She also liked being assigned less homework and felt the teachers knew that the students "had to hold down jobs" and didn't give them homework for that reason. She thought the teachers in extended day were more understanding and didn't seem to be "against them all the time." Finally, she liked the less stressful pace, the longer class periods and less rules of extended day.

Beverly had an unpleasant, maybe even traumatic experience with regular day school when she became pregnant. The other

students, mostly girls became insulting to her. Girls whom she thought were her friends became enemies, even to the point of ostracizing her from their group and trying "to pick fights" with her. Much of this unfortunate behavior manifested itself in name calling. Beverly said the girls called her names like "slut, whore, trash, sleaze," and others. It became too much for her and she felt the only way to deal with the situation was to quit school. It was only later that she realized that she was hurting herself by dropping out of school and that it would continue to be a stumbling block for her in the future. It was then that she decided to try extended day.

Fortunately, Beverly's experience with extended day was considerably different. She started the program with low self-esteem and apprehension about the other students "attitudes toward her situation." What she discovered was that most of the students had similar traumas in their own lives ranging from broken homes, substance abuse, to school suspensions. They "didn't make a big deal" that she was "a mama and they didn't say nothing about her being some kind of slut." It made the school experience for Beverly more tolerable. She also thought the extended day teachers didn't judge her like the regular day teachers. She could tell this "by the way they just look at you like you was some kind

of dirt to them." As a matter of fact, she thought the extended day teachers were almost the opposite. She mentioned one English teacher who had her to read a book on nurturing and caring for infants as part of an assignment rather than "that same ole' boring literature and grammar stuff."

The students were asked what they disliked the most about the program. Surprisingly, there was little opposition or disenchantment with the alternate school setup. One idea that did surface was that several students disliked the time that the extended day program started. These students felt that it was too difficult to leave work at 3 or 3:30 and be punctual for the class at 4 pm. They didn't appear to associate this disaffection with the idea that they disliked the very aspect of extended day that enabled them to circumvent regular day problems. Also, they felt they needed more than just one restroom break during the evening.

Actually, this was probably a legitimate request and need, considering that most of these students are chronic soft drink consumers. It is not unusual for them to "finish off a sixteen ouncer" before class and another twelve ounce drink during the six o' clock break. Finally, one other issue of concern was them feeling like they were not part of the high school experience, but it was not perceived to be a big problem because most of the

students,in retrospect, realized that experience had been unpleasant for them.

In trying to aid the students to focus on their lives as participants in an alternate high school program, the question was posed to them as to what they would be doing or where they would be if they were not involved in the extended day program. Most of the respondents to this question realized that there weren't many options available to them to make up loss credits for mistakes of the past. Jeff was the most vocal on this question and mentioned several ideas. He felt that many of the extended day students would have probably just given up, dropped out, and forgotten about school. He stated that school was a "bad deal for a lot of students" and "teachers were always against them." He said that he "maybe would have gone to community college or maybe tried summer school to make up credits." He acknowledged though, that scenario would have prevented him from graduating with his class and "he probably wouldn't have messed with it." Concerning where he would be without extended day classes, he thought he would "probably be just laying around the house, not doing much of anything." He did concede that it "meant a lot to walk with his friends" and he knew he wouldn't have had a chance to graduate on time without the program.

For Beverly, it meant an opportunity to escape the "vicious" atmosphere of the day school acquaintances and still go on with the process of getting her diploma. It also helped her feel more comfortable with being an unwed, teenage mother because both teachers and students in extended day tended to be less critical and judgmental toward her. Beverly thought that without the program, she would be "sittin' around the house with her little chap, and maybe watchin' a lot of TV." She didn't know what she could have done to finish her credit requirements. Fortunately, her mother's work schedule coordinated with the extended day hours and she was able to get child care for her infant. She felt sure that without the extended day program, she would not be graduating on time, and "probably not graduating at all."

There were some interesting responses to the question of how they perceived the attitudes and feelings of other students toward them as extended day students. Amy said that some of her friends were envious of her because she was able to work during the day, make money for herself and still be getting her high school diploma. They viewed extended day as easier with less rules and restrictions and "wished they could be doing the same." But Amy felt they really didn't mean it though because they could quit school and get into the program just like she did. Actually, Amy

discerned little to no difference in how she was treated by her friends. Going to school at a different time was not an issue worthy of much consideration. It was just "something she had to do to get by and graduate." She observed that her friends and she weren't as close as before because her new schedule didn't allow "much time to get together and do things." Still, she didn't think her friends thought less of her because she was not in regular day. It just wasn't much of an issue.

For Jeff, who was attending regular day and making up a lost English credit at extended day, an attitude difference was nonexistent. He said some of his friends asked him "what extended day was like," and "what it was like to go to school at night." He said they thought "it would be weird to go to school at night." I asked Jeff what he told them. He said that he told them that it was "pretty much like day school, that you do pretty much the same things in class, just longer classes and at a different time."

Beverly was really glad that there was an extended day program for students like herself. She really didn't know if her former day school acquaintances thought any differently toward her now or not, and "she couldn't care one way or another." She did like the fact that there were several other girls in the same situation as herself who also were in extended day and she could

talk to them and no one "makes a big deal about nuthin." I asked her if she felt any differently about herself being in extended day rather than finishing high school in a regular day setting. She related that it bothered her at first but after she came to a few classes, she realized that it was "better than regular day" in a lot of ways, and at least for her, it helped her take care of her personal situation and not lose out on her diploma. One final thought she mentioned was that she didn't feel as "low" about herself as she did before. The other girls "worked" on her mind and made her feel "like I'd done some terrible thing gettin' pregnant, like I'm some terrible person or somethin'. It was just somethin' that happened, that's all. Maybe it was a mistake, but it don't make me some kind of slut or nuthin."

Finally, in an attempt to help the students focus on the idea of "experiencing the experience" of being potential dropouts or at-risk students, I asked them to think about their thoughts as they went through the process of enrolling in extended day, to try and remember what they felt when they told their families and friends that they were coming to an alternate school program, and what their thoughts were when they came onto the campus when practically everyone else had already left or were in the process of leaving the school premises.

Amy felt that she "didn't have much choice" because she needed to get a job during the day and she didn't want to give up on getting her diploma. She recalled that she was "glad" to be able to get into the program when she was enrolling. Her family and friends "really didn't have much to say about it." She felt they "didn't much care what she did." The main feeling she had when she came onto campus in the afternoon was that she was "real tired" and that it didn't matter "if there were a lot of people around or not."

For Jeff, it was just a matter of leaving school and coming back one hour later as he is attending regular day as well as extended day. He stated that it was hard coming back some afternoons but that it "was really no big deal." His big goal was just "to hang in there for a few more weeks." As far as attitudes about his being an at-risk student, he stated that it wasn't something that he had "thought about much and didn't really talk about it much to anyone."

Beverly didn't have very much to offer in response to these questions. I think the main difficulty with her considering her at-risk status was that she took the implication personally and that it just perpetuated her self-consciousness resulting from her previous encounters with students and teachers concerning her

pregnancy and illegitimate child. She did say that she liked coming onto campus knowing "those backstabbers" weren't there to "get in her face." Also, she didn't care "what people said about her as long as she could get her "diploma and get out of this place."

Some interpretive inferences and theorizing could certainly be made from these oral narratives. First and foremost, it appears that the majority of the students in Extended Day are glad that such a program exists and that it exists in its present "form." Of course, the main reason for that feeling is that the program offers an opportunity for the students to receive "credit" for school without having to experience so much of the political aspects of regular day school. The reader might be interested to know at this point that the program in that particular format was discontinued at the end of the school year!

The administrative logic is certainly not surprising-- the students "need" to be in a more "regular school day structure." So, next year, the classes will return to the 5-day, frantic, 50 minute per class pace, with class changes, tardies, etc., thus assuring that certain students will continue to experience the same problems. So, at least two of the three rights that Huebner (1975) advocates appears to be thwarted. The students were not asked what might be best for them and consequently are not being granted the

"unconditional respect for the political, civil, and legal rights....as free people participating in a public world." Also, they are not being granted the right to "participate in the shaping and reshaping of the institutions" within which they live. (Huebner,1975)

I believe that this situation is typical of the ongoing schooling sickness that continues to thwart students' freedoms, choices, and rights for which our democratic culture supposedly stands. Arguably, this systematic squelching of so many student voices in schools everywhere is at the very core of the problem. The individual circumstances of the students involved in this program were certainly varied and the reasons for their participation were largely disparate, yet the program collected them all under an umbrella which helped to shelter them from the stigma of "failure," dropout," and "delinquent." Furthermore, the students were able to move through the program with little to no major disruptions such as fights and emotional outbursts. Almost all the students interviewed liked the calmer, quieter, and slower atmosphere of extended day. (I.e., a more healing environment) There was a near consensus that without a program such as this one, their options to make up lost credits would have been greatly reduced. Most of the students felt that regular day school was more hectic and less desirable. Only one of all those interviewed

preferred the pace and the larger numbers of a regular school day. Thus, it seems tragically ironic that the aspect most liked and appreciated by the students was the first to be discontinued. Administrative decisions like this seem so typical of those in power who prescribe remedies, but who never take the time to even meet those patients for whom they are prescribing. How can any real healing ever be effected with such a removed and distanced approach to administering.

There were some ambivalent thoughts about the time of the program as some wanted the classes to start somewhat earlier and some preferred starting class thirty minutes later. All the students liked the "bonus hours" but realized that they were not getting as much instructional time as the day classes. It didn't seem to matter to most of them as "getting out" or getting their diploma was the only thing that really concerned them. The students seem to inherently know that they are merely part of the political process that requires they possess a diploma, but not necessarily knowledge or specific skills.

Apple (1977) attends to this idea when he comments on the political aspects of the educational experience. He defines this situation as "the extent to which it increases the power of individuals or groups to make determinations about their own

present and future actions." The students are not concerned about an "experience that has beauty and form," but rather; they possess a well-learned knowledge of the "industrial production model of schooling" where the process is subservient to product and the product is obtaining the diploma.

There were a few students who stated that they would like having a set-up like extended day as part of regular day school. They felt that there were enough advantages to it that it would be a positive change from the regular day format.

Having fewer students in the extended day classes was much preferred over larger day classes. Unfortunately, that is not part of the administrative political agenda for next year as the impetus is to do away with as many small class settings as possible and to "mainstream" as many students as possible. There is very little of Huebner's "right of each individual" here as neither teachers nor students ideas were considered. (Huebner, 1975)

At least half the students felt they would not have been doing something constructive or working on finishing up their credit requirements if extended day was nonexistent. No one stated that being in the program caused friends or family members to treat them differently or altered their self-concept in a negative way. On the contrary, it seems that several students'

self-image improved because they were going to finish high school on time despite mistakes of the past. For others, it was an aid for them to work full-time jobs while simultaneously getting their high school credits. Before the program, those students would have simply dropped out of school and gone to work.

In conclusion, it was difficult to try to convey to these students the idea of experiencing the experience of being at-risk students participating in a novel, alternate school program. Most were conspicuously hesitant in confirming their understanding of the concept and quite reticent in sharing their ideas, both in the individual and larger settings. But, their "stories" still conveyed that they have an understanding of the political influences in schooling and that they are just "glad to be leaving this mess forever." I think it is one of the great tragedies of our public education system that so many students confuse becoming educated with the political structure of "school." Unfortunately, until students and teachers alike understand the chasm between the two, antipathy and frustration will continue to be the prevailing mood in contemporary American schools.

LENDING LANGUAGE AS THE LENS

Since the whole purpose of this study is to offer a new way of looking at schools and the schooling process, I think a crucial first step is to understand that language leads us on the way to broaching that subject. Heidegger (1959) says that the lasting element in thinking is the way. He feels that "perhaps the mystery of mysteries of thoughtful Saying conceals itself in the word 'way,'...All is way. And ways of thinking hold within them that mysterious quality that we can walk them forward and backward, and that indeed only the way back will lead us forward" (p.72). This idea of the relationship of looking back to go forward is important in developing language to view the problems in schooling. Truly, without language, there is no perspective. Without a new language, there is no new perspective, and no new consciousness. As Mengert (1991) reminds us, without language, we are unable to understand. We must develop the language first. Understanding the importance of how language can open up new vistas of awareness and consciousness is an imperative prerequisite we must remember. If we become myopically focused on what is in front of us in language, then we lose the relationship of the origins of language. Without reflection and consideration of

those primordial impetuses, a true course for the future of that language can hardly be accomplished.

In this discussion, I am introducing the word "sickness" as the lens with which to view the schooling process. I believe we can do that by contexturalizing what is happening in the schools with the concept of what sickness literally connotes. Then, the next step is to choose the language to lead us away from that sickness. The healing of education is that language. After learning the language of the healing paradigm, we must then make a choice. That choice should not place us in a dilemma. As a matter of fact, the choice should be crystal-clear. We either choose to let the patient (i.e., the schools) continue in illness, or we begin the process to effect a cure. That beginning is to utilize and emphasize the word "healing" as an antidote. Healing must take its place with all the other code words in educational jargon so that schools can first get better. Then, we can begin to think about getting back to work.

So, as we seek the "clearing," a Lichtung in which Being declares itself, Steiner (1978) suggests that Heidegger would remind us that "our normal habits of speech, of definitional logic, of causal relation and verifiability, must be repudiated and we need to rethink truth as something beyond the "conformity with subjective, rational, cognizance." (p. 71) I believe that in order for

those of us who are interested in rethinking and understanding what is going on in schooling and to arrive at a "clearing," we need to arrive at a new truth. If we can accept that new truth that public schooling in America is sick; that it fosters spiritual, physiological, emotional, and intellectual weakness; and, that it merely exacerbates currrent social and cultural problems, then we will hopefully embrace the healing cuuriculum as the antidote for those ills.

So, in order to go forward to discover the healing curriculum, let us first take a step backward and determine the sickness in schooling. We will proceed upon that path with Chapter 2, where we will more closely examine the schooling sickness.

CHAPTER II

THE LANGUAGE OF SICKNESS

There are many sicknesses in society and there are many sicknesses in schools. Society is plagued with violent crime, injustice, and war. Schools are besieged with mindless routines, stress, and boredom. Ostensibly, it all begins with the mind and how we come to consciousness and knowing. Freire (1990) feels that one of the most tragic ills of our societies is "the bureaucratization of the mind" (p. 37). In order to overcome this sickness there must be a creative spark, but he offers us the premonition that "there is no creativity without rupture, a break from the old, without conflict in which you have to make a decision" (p. 37). The problem with the schooling sickness is that so few of the leaders in education can think beyond or outside of the present paradigm of ineffectual notions of how schooling should be done. As Horton (1990) tells us:

> The problem is that most people don't allow themselves to experiment with ideas, because they assume that they have to fit into the system. . . . most people can't think outside the socially approved way of doing things and consequently don't open up their minds to making any kind of discoveries. . . . you have to think outside the conventional framework. (p. 40)

One of the sicknesses in schooling is the reification of the idea to "do as little as possible to attain the highest reward possible." Little value is placed in the means or processes of coming to knowledge, only the ends of grades and degrees. Students do not want to know how they "know," merely the right answer to the question, so they can make the grade, pass the test, and get the diploma or the degree. All this is to be attained with as little commitment and effort as possible. Schooling may just be that rare commodity that people will pay more for, if they will only be given less of it. I believe that if college courses were offered where students could attend half the customary number of classes provided they paid a higher tuition for those courses, those courses would be the first to fill. Schooling has become an undesirable experience for too many students today. Tragically, those students errantly equate their educations with that schooling process, and too often willingly surrender those precious opportunities to educate themselves. We must remain cognizant that becoming educated has little to do with schooling. (i.e., "going to school") The two are not synonymous and we need to cease speaking of the dichotomous concepts in the same breath. Moreover, it is possible that public education schooling efficaciously impedes and obstructs any real education from occurring.

The sickness is an insidious infection that defies detection. But it eventually manifests itself in the contagion of frustration, apathy, depression, antipathy, social dysfunction, and violence. Mengert (1993) maintains that intellectual growth is not among the main activities going on in public schools. He says that schools are "all about behavior modification, attendance, tardies, and test scores. . . .students do not get to find out who they are. . . . it's more of a screening process for the industrial machine."

Why is it that society's main issues (e.g., violent crime, robbery, diseases, divorce, amorality, etc.) are not the main educational and schooling issues? Why is it that these exigencies become less important in the schooling setting than irrelevant standardized tests, grades, and report cards? Whose agendas and purposes are being served with this "trivialization" of educational, social, and cultural issues? (Purpel, 1989, pp. 2-3)

Purpel feels that the public has an enormous number of unrealistic and possibly contradictory expectations for the schools, such as: "to discipline our children and support and encourage their independence;" to teach them to "learn to love their country, to honor and respect authority and tradition;" to help them "develop initiative and critical thinking;" to help them to deal with "their difficulties with nutrition, health, sexuality, death,

morality, interpersonal relations, the maturation process, and sibling rivalry;" to "provide community for the student and to be a focus of community life for adults;" to teach students to "participate in sports, to be musical, to sew, cook, clean, do woodworking, printing, to paint, sculpt, and dance;" to provide "psychological, vocational, and social counseling;" and finally, to "provide opportunities for exercise, celebration, play, hobbies, eating, ritual, friendship, and competition" (p.4) This is part of the sickness in that many of these expectations are unrealistic and sets up the entire schooling process for failure as the schools are just unable to deliver.

Just as a patient who is unwilling to accept his or her condition, the public is unwilling to admit the severity of the schooling condition. Purpel uses the language of sickness when he describes the public's acceptance of low standards for schools. He feels the answer is "probably a combination of inertia, lack of awareness, conscious acceptance, as well as deception, delusion, and avoidance" (p.6) He concludes that we are suspicious of the intellectual process itself, just as many patients are suspicious of the healing process and the craft of the healer. Those suspicions can only hinder the patient getting better just as Purpel's assertion that the public's acceptance of low standards

"represents our impulse to restrain the educational process" (p.6).

Purpel feels that "when we talk of education we are simultaneously talking about culture; when we propose changes in education, or when we propose not making changes, we are making moral statements" (p.8). He continues by saying that issues such as school segregation, selective admission, grading, tracking are "cultural and moral issues rather that educational ones and by naming them educational, our culture shows its discomfort with making moral choices" (p.8). It also shows our unwillingness to address the sickness of the situation; to "speak" the real underlying cause of the illness rather than to just superficially treat the symptoms.

It is possible that there is an intent to keep the public's children ignorant and sick rather than offer a real remedy to present schooling direction. Purpel speaks of the position of some "that we would be better off with most people being acculturated and socialized, with only a carefully selected and prepared minority being able to deal responsibly with the ambiguities and sophistication of serious learning" (p. 10). Gatto (1992) is saying as much when he asserts that compulsory schooling is all about keeping up the economy and guaranteeing a steady "supply of helpless people . . .to pour out of our schools each year" (p.9).

In essence, the schooling process keeps the atmosphere of sickness intact by refusing to acknowledge the link between educational problems and cultural issues. Purpel says that "the educational establishment has done us all a disservice by refusing to connect our serious and fundamental cultural malaise to educational issues" (p.23). He feels that:

> . . .our primary task in education is not to throw out premature, distracting, and obfuscating solutions to ill-conceived problems but is instead to clarify the questions that are of most worth. These questions can help educators develop appropriate responses, but they must be questions rooted not in the existing arsenal of the education establishment but in the most vital concerns of the culture's and individual's search for meaning. . . When one considers this kind of crisis and how the schools have responded to it, one would have to conclude that the schools are intellectually and morally bankrupt (p. 23).

It is tragic that this knowledge is the very knowledge we need most when we find ourselves in a crisis. As Purpel (1989) says:

> . . .at times of crisis, we yearn to help, to ease pain, and are often frustrated by the difficulty or impossibility of doing anything. The sense of impotency in the face of suffering reflects in a vivid manner the depths of what it means to be powerless, for one feels rage, guilt, and dehumanization when one is not afforded the opportunity to participate in the healing process when one is denied the responsibility to help other people's lives become whole. (p. 44)

As a teacher attempting to do just that, I readily concur that the emotions I experienced in my personal struggle with this idea of powerlessness were exactly those feelings. At times, the waves of emotions became overwhelming, effectively shutting down my ability to concentrate and focus on much of anything. In addition, I began experiencing extreme physiological symptoms that were very disconcerting. I remember at least four times in a six-month period that I awoke in the middle of the night in a cold sweat, heart pounding, head throbbing, accompanied with extreme shortness of breath. Doctors later told me the symptoms were indicative of a heart attack. Those experiences were frightful and emotionally debilitating. They also helped me to understand the fallacy in the admonition to those unfortunate stressed-out souls who are often told, "just don't let it get to you." My feelings of disquiet and persecution invaded my very subconscious and attacked my spiritual well-being.

I think Purpel (1989) continues to talk about the schooling sickness when he says that:

> . . .the culture and the schools have made a great deal of the dangers and perils of acting out of guilt because it is unhealthy to do so. They have done far less about speaking to the consequences of moral irresponsibility; they seem less concerned with the 'illness' of avoiding the consequences of mutuality than with the 'illness' of personal anguish. (p. 45)

Unfortunately, students and teachers have little time to open dialogues on such issues. We are much too busy in the teaching routines and the testing processes which are really all about manipulating scores so that administrators can give the appearance of success in the schools.

Schools suffer from a variety of ailments. A beginning list of those problems include violence and various forms of disruptive behavior, dropouts, intellectual apathy, drug use and abuse, and a plethora of health problems from obesity to anorexia and depression to hyperactivity. One particular scenario could be cited here and as tragic as it is, it is still only one of the pictures of troubled young people. Los Angeles Times writer, Shari Roan (1993) in an article printed by The Charlotte Observer talks about the present generation of teen girls and how their life-style has placed them on a freeway to serious health problems and self-destruction. She reports that:

> While research and knowledge concerning women's health is proliferating, the health future of the nation's young women is looking very dim. The problem is not about breast cancer and other diseases that affect mostly women, but rather about the self-destructive behavior of teens. Warner-Lambert, the mega-pharmaceutical company sponsored a conference recently in Washington, D.C., and the main concern of the conference is how we can learn to manage our self-destructive behavior and to control how much pain we inflict upon ourselves. (p.1A)

Health professionals claim that this is prevalent among adolescent women and that they are engaging in "far riskier health behaviors - and in greater numbers than any generation of women." Some of those behaviors include "high rates of substance abuse, smoking, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, eating disorders, and depression" (p.1A). The article informs us that teen girls often do not have health insurance, and that an increasing number are homeless or single parents existing at the poverty level while simultaneously being bombarded by media messages that stress being physically perfect. The article continues with several disturbing statistics. Lung cancer has become the leading killer of women now that young women are smoking; one in five female high school seniors smokes daily according to Girls Inc. (formerly known as Girls Clubs of America); one survey asserts that "one in four girls age 12 to 17 reported using alcohol in the previous 30 days; "for both sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy also continue to increase among teenagers. Half of all high school senior girls say that they have had sex, more than three million teens- male and female- contract an STD each year;" more than half of all teenage girls think they are fat; 20% report using diet pills to lose weight; half of all teenage girls don't get enough exercise; and teen pregnancy alone puts young women at greater

risk for anemia, toxemia, and later risk of cervical cancer" (p. 1A).

I agree with Roan that the most distressing aspect of the situation is the low self-esteem and prevalent depression among young women. LaWanda Ravoira, a health educator in Florida suggests in the article that some girls get pregnant intentionally. She relates that, "too often these young women look to relieve their pain in extremely self-destructive ways. They tell me they have sex because they are looking for love and attention. Society has not shown these girls that there is a reason to avoid pregnancy" (p. 1A).

There is some good news, however, in that more awareness to the problem might shift the focus in education to teaching more about healthy behaviors and disease prevention to teen girls. Experts note that traditional medicine may not be the way to treat the problem. Even though there are those in the medical profession who are beginning to specialize in women's and adolescent health, the more practical place to begin is utilizing school nurses, trained peer counselors, outreach workers, and adult mentor programs.

As tragic as this scenario is, there is indication that even worse problems exist in the schools. Kevin O'Brien, (1993) a staff reporter for the Charlotte Observer writes that in a recent opinion

poll taken by the Charlotte Observer and WSOC-TV, the greatest perceived problem in the schools was crime and violence. 42% of the people polled said that "crime and violence were the principle threat to better public schools, far outranking "quality of teachers"-17%; and, "keeping up with new technology"-12%" (p.1A).

So, what is the answer to the problem? Sadly, the most accepted solution is a "get-tough" approach, advocating "increased parental involvement, better teaching control of the classes and criminal penalties for children who bring guns to campus and for their parents" (p. 6A). In at least one school system in North Carolina, hand-held metal detectors will be used in middle and high schools. There has been a governor's task force on school violence which asserts the problem is prevalent throughout urban and rural schools. New, more punitive laws are being debated and legislated, such as making it a misdemeanor for anyone under 18 to possess a handgun; requiring school principals to report violence on campus immediately to local authorities; making it a felony to bring a handgun onto school property; fining parents who don't safely store weapons in the home; and making it easier for schools to expel students." (O'Brien,1993, p. 6A)

I do not think that the solution will be found within the reactionary measures stated above. Making more rules and laws

that will label, name, and turn even more young people into criminals will do little to deter those pre-offenders and merely banish those who are caught to the court and prison systems which are arguably even worse than the school setting. The solution lies not from without, but from within. There is great need for healing in the schools and within the individuals who participate in the schools, namely the students and teachers. Who can argue with the need for healing in the schools after understanding that the problems cited above are widespread across the country, in both rural and urban settings? If we could all agree that the time has come to develop and emphasize a healing language for public schools, then we are taking the very most prerequisite steps to getting the schools moving in the right direction. That direction, of course, is toward "getting well."

Before we can ever begin to expect young women and men to get back to work with their education, we have to get them healthy. We have to overcome their feelings of sickness such as low self-esteem, depression, loneliness, and low expectations of themselves. Since schools are supposedly all about education, we must decide soon what is more important in the curriculum. Is learning grammar more important than preventing the contraction of an STD? Is Chemistry lab more important than considering the

divineness of the human body? Is learning Algebra more important than learning how to avoid an unwanted pregnancy?

SYMPTOMS OF THE SCHOOLING SICKNESS

The following is a list of words that can be and usually are associated with sickness: anger, conflict, illness, death, anxiety, stress, worry, negative attitudes and beliefs, negative emotions and feelings, depression, fear, frustration, suppression, repression, oppression, ailment, helplessness, hopelessness, self-fulfilling prophecies of ill health, pain, chronic illness, self-defeating behavior, neglect, pressure, misuse, abuse, tension, loss, denial, disease, failure, sedentary (life-styles), lack of, need for, guilt, resentment, weakness, disorder, refusal, problem, violence, suicidal, rejection, isolation, despised, forgotten, ignored, epidemic, confusion, emptiness, void, darkness, suffering, jealousy, pride, competition, violence, dishonesty, cheating, punishment, shame, guilt, and obsession. Of course, the words are relatively meaningless and impotent in and of themselves. Sadly, when they manage to worm their way into the very core of our conscious and subconscious mind, we are prone to surrender control to them and symptoms are sure to surface.

One such symptom of an unhealthy characteristic of schooling is embodied in the feeling of resentment and jealousy among teachers and principals toward other teachers as they try to improve themselves with furthering their own education. In six years at my high school, I felt more negative than positive vibrations from colleagues as I completed my Masters Degree in Education and began work in a Doctoral program. I think it is a sickness that those who choose not to further their own education resent peers who do. Why would teachers begrudge the efforts of others from doing the very thing that they purportedly try to foster in their students? Why is it that furthering one's education is not an occasion for celebration? Why is it instead a situation that evokes feelings of resentment and jealousy? I believe that it is nothing more than the adults continuing the behavior we learned so well in school as students ourselves. That behavior is an outgrowth of the competition paradigm so prevalent in schooling which advocates the mistaken notion that higher grades give the person more value or more worth as a human being. Moreover, those higher grades might mean that the individual will capture more of the scarce rewards. The accomplishments of students, as well as teachers, should be measured (if they must be measured at all) against their own prior performances, not against other

students or against some arbitrary type of comparative group standards.

Schooling reifies and validates that notion by assigning class rank and awarding various honors and freedoms to those "high ranking" students. So, rather than more education and new ideas being welcomed into a cooperative atmosphere among teachers and students, we just perpetuate the sick emotions of resentment, envy, and jealousy intrinsic in the competition model of schooling. Everyone and everything is compared, arranged, named, labeled, categorized in an insidious way that leaves students and teachers in the cul-de-sac called comparison.

The entrapment in this scenario is that value is not given to a person as a human being, as an individual created in a Divine plan. Value is only attained when a comparison is made to another. Thus, students are compared to other students, rather than to their previous work; teachers are compared to other teachers, rather than to individual standards and goals. The result is a sickness of competition and comparison where harmony and cooperation are more the exception than the norm.

Constantly comparing ourselves to others to ascertain our self-worth only leaves us vain or bitter, because there will always be those greater or lesser than ourselves. Why is it that schooling

insists on ignoring this wisdom passed down through the ages and continues to endorse and encourage competition and comparison? When will this pernicious paradigm perish? If it ever does, it won't come too soon for those students and teachers who feel the sickness of never being able to "measure up."

In the healing curriculum, the students would be encouraged to measure themselves against their own prior knowledge and to feel better about what new levels they are attaining each day. Notions that there are students smarter or dumber, better or worse than they are should be de-emphasized. This idea is parallel to the concept that a patient should be more concerned with his or her own recovery from an illness than the progress or lack of progress of other patients. It does the patients little good when they look around and see others getting better while the mirror only reflects illness back to them. All they want is for the feeling of healing to occur within their own bodies. Is it any different when students hear the accolades and chastisements of fellow students in the midst of their own struggles in coming to knowledge? Isn't what they really need to hear is how they are individually getting better with the information to be learned? I think so and the healing curriculum would certainly address that individuality in the education process.

TEACHING DISHONESTY AND CHEATING

"Do not close your eyes to acts or events that are not always measurable." (Siegel, 1986)

Lawrence Kohlberg and Rochelle Mayer (1972) assert that the most important issue confronting educators and educational theorists is ascertaining the destination for the educational process. They argue that well-defined goals are essential in deciding which direction education is to take and in deciding the value of various methods and programs. One goal, then, that must rise to the surface is an abatement of the incessant testing mentality in schools today. This testing obsession is not only a red herring for the real purpose of education, but a deterrent to the students' education as well. I think the "ultimate significance" of the educational process is the stirring of students' desire to seek truth, about oneself and the world. The testing process is an insidious device that immediately names and labels students and creates such stress for them that they not only miss out on that ultimate significance, but unabashedly resort to "cheating" to deal with the pressure. This is a sickness that must be cured.

The American Heritage Dictionary (1985) defines cheating as: to deceive by trickery; swindle; mislead; fool; mislead; or to act

dishonestly. (p. 262). In the classroom, however, cheating is defined by looking on another student's paper; copying "answers" (right or wrong) from another's test; working together on individual classwork or homework; or in general, getting answers to questions in some inappropriate manner. In the classroom, the definition of cheating is arbitrary and contingent on the school's or teacher's concept of what cheating entails. As noted above, it can be anything from students working on homework together to whispering during a test. (As one teacher knowingly explained to me, "if they're whispering during a test, they have to be cheating.")

In the classroom, cheating is treated as a serious transgression with devastating consequences for the student involved. For example, the Iredell-Statesville Board of Education (1992) in its "supervision of students" (10.4620) states that persons who cheat: 1) "shall not receive credit on work accomplished by cheating;" 2) shall have parents notified by the principal; 3) risk losing membership in honor societies and other organizations; 4) risk failing the subject due to loss of credit; and, 5) risk their standing in sports and other extracurricular activities."

But there are even worse consequences. A student accused of cheating is treated much like a patriot guilty of treason.

Humiliation and loss of self-esteem are only part of the
punishment as reputation is injured; grades and class rank can
plummet; admittance into honor organizations can be denied; and,
future dreams and aspirations can be thwarted. Even with teacher
discretion, everyone seems to know who cheated and the student,
in a sense, is "branded." Certainly, to trick, deceive, or cheat
someone is not a desired behavior in our society, but it is
accepted, rewarded, and even glamorized if the dishonesty occurs
because of a person's ability to be clever and "outwit" or "outfox"
another.

The dreadful connotations placed on similar behavior within
the school setting is a sickness that needs to be addressed because
the students have been placed in a contrived setting with contrived
knowledge and led to believe the notion that there are "right"
answers to all the questions. If they miss the answers, then they
fall back, lose recognition, and are labeled with being "wrong."

All this is just another part of the sickness as we have placed
so much emphasis and pressure for students to conform to a
particular definition of dishonesty, while in society, people who
"outwit," "outfox," "pull one over on someone," (in essence,
cheating) are not so bad, and in some situations, even glamourized.
This approach to honesty within the school setting is hardly

compassionate and maybe even insidious in that so much emphasis

is placed on individual scores and test results that some students

deal with that emphasis by breaking the "code." It is as if we "set

the student up" for the temptation and then proceed to ruin them if

they yield in a particularly pressured situation.

As Purpel (1989) writes:

> The stress on competition and individuality narrows and
> undermines this impulse to care and nourish. Indeed, the
> culture and the schools have had to develop techniques to
> become immune to the kind of caring that deflect us from
> competition and the pursuit of individual success and
> achievement. (p. 40)

This sickness has been created and fostered by the schooling

mentality that students must be either right or wrong, labeled and

named, grouped and categorized, graded and ranked, and compared

to other students. Why have we designed such a heartless and

potentially devastating paradigm and then place unsuspecting

students to compete and be successful in it. Just by the very

nature of the hierarchical structure of the grading and ranking

process, there can only be one "top" student in the school. What

does that mean to the other students who are not the top student?

What about those few top students who graduate "with honors?"

Do the remaining vast majority of students graduate without

honor? Where is the compassion and understanding in this scene? What happens to those students who actually believe that such a system has truth and merit and enter society thinking that because they made top grades they are "smart" and those who made poor grades are "dumb?" When students set their course in life based on this one dimensional structure, they are setting sail with a compass that gives them fallacious readings.

Is this scenario a conscious or unwitting creation of those who call themselves educators? Kohlberg and Mayer (1972) would probably contend that the culprit is society's advocacy of the cultural transmission ideology of competition, competencies, and objectives. This ideology emphasizes maintaining the social system while meting out individual rewards. Winning is the imperious implication in this design while the consequences of losing are tacitly understood. In order to determine exactly which individuals will be the winners, this approach relies predominantly on testing and other achievement measurements.

With such an emphasis on gaining an advantage on one's peers, it is little wonder that the notion that someone might be gaining unfairly has become such a diabolical deed deserving of catastrophic consequences. This situation is hardly a quality of the romanticism or progressivism ideologies and certainly not of a

healing orientation. The concepts of cooperation, generosity, and community togetherness in the classroom are largely squelched by the western cultural transmission ideology. The idea of scarcity fuels this competitive impetus in the classroom. Regrettably, the situation is worsening as the testing mentality becomes even more pervasive and the students continue to be opponents rather than teammates in the struggle for grades, scholarships, and "cultural capital."

And yet, it is this pressure of individual achievement and competition that creates and nurtures this environment for cheating. It seems to be widespread in schools everywhere in America. In an Associated Press article by Carole Feldman (1993), it is clear that not only do students cheat, they are admitting it as well. Feldman reports that "cheating is pervasive among the nation's top high school students, according to a survey of juniors and seniors with at least a B average. Nearly 80% admitted some dishonesty, such as copying someone else's homework or cheating on an exam." The findings were based on a 1993 survey conducted by Who's Who Among American High School Students. Of the 1, 957 students who responded "80% said cheating was common at their schools and 78% admitted to doing some themselves." Feldman quotes Lew Armistead, spokesman for the National Association of

Secondary School Principals, as saying that "kids are seeing all around them that elected officials, business leaders, all of us are taking shortcuts in life, and we need to understand that they're going to follow our examples."

In another article in The Los Angles Times, Michael Moore (1992) tries to explain why students do cheat. He cites a 1990 survey, conducted at the University of Miami, Ohio which purports that "nine of 10 students there cheated by methods ranging from copying a classmate's answers during an exam to plagiarizing term papers." Moore writes that it is difficult for many people to sympathize with students who cheat, but states that " our institutions of higher learning also have a responsibility: to provide the kind of education that is not only interesting but stimulating. They have largely failed this mission by choosing to become diploma mills." Moore says that "the dynamics of the 'system' are to blame. A majority of students don't cheat because they are lazy, or hung over. They mostly cheat in classes they are forced to take. . . . and that are boring." Moore continues by saying that "professors are the primary reason that cheating is allowed to grow year after year. If students are getting away with cheating, it's usually the result of a lack of vigilance on the part of the professor." He mentions the Georgia Tech story where students

"created a fictitious student. They wrote his papers, took his tests. 'He' graduated in three years with a bachelor of science degree."

Also, ("Naval Academy cheating," 1994) informs us that "a sweeping Navy investigation into one of the largest cheating scandals ever at the Naval Academy in Annapolis will implicate more than 125 midshipmen, or about 15% of this year's graduating class, Navy officials said." While some of the students "merely received a computer message urging them to study a particular question on a previous year's test," others could be accused of worse cheating and "could face expulsion and criminal charges for stealing exams" (p. 5A).

In yet another article on cheating, Kibler & Kibler (1993) also analyze the motives for cheating. They claim that students face such a competitive and intense atmosphere on college campuses that they resort to cheating to get through the system. They surmise that cheating is becoming the preferred choice among students. They cite a study done at Rutgers University in 1991 in which 67% of the students responding from 31 highly selective colleges and universities admitted to cheating in college. Ultimately, Kibler & Kibler felt that students cheated because they were more motivated to cheat than to consider moral and ethical

considerations. In addition, they pinpointed low self-esteem, poor self-confidence, and fear of failure as the main reasons students resorted to this type of academic dishonesty. It is definitely a sickness to be healed, and one way is of course to treat the individuals with counseling to help them to build their self-esteem and to nurture their sense of self-worth.

While the above reasons may indeed play a part, I believe that the situation is still exacerbated largely by a societal impetus to gain an advantage over one's peers. As Purpel (1989) reminds us:

> When we call cooperative and collaborative acts of research and study 'cheating,' we insist that students take individual responsibility for what they claim to know. Students are neither asked to take very much responsibility in helping other students to learn, nor are they encouraged to note how their gains are often at the expense of their classmates. In addition, playing the competitive game of schooling means in part not allowing one to feel sorry for the losers since losers are also competitors. To show sympathy for them would give one's competitors support and might sap one's resolve and determination. (p. 40)

In this scenario, the student is unceasingly pushed to perform and achieve, but not necessarily in an interdependent, cooperative, and community spirit. Purpel goes on to say that:

> Although we are aware of the individuality of knowledge, of the value of group study and interaction, and the importance of students sharing their ideas, we actually discourage these

educationally sound practices because they interfere with the practice of individual grading. Students are, in fact, urged to compete with each other in the classroom--entrance into certain tracks or programs (e.g., reading groups, college track, gifted and talented programs) is competitive and limited, as is college admission through standardized test scores and course grades......The insight that schools' prime educational approach consists of students trying to please teachers by getting the 'right answer' is one which also reveals how students are put in a position of competing with each other on who can most please teacher. (pp. 32-33)

The argument is also about the notion that there is the "right" answer to every question and that it is important for some students to get that answer, but not others. In addition, students must arrive at that answer only in approved ways; usually, that means students are not to share their knowledge or even how they came to that answer, because they might lose or gain an advantage over their peers, or because it might lower or raise their grade or classrank. If they do, it is called cheating. This is no different from a patient discovering the right answer to good health and refusing to share that answer with other sick people. This is exactly what the schools teach; protect your answers, keep your paper covered, and do not let others get the answers from you. If you do and you get caught, you will be penalized yourself and lose some of those scarce and hard to achieve awards. All this does is add to the sickness.

This contagious illness of students being "cheaters" can even infect the roles of teachers. It certainly happened to me. While I readily admit that I have told my share of lies and misleading statements in my life, somehow in my schooling, I managed to preserve my notions of honor and truthfulness when it came to the idea of "cheating." I seemed to have compartmentalized the definition to the school and classroom setting and especially when testing and grading were involved. As an elementary and high school student, I was always cognizant of not "looking on others papers" and certainly did not even entertain the temptation of "cheating" on tests. I probably even took the concept to the extreme and positioned myself in my seat and covered my papers so that others would not be able to look onto my desk. I did not consider cheating in school as a student, so you might understand that when I was accused of cheating as a teacher (or rather unethical conduct in administering an End-of-Course Test), I became defensive and took the charge as a personal attack on my character.

The charge came about in the Spring of 1992. In actuality, it was nothing more than an anomaly in the distribution of the test materials to a class that was unusual in its dynamics, which subsequently slowed the administering of the test. However, when

a teacher is being watched and stalked by a principal for anything that can be used against that him or her, misunderstandings and unusual circumstances can be twisted to give the appearance that something illegal has occurred. This was exactly what happened to me. In addition, the superintendent, without any further investigation or verification from any other source, formally placed a reprimand in my permanent workfile and then proceeded (with the warning that if I did it again), a number of serious consequences could happen to me, the worst of which could be termination, the revocation of my teaching certificate, criminal charges levied against me and/or put into jail! All this was stated because he thought there was an appearance that I had cheated somehow! The charges caught me completely off guard, but the manner in which the superintendent "assumed" my guilt and the way the initial investigation took place was the most troubling of the entire episode.

Concerning the investigation, students were individually called out of other exam periods to make statements against me without the knowledge or permission of their parents or guardians in a "gestapo-style" interrogation process that scared and confused them and which caused them concern for my personal well-being. The assistant principal who conducted the investigation said

things to them such as: "your friends have said these things about Mr. Sipes and you need to go ahead and say them too;"or, "we've caught Mr. Sipes doing something dishonest, so you can go ahead and tell the truth about what he did," etc.. Later, these students came forth and signed affidavits (with their parents present) that they had been pressured to say things against me and had been afraid they would get into trouble if they did not tell the assistant principal what he wanted to hear. Also, two of those students volunteered to come to the grievance proceeding to testify in my behalf, and while they both were impeccable in their testimony exonerating me, I was deeply outraged at the way the attorneys for the administrators were allowed to badger and harass the students with their questions as they attempted to confuse and disorient them. It was despicable to witness adults putting the students through such blatant and heartless tactics trying to protect the administrators who were arguably guilty of their own type of unethical conduct. Fortunately, neither the students nor I had done anything wrong to cover up. They simply told the truth and stuck to their stories, despite the attorneys' efforts to trick them and they turned in flawless statements in my behalf.

Such was not the case when it came time for the adult administrators to make their statements. Their accounts

contradicted each others' as well as previous statements they had made, both oral and written. In the end, though, as I mentioned earlier, it made no difference. The outcome of a process that reeked of such injustice, lack of consideration for the facts, and of thwarting justice left me in an indignant outrage, but with no place to go to either vent my anger or to clear the smear on my credentials as a teacher and professional.

The idea of cheating and being called a cheater troubled me as much as any aspect of the affair. This notion of cheating is particularly indigenous to schools. As a student growing up in the public school system, I was always horrified of the humiliation and ostracism that must occur to the lost soul of a cheater. The issue here, though, is greater than just an account of one person's experience and ideas on cheating. As educational leaders, we need to go beyond just perpetuating the same old system. Educators on the college level must prepare future teachers for the struggle in which they are about to be engaged. They must also become more vocal in letting the political leaders and general public understand the sickness of competition and testing gone out of control in the schools.

It does not have to be this way. In the healing curriculum, every effort would be made to create an environment of sharing,

teamwork, and cooperation rather than the competition paradigm so prevalent today. In such an atmosphere, cheating would become unnecessary since no advantage would be gained over another student by making a higher grade. An ideology of healing and compassion is a viable alternative and a much needed one. The curriculum emphases could be on: 1) cooperation more than competition; 2) "getting along" with one another in an ever shrinking world rather than "getting ahead" of each other; 3) subscribing to the notion that nurturing moral reasoning is more important than thoughtlessly and blindly adhering to rules and values of past society, regardless of their merit; 4) viewing knowledge as a dynamic discovery process rather than a static cultural given; and, 5) accepting the concept that education is developmental, both intellectually and morally rather than just a transmission of fragmentary facts, rules, and values collected from the past. In this type of healing-oriented curriculum, the vision of education as an exercise in developing the individual's understanding of moral and ethical principles would come into sharper focus and the atmosphere for cheating would quickly dissipate.

In the healing curriculum, the classroom would become an environment of cooperation with students working together on

projects without the ominous cloud of grades always darkening the light of ethics, principles, and truths. The students would become "questioners" of life's paradoxes and society's shortcomings rather than merely containers or receptacles to be filled with facts and figures of past culture. Also, since the aim of education would not be to create winners and losers in the classroom, a concept like "cheating" could not even be born. Cheating would have no reason to exist.

This scenario is not an unattainable outcome in the classroom if we can begin to think more of the healing curriculum and the opportunities it can offer students. Of course, teachers must take a stand to resist the testing frenzy whenever possible. Sometimes, though, this can result in misfortune for the teacher. That is exactly what happened when I personally tried to incorporate this philosophy into my classes as an English teacher.

I utilized multiple assessment devices and practices such as daily journals, writing portfolios, composition books for assignments, oral presentations, hands-on projects, and more. However, because I abstained from administering traditional multiple-choice, true-false, short-answer, and sentence completion "tests," the principal adamantly and repeatedly accused me of refusing to *test* my students. Her posture persisted

throughout my summative evaluations and the grievance procedure. It did not matter that the students were supportive of my techniques. As a matter of fact, when she discovered that the students had written evaluations praising my procedures, she quickly confiscated them (as well as the students' personal composition notebooks) and refused to allow anyone to see them. The students tried to resist her, but she told them that she could do anything she wanted to do with their property. My letters mailed to the superintendent requesting that the papers and student property be returned to them or myself were never answered. Unless the principal destroyed the papers and notebooks (which is likely), she still has them to this day. If this type of mentality of repression, subjugation, and subversion is so documented even once, how many more examples and variations of this scenario must there be? This type of behavior is a sickness in our schools and we must take a stand against such despotic notions of power and control.

Teachers must give the students as much freedom as creatively possible in determining what it is to be learned and how that learning will be evaluated. "Personalizing" the lessons for the students should become a priority with the emphasis not on the grade received, but rather, the principles and truths the students

can "internalize." The students could then leave the classroom never knowing the need for cheating, while developing a free and healthy character on a journey to understand themselves as philosophers trying to find universal meaning for their lives.

THE MEAT MENTALITY

The prevailing attitude of educators and the community toward schooling and education is not unlike the ostensibly ubiquitous "meat mentality" of western culture. Even though it would take a very uninformed person who has not heard of the claims that humans eating animal flesh could cause them serious health problems, the culture not only patronizes the burger and various meat places, but encourages and advocates their existence. Apparently, it does not matter that a plethora of human ailments, such as heart, liver, and kidney disease are linked to meat consumption, or that the planet's rainforests are daily being decimated in order to provide grazing land for the animals to be consumed. The meat mentality insists that we ignore all the research, all the visible and documented evidence, even the intuitive, tacit feelings that something is "not right with this picture," and continue to consume massive quantities of meat, with little to no regard to the human and planetary consequences.

The schooling mentality is certainly parallel to this type of thinking. Even though it would take very uninformed educators to be unaware that the prevailing schooling process today is not much more than the paradigm of the turn-of-the-century factory worker preparation, surely they realize that the demands of the culture and society of 1993 are far removed from the requirements of 1893. And yet, schools are still being run today based on that century old model. In the meantime, the contemporary issues of preparing students for the life that awaits them in the 21st century are being shunted and obscured, impervious to the individual and collective demise of humans all around us.

The meat mentality screams to us that if we stop eating meat, we will not be healthy, the economy will suffer, and our quality of life will plunge. The schooling mentality purports that the schools need more controls and restrictions on student freedoms and movement, more structure and fragmentation in curriculum, and, of course, more testing, labeling, categorizing, and naming of students as objects. Humans are more than unthinking, blind consumers of products. Students are more than mere receptacles to be filled with facts. And yet, this situation continues to prevail.

This momentum of unconsciousness and non-reflection about the vital issues of physiological, educational, emotional, and spiritual health must be slowed and redirected. Those who are financially threatened by the prospects of Americans eating less meat must have faith that alternatives to meat can be introduced and that they can still make their profits, not to mention other benefits such as healthier people, lower health costs, etc.. To date, few are willing to be the trend changers and slow down the direction. In schooling, those administrators and rule-makers must have faith that their financially secure positions won't be jeopardized by a healing mentality in the schools and that there needs to be more opportunities for students to learn how to learn, rather than memorizing and "performing" on standardized tests, just so the administrators' lucrative paychecks can be justified. Of course, society can continue to endorse the sickness associated with particular life-styles or collectively decide to get better. Schools can continue to emphasize those characteristics which are producing "sick" students or choose a curriculum which acknowledges the inherent sickness in schooling and begin to take action toward healing.

VICTIMIZATION: VICTIMIZERS AND VICTIMS

In medicine and other healing environments (e.g., counseling, psychological, spiritual), the word victim is often used. We hear and read of victims of torture, victims of sexual abuse, victims of floods, victims of earthquakes, victims of hunger and homelessness, victims of contagious diseases (e.g., AIDS), even victims of stress. One area, though, where the victimization language is not used as readily is in the context of the schooling process. We need to posit the notion that students and teachers are also victims and that the schooling process is the environment in which the victimization is taking place.

If we, as educators are ever going to help the tremendous numbers of these "schooling victims," we must begin to at least acknowledge the victimization language in the schooling scenario. It is the first step in helping students and teachers adjust from the schooling mentality to a life beyond school.

Gudorf (1992) helps us to broach this contexturalizing of victimization within the schooling setting by stating what she considers the most alarming and also the most common aspect of victimization (i.e., "the failure of victimizers to recognize what atrocities they perpetrate," and "the extent to which victimizers are unconscious of the evil they do" (p. 2). She continues:

This lack of consciousness is seldom total, of course, and is often deliberately cultivated. Many of the religious rationales for victimization are just that-not the initiating cause of victimization, but carefully constructed defenses for continuing practices that benefit limited social groups at the expense of others. (p. 2)

In the schooling environment, one group of victimizers are the administrators and policy-makers who control the lives of the teachers and students. The sickness in the way schooling is carried out is that this comparatively small and highly paid social/power group controls the lives of students and teachers so completely. Of course, some administrators are more benign than others, but in far too many schools, student and teacher movements are so regimented that one must get special permission to even go to the restroom or get a drink of water. The principal at my school, for example, confined even the teachers to their classrooms at the end of each day! We were not allowed to leave for any of the usual teacher routines (e.g.,restroom break, mimeographing papers, conferring with a colleague, etc.) prompting at least one teacher to call the office to be allowed to leave her room to go use the restroom! This type of victimizing not only denied us any semblance of being professionals in a supposedly professional setting, it effectively reduced many of the teachers to that of mischievous sneaks as they would hover just outside the

doors of their classrooms to engage in the "wickedness" of conversation, and just as soon as someone spotted the principal coming, they would all scurry back inside their rooms. It was a sad experience.

It is almost as if the "power players" forget the humanity of us all and somehow detach themselves from those whose lives are affected by their decisions and rules. Gudorf (1992) talks about this when she explains that:

> Ignorance of our common humanity is not random, but chosen and maintained through avoiding all that might lead us to identification with victims: physical proximity, common terms of address and description, shared institutions, knowledge of the other, and recognition of the injustice and unmerited and involuntary suffering present in our world. (p. 2)

Purpel (1989) offers a parallel comment on this aspect of victimization. He writes:

> For millions of Americans (or any other group) to live prosperously and contentedly while hundreds of millions struggle for minimal existence is absurd and unacceptable. If we consider the very real possibility that our prosperity is at the expense of human misery, then the situation is obscene and outrageous. Such a state of being does more than oppress and violate the basic human rights and needs of those in misery; the obscenity of poverty dehumanizes and abases the impulse of the prosperous to love, to show compassion, and to do justice (p. 88).

In schooling, administrators manage to avoid identifying with teachers and students by effectively employing the conditions stated above. Too often, we are only known to each other by our titles of Mr., Ms., and Dr. which as Mengert (1990) reminds us, relationships such as friendships cannot be made with titles. In effect, teachers do not have first names and are not "real" people, which, of course reduces the need to really get to know them as people. In my seven years as a teacher, it has been rare to ever hear an administrator address me or another teacher by his or her first name. I have questioned this practice on occasion, and have always been given the answer that "it is more professional" to use titles. Certainly, in the grievance hearing, no first names were used which effectively kept everyone involved from acknowledging and dealing with one another as human beings with needs and feelings. We were more like robots, impersonal and indifferent to one another, going through phantom motions.

Distancing ourselves, both emotionally and physically, is another way in which our common humanity can be ignored. In the schooling process, the administrators have removed themselves from the proximity of the teachers, the students, the classrooms, even the school premises, and placed themselves apart in a "central office." Just as Gudorf explains to us that it is easier for

the victimizers to victimize if they are somehow distanced and detached from their victims, so it is easier for administrators to impose rules and policies onto teachers and students that they themselves would not want to do, if they themselves are removed from them. When we discuss this idea of victimization and distance, we should also mention how schools themselves are part of the process. Schools enable students to learn how to detach themselves from the idea that others have feelings and rights. We should teach instead that when one infringes upon those feelings and rights of others, it makes that person a victimizer. As Purpel (1989) relates:

> Schools are usually reluctant to encourage students to develop deep emotional attachment to the issues or to dwell on the moral obscenity of these situations. Teachers are very reluctant and careful not to 'induce guilt' but rather to develop the distance that can allow one to have a sober and thoughtful understanding. (p. 41)

Unfortunately, this is the very framework which Gudorf says is the impetus for the victimization process. If it gets enacted in this manner in the classroom, the process is exacerbated with the way the administrative hierarchy is constructed. The administrators who have the power and control to effect change are removed from the actual students and teachers and their

classrooms. They have distanced themselves by placing their offices away from the very persons and places that they are administering. They call their location the central office. Their world is isolated from the school setting, and of course, the students and teachers. This became especially clear to me when I went to the first grievance hearing at the central office. Approximately twenty-five students showed up at the central office. It was amusing to me to see the consternation and concern in the eyes and faces of these "downtown" administrators. It was obvious that they felt very uncomfortable with students congregating in a place where they did not "belong." They did not know what to do with them. I was told later by a secretary who worked there, that it was rare that any students ever came to those offices, much less twenty-five at one time.

With this in mind, it becomes clear how easy it is for students to hurt and victimize themselves and others when they learn how to emotionally distance themselves from their peers and members of society. The concept holds true for the central office administrators who physically distance themselves from the very people they are supposedly helping and create harsh rules, curriculums, and mandates that are out of touch with the students and teachers. One way to overcome this sick direction of schooling

is to have a curriculum that would emphasize the notions of healing, compassion, and fairness. Alas, as Purpel (1989) reminds us, "there is seldom, if ever, a story of a school or university that sets as one of its prime continuous and long-range goals the cultivation of human caring and concern' (p. 41).

This victimization process is played out with the educational jargon of higher test scores and more teacher accountability, but is in actuality only more control measures to restrict the teaching freedom of the teachers in order to give the impression to the general public that the administrators are actually doing something. The teachers and the students end up as the victims engaged in a endless process of test-taking and comparisons of test results. This is all purported to be "education," but in reality is a large part of the sickness. For example, if student scores are ever construed as "low" in the ever-burgeoning testing frenzy, then administrators naturally look to the teachers for the solution to their problem. It is just another victimization vehicle that places the teacher in the role of the victim. If the students are not scoring high enough to make it appear that the administrators are doing their jobs, then it is the teachers' fault. They must not be teaching, and they must be scrutinized more closely. What and how these teachers teach must be controlled ever more tightly.

Gudorf (1992) feels there is an even more disturbing aspect of victimization when she discusses the acquiescence of the victims to the demands of the victimizers. She relates that:

> . . . .even more appalling and mystifying to most of us who examine the process of victimization is the extent to which victims become resigned to, accept, and even perpetuate the very victimization that oppresses them. (p.2)

This seems to be true for the teachers who feel that they are continually being weighted down with more responsibilities and duties, (in addition to the pressures associated with the testing frenzy) but still allow the process to continue. It seems especially valid for those teachers who were unceremoniously confined to their classrooms, but nevertheless, were willing to accept their demeaning situation.

Gudorf (1992) addresses this willingness with the comment:

> What makes this acceptance worse than the largely unconscious cruelty of victimizers is not any greater moral guilt or responsibility of victims; the victims operate with far less freedom, and therefore far less responsibility, for whatever actions they take within the situation of victimization. What makes their resignation seem worse to us is that once we recognize their resignation we understand that the structure of victimization is much more difficult to destroy than we previously realized: the structure is so powerful that its very victims have been sucked into supporting the evil which oppresses them. (pp. 2-3)

I feel it is important to echo at this juncture the words of Mengert (1993) who cautions us to not blame the victim. The victims may have internalized their victimization in ways that facilitate their acceptance of the situation, but they may not necessarily be aware of the fact that they are being victimized. With that idea in mind, Gudorf feels "the first major task in liberating victims is to help victims both see themselves as victims and accept that their liberation is possible" (p. 3). Purpel (1989) touches on this aspect of victimization with his comments about the weakness of the educational profession which he feels is "captured in part by our difficulty in admitting to our condition" (p.101). He goes on to say that:

> . . .what is maddening is that although we have been constituted to be weak, we are nonetheless brutally criticized by the culture for the consequences of our weakness. We are criticized for not being intellectually strong, yet the culture tends to channel its best and brightest students to other professions, such as law, medicine, and the sciences. We are berated for our sloppy theorizing and numbing jargon, yet scholars in older, well-established fields tend to ignore the serious study of education or insist on substituting their naivete about educational matters for informed dialogue. Teachers are asked to perform at very high-level tasks of profound importance and yet are given resources that are absurd and insulting. Moreover, because school budgets tend to be prominent and distinguishable, they are often subjected to minute and haggling examination, which puts the educational community in the posture of beggars who ought to be content with their customary dole. (p. 101)

What is needed is a curriculum which encourages a praxis to empower the students and teachers to defeat the inequitable social structures that oppress us, and to aid our spiritual and psychological healing. The praxis must be a way to use language to enlighten all those who visualize schools as a place to become educated, and not to just be schooled. It would certainly be radical and controversial because students would gain the language of truth: that they are not being educated as much as they are being held captive in a "holding tank" or "concentration camp" setting that keeps them out of the skilled workforce; relegates them to years of unskilled labor jobs (e.g., cashiers, food servers and buspersons, floor sweepers, amusement park attendants, construction laborers, etc.) until someone decides to train them for specific career settings; and, that they are used as pawns to manipulate irrelevant test scores so that highly-paid administrators and policy-makers justify their own lucrative jobs. Until we admit that schooling for too many students is a setting where they are a captive audience where they have no choices to decide what it is they will learn, they will continue to be victims. Until teachers realize that we are just as much victims of that same control mentality, we will also continue to be victims.

One of the first steps toward a healing and liberating curriculum is to allow that "choice" and "voice" of students and teachers in building a healthy learning community. In this educational environment, students would once again begin to take an interest in their studies, and lift themselves from the oppressive sickness of years of schooling, get well, and get back to work.

This, of course, is the core of Dewey's philosophy of education as explained by Sharan (1990). Sharon tells us that:

> Dewey argued that the values of a democratic society, and the patterns of human interaction needed to realize these values, can best be transmitted to the young through schooling that possesses an adequate degree of continuity in experience between society at large and the nature of the pupils' life in school. The means of education must be consistent with the ends. To maintain a democratic society, citizens should be able to think critically for themselves as well as being willing and able to freely exchange ideas and opinions with others. Dewey aimed at bringing the scientific method of reflective thought to all aspects of social life, and to the process of learning in school as well. Critical thought can be conducted in a social environment that allows for public verification through orderly discussions. Also, democracy requires that citizens participate in determining the rules and goals of their society. Pupils should be involved, in keeping with the limits imposed by their age and development, in planning the nature of their school environment and of their learning experiences in school. By giving students collective responsibility for their learning, we can cultivate their sense of social and intellectual responsibility. Unlike transmitting information, responsibility cannot be cultivated by telling students to be

responsible. Unless schooling embodies in its very procedures the process and goals of democratic society, schools will not develop these basic values and approach to life in our future citizens. The predominantly rote method of learning currently practised [sic] in school, where teachers present material that students are expected to absorb, understand, and repeat upon command, cannot achieve the goals of enlightened democratic education. (p.31)

This notion caused a great deal of concern for the principal when I mentioned it to her while cornered by her in the teacher work area. Her incredulous response to my telling her that I allowed the students to engage in dialogue to determine what they would study in my English class was, "You what? You allow your students to have a say in what they study? Mr. Sipes, we have a serious problem here. . . . . what you teach in your classroom is determined by the State Curriculum Guide and I am here to see that it gets carried out." When I suggested that she might look into the works of Dewey, Freire, Maxine Greene, or Miles Horton, she disdainfully replied that she was not interested. If education is ever going to escape the grip of administrators such as this, we must open the language of liberation as well as healing.

GRADES AND THE TESTING SICKNESS

One of the most malignant of the tumors eating away at the schooling process is the obsession of grades and testing. The students' self-image, relationships with peers and teachers, and future life goals are all affected by the obsessive compulsion to attach a grade or a test score to practically everything associated with schooling.

Consequently, as all this gets played out in the schools, there is only one "winner." That person, of course, is the one with the very top grades or class rank. All the other students win in lesser and descending amounts as their grades and class rank reflect their supposed abilities. Students who do not receive "good" grades or who receive merely mediocre grades are awarded proportionately less dignity and consideration, regardless of their possible abilities and skills that are not measured in the grading scheme.

However, the language that is used certainly causes one to believe otherwise. The word "excellence" is redundantly recited as the goal for the schooling process, but Purpel (1989) believes that it is little more than a code word to "sort and weed" and the testing process is the tool with which to do the dirty work. He goes on to say that:

. . .excellence and testing have become two sides of a coin minted to exchange a once popular coin of equality and justice for the classic gold standard of hierarchy and privilege. 'Excellence' has through a relentless process of reification and reductionism come to mean high scores on normative standardized tests...The process, absurd as it is, is simple enough. Give students and teachers a test, teach them how to pass the test, and Eureka! the test scores go up- which the public is told means that excellence has been achieved. (p.17)

The tests, though, do not even accomplish that mirage because officials do not know how to even read and interpret them. Pollak (1994) reports that "not being able to compare this year's 'Report Card' on N. C. schools to last year's has left some school officials wondering how to put the numbers in perspective" (1C). She quotes Hickory schools Superintendent Stuart Thompson as saying:

There's no way to compare. It's like comparing a squirrel to a rabbit. So this year's results don't mean much to us. But next year we'll be able to compare to this year, and see whether or not we've grown . . . It's not a precise thing, but I get an overall feeling that we're sort of close to what we were a year ago. (p.1C)

The language used for all this is really the language of comparison, sameness, and mediocrity. Pollak tells us that "the new Report Card eliminates the 'subpar,' 'par,' and 'above-par' rankings of school systems. Instead, it lists the percentages of students whose test scores are at or above the expected levels for

their grades" (p.1C) We can examine that language as Pollak continues:

> . . .in Hickory, for example, Thompson had to contrast last year's 'above-average' ranking with a list of numbers showing that students tested above the state average in most-but not all-subject areas . . . .Overall, Catawba Valley schools had more above-average scores than below-average ones. Catawba County schools scored above average on all elementary, middle, and high school performance exams. (p.1C)

The article goes on to compare other school systems' "averageness" and their respective superintendents' explanations of the irrelevant scores. This meaningless exercise in throwing numbers and double-speak at the taxpaying public adds to the sickness.

In another account by O'Brien (1994), he writes that:

> . . .after years of promising to measure public schools by a higher standard, North Carolina finally did. . . .The result: A startling report that suggests one in three students isn't doing grade-level work . . . The problem with this new system is that there is a problem defining what 'grade-level' actually connotes. The state rated more than 1 million students on a new, tougher scale that used rigorous definitions of grade-level work and superior work, called proficiency. The standards were set in part by teachers, who were asked to judge their students' ability in math, reading, and other subjects. (p. 5C)

The humorous aspect of all this educational jargon about how the students and schools are doing is that little to nothing has changed, just the posturing of the language. As Pollak reports:

> . . .the bleak assessment differs sharply from previous report cards, which only compared individual school systems with the state average. Under the old rating, half were always rated above average. Under the new rating, more than half are now considered inadequate. (p.5C)

Is this not the old question of the glass being half-full or half-empty? In either case the amount of water remains the same, just as this aspect of the schooling sickness remains the same.

All this is a classic example of the "trivialization" of education of which Purpel (1989) speaks. It tends to evade or neglect "larger, more critical topics" and puts the stress on "technical rather than on social, political, and moral issues" (pp. 2-3). Purpel goes on to say that:

> In the wake of all this has come the renewal of harsh economic and social competition in which the metaphor and mythology of organized sports and war have been used to glorify, extol, and legitimate the ideology of 'opportunity,' which comes down to mean a winner-loser culture. . . In this scenario, freedom has come to mean license for the powerful rather that liberation for the weak; equality is seen as the privilege of competing rather than the right to dignity; individualism has come to mean greed rather than moral autonomy; and community has come to be oriented around terms of class rather than terms of humanity. (p.16)

Grades are the sole determining factor to acknowledge the "top" students in school, especially for that culminating moment that all students anticipate, the graduation ceremony. At that time, the student with the top grades or class rank is allowed to be the honored speaker. The other speakers that might be allowed to speak to the graduating class are, of course, those with the next best grades or class rank. Why is it that the top artist, the top mechanic, the top musician, the top athlete, the most service-minded student, or even the top speaker not so honored? Is it because those students are dishonorable, unworthy, or could not possibly deliver an acceptable speech to their classmates? Why is it that students with a certain class rank graduate with "honors" while everyone else ostensibly graduates without honor? Does this not make the schooling process for most of the student population an exercise in futility and mediocrity rather than an experience of accomplishment and celebration of success?

This tension is not a healthy one and as Purpel (1989) concludes:

> . . .all this rests on a firm and presumably unshakable conviction, that dignity and worth are to be earned. And yet this conviction, however strong and widespread, must coexist with our immense and overwhelming yearning for unconditional love--our intense desire to love others, be loved by others, to love others for who they are rather than for what they do or have. (p.37)

The fact that we allow this scenario to continue and even to proliferate is a sickness that must receive radical treatment. One option would be to completely do away with grades. Purpel suggests that this treatment should be attempted as he writes that:

> Teachers and students need to be free of the fears of dominating and of being dominated in order to facilitate free common inquiry. For this reason alone, the primitive practice of 'grading' students should be abolished. Grading degrades and dehumanizes in its inherent process of creating hierarchies. It is also anti-intellectual in its irrational and arbitrary character, and it is a serious barrier to the true educational process of inquiry, sharing, and dialogue. (p. 120)

If the teachers are committed to educating, then they are constantly ruminating on ways to bring knowledge and understanding to themselves and others, regardless of the students' class rank or grades. The sickness in the grading mentality, however, is that only certain people (i.e., students) have worth and value while others do not. The ranking and grading mentality begins early in the schooling process and perpetuates throughout the schooling levels. But in society, whom would we select to be the unworthy and the unimportant? Would it be the plumbers, carpenters, janitors, and secretaries? Are they not as important as any politician or administrator? This obsession is

another aspect of the sickness in that it associates one's worth

with their achievement, which is the antithesis of unconditional

love. As Purpel tells us:

> . . .this standard indicates that a necessary if not sufficient
> condition for fulfillment and strong self-image is achievement and
> the ability to excel in a particular realm of achievement.
> Moreover, our worth is really not inherent, not sovereign, not
> inevitable, but continuously subject to trial, examination, and
> evolution. (p. 36)

The sickness is that while there are some students who leave

the school setting with self-respect and dignity, others (probably

the majority of students) leave with low self-esteem and a lack of

self-confidence because they have not succeeded with these

schooling notions of worth contingent upon achievement. Purpel

calls this a "deadly equation of achievement with worth" (p.36)

Worse yet, the practice is so accepted that no one seems to be able

to see its destructive aspects. Purpel relates "it is a notion which

is so pervasive and routine that it is hardly even noticed, much

less questioned" (p. 36).

A tremendous upheaval seems to be needed to change the

present momentum of schooling ideology in America. Being guides

to help students to understand themselves as "philosophers" on a

quest to find universal patterns of meaning for their lives and to

have healthy life-styles is not the priority of present curriculum. Indeed, it does not seem to even be on the agenda of most of our political, social, and educational leaders. Their agenda is one where facts and figures can be collected, arranged, and compared with other students, teachers, schools, and systems to give the image that success is being accomplished and increases in their salaries can be rationalized and substantiated. Sadly, this scenario continues to prevail despite the increase of a plethora of social problems and ills. This sickness must be brought to the attention of the community and educational leaders with the hopes that a treatment to heal the situation would be placed on the top of the priority heap. But, even that does not insure that the new leaders who will guide us into the next century will not continue to perpetuate the problems of the past. It is possible that nothing less than a "battle" of educational ideologies will be required to create a new classroom of cooperation, compassion, and healing for the future. As Mengert (1993) reminds us, we need to get well first, then get back to work. In other words, the sickness must be administered to and a course toward healing set before students and teachers can ever really get about the noble aims of education.

The sickness in testing is that it has reached such epidemic proportions that school is probably more about taking tests than

any other single activity. Measuring, grading, and evaluating student successes and failures can be a worthwhile activity for teachers, administrators, and bureaucrats, but it has turned into the ugly visage of a panacea for the sickness in school. The schooling mentality is that everything must be tested and then categorized, labeled, compared, and finally unceremoniously discarded in order to make room and time for--that's right, more testing. A classic example of the futility of standardized testing is the North Carolina End-of-Course Test for High School English classes, of which I am very familiar. Each year in the Spring (usually in May), students take a test measuring their grammar skills, knowledge of specific literary terms, and reading comprehension. Each year, the students' scores are compared and arranged in every conceivable way by school administrators to evaluate not the students' abilities, but rather, as a tool for or against the teacher. Teachers can be praised, reprimanded, suspended, and maybe even terminated for the scores of their students which ultimately become the "teacher's scores", rather than the students'.

Then there is the time factor. The testing and grading frenzy requires so much of the teachers' and students' time. Teachers are largely preoccupied with delivering material that will be tested;

preparing testing procedures (e.g., mimeographing, typing, copying tests); administering tests (mostly written short-answer, true-false, sentence-completion, and multiple-choice items that preferably can be bubbled-in by students and graded by scanners); grading tests (often at home, because there is little opportunity during the day to get the job done); recording grades (usually first in the grade-book, then into a computer grading program); and, finally spending a large amount of time discussing and explaining the meaning of those grades to parents, students, and administrators. It is a frustrating draining of precious time that has little to do with education and scholarship, but certainly with controlling how students and teachers spend most of their lives in the schooling process. As Purpel (1989) maintains:

> If this distorted notion of education does not serve scholarship and the pursuit of truth, it does serve other, more pressing items on the school's agenda. Pseudoscience, narrowly defined academic goals, and predetermined answers are antithetical to serious educational inquiry, but they are excellent ways of facilitating the emphasis on grading and competition. They are effective control mechanisms and give a legitimate flavor to the hierarchical power structure in schools. (p.61)

Thus the schools, teachers, and students exist in order to legitimate that structure of hierarchical power. That is hardly a healthy situation and is much like a doctor keeping his patients

alive, but still sick, so that his job will not be in jeopardy. A clientele of healthy patients would make his job unnecessary.

Purpel (1989) accurately addresses the ailment of grading and asserts that most teachers view the grading process as a hindrance to learning. He feels that:

> It is very difficult, and probably impossible, to develop procedures for giving grades that are valid, reliable, fair, and efficient; students come to worry more about grades than meaning; and both teachers and students respond to these problems by developing techniques (e.g., multiple choice tests, cramming, memorizing) which are at best distracting, and at worst counterproductive to serious learning. The concern for grading produces anxiety, cheating, grade grubbing, and unhealthy competition. . . grading is primarily a technique for promoting particular social, moral, and political goals, and it is those goals which should be debated rather than the technical and misleading questions about the value of essay vs. objective testing or whether to use grade point averages or standardized tests as the basis for college admission. (pp.8-9)

The whole process creates an unhealthy environment for everyone with little wellness being attained for all that effort. Why do we allow this situation to continue? Is it because we do not have the language yet to broach these issues? No, I think we do, but we choose to look the other way and acquiesce that "it's just the way it is." What disastrous and catastrophic scenarios will schooling have to reach before we finally decide to cure the

disease? If the present schooling mentality was the prevalent attitude among the healers in society, then we would indeed see a culture of rampant disease and sickness.

Finally, with the idea that the "grade" means everything to the student, but little to the teacher, I want to suggest the notion that the teacher really does not have the exclusive right to arbitrarily decide the student's grade anyway. A dialogue between student and teacher should exist which would play a large role in determining when the student is ready to quit learning and to receive his or her grade. On the surface, this sounds antithetical to the very core of the teacher's supposed role in the grading process, but in a deeper analysis, it is an idea that has merit and should at least be considered as part of the healing curriculum. The idea came to me while I was taking a graduate level course at the university. The professor told us at the beginning of the course that students in her class could earn whatever grade they chose, even the top grade of an A. She said it was entirely up to us and even though she did have her standards, she would be willing to work with us until we had reached that standard.

Having been through 12 years of public schooling, 4 years of undergraduate schooling, 1 year for a teaching certificate, 2 years for a Master's Degree, and 2 years into a doctoral program, this

professor was the first to tell me that I could get an A in her class and that she would work with me until I reached her standards. It finally took me five drafts to get there, but I was determined to do it and she cheerfully and patiently guided the process.

In the healing of education, it should be the *student* who decides when it is time to quit learning. Certainly, there are time constraints built into the schooling scenario, but that information is known from the outset and it is the student who chooses to do what is necessary to meet the standards of the teacher. This is the converse of the situation where the teacher creates and administers a test, exacts a score, assigns a grade, and that is that. That kind of scenario completely voids the teacher/student dialogue/relationship and negates the opportunity for the student to address perceived weaknesses and flaws in his or her work. Certainly, if a student is satisfied with lower marks, then the argument is largely moot. Still, the student is the one who has made the choice and not the teacher. If grades cannot be abolished as Purpel suggests, then at least the schooling process can begin to allow the student some input and authority in that grading process. Unfortunately, these ideas of students having active roles in determining their development are largely ignored for the proliferation of grading and testing. The idea that schools are

improving because of test scores is much like putting makeup on a seriously sick patient. It gives the appearance that the doctors and staff have effected a cure, when in fact, it has exacerbated the sickness because the real root or core of the illness is not even mentioned and the patient is allowed to remain sick.

THE COLLECTIVE COMA OF SCHOOLS:
COMPARISONS AND COERCION

Just like patients in comas, students who are sick from the schooling process are unconscious or mentally asleep to the hollow beckonings of higher standardized test scores and meaningless grades of a fragmented, disjointed schooling curriculum. It will take more than the transfusion of tax dollars to awaken and bring back to consciousness the vestige of the educated learner. Just as the intravenous tubes and breathing machines merely maintain traces of the patients' vital signs, all the monies, buildings, and materials injected into schools maintain only the marginal life levels of the perfunctory pupil. The patient must come out of the coma; the student must awaken to consciousness. When that happens, the healing process begins for the patient and the student finally becomes engaged in his or her education. There is little engagement, however, if the students are prescribed a remedy that

is impervious and nondiscerning to their interests and needs. This is much like a doctor who refuses or is not allowed to discover what his patients' needs and concerns are but proceeds to prescribe the same treatment for all regardless of their illnesses.

Why is it any more ludicrous for a doctor to stand in front of a room of 20-30 patients and prescribe the same treatment for them all, fully expecting to cure them all, than it is for a teacher to stand in front of a classroom of 20-30 students and give the same curriculum to all and expect successful results? This is a sickness and it stems from the rationale that there is a "right answer" and that there is no truth in conflicting ideas and theories. The schools are such a successful outcome of this attitude that they have a sameness that is persistently pervasive.

Purpel (1989) feels that:

> . . .the extraordinary sameness of the school's curriculum is a powerful lesson; at the core of every school's curriculum are five subjects-English, social studies, science, a foreign language and mathematics. In a nation of diversity and pluralism, with fifty states and with over twenty thousand school districts, we could reasonably expect some variation on what constitutes the core of a curriculum. The lack of truly significant variation is another strong example of cultural hegemony, of beliefs so strongly ingrained that they are beyond examination and criticism. (p. 52)

When a patient is sick and not getting better with the treatment, Plato's doctor would try something new, something different to get the patient better. Those who doctor on the schools are not offering anything new, just different versions of the old sameness. Schooling has become such a institution of conformity, constantly craving sameness, that the present preoccupation is one of endless comparisons to somehow have all the school systems; all the schools; all the teachers; and, all the students conforming to that sameness. Individuality and autonomy to do anything significant outside of that paradigm is just not allowed. The way to accomplish that objective is the current obsessive emphasis on the state-mandated End-of-Course Tests results. School systems, schools, and teachers are compared in every way a computer can print out a chart, graph, or number line. Comparisons are used: 1) by school boards to put pressures on school system superintendents whose system scores do not "measure up" and to financially reward those whose systems do; 2) by superintendents who do the same thing with the principals; and, 3) by principals who do likewise with the teachers. The sickness of the situation is that comparisons are not healthy. When we individually compare ourselves with others, we are merely setting ourselves up to either be vain or bitter, because there will always

be those who are greater and lesser than ourselves. Either way, comparisons distort the truth and create an unhealthy environment for everyone. The maddening aspect of all this is that the comparisons are based on irrelevant test scores measuring memorization of a limited body of facts. Rather than school board members, superintendents, principals, teachers, and students looking inward and opening discourse to their needs and concerns, (which cannot all be the same for everyone) and sharing skills and knowledge to address those needs and concerns, we look outward to proliferate and compare meaningless numbers on charts and graphs. In the end, it is the students who suffer the most as they spend a disproportionate amount of their time preparing for and taking tests. As Kevin O'Brien (1994) reports to us:

> Schools get the Report Card, but students take all the tests. . a sixth-grader in North Carolina will take at least eight state tests in a school year, a sixth-grader in South Carolina, at least five. It's a heavy force-feeding of questions and answers, and that's on top of the regular exam load students face. (p.1A)

The current emphasis on testing is to test often for "accountability," but as John Dornan, executive director of the Public School Forum of North Carolina says, "the accountability craze has helped us focus on student achievement, but it's bordering now on obsession." O'Brien (1994) goes on to say that:

Although the students' individual scores have no direct bearing
on their academic futures, they do provide measures on the
school system which is often controversial. Many of the
states' superintendents whose systems did poorly criticized
the instrument. Part of the test scores (the open-ended essay
portion) will not even be reported because the state does not
know how to score them yet. (p.1A)

The process is ludicrous. O'Brien tells us that:

Richard Jaeger, director of the Center for Educational Research
at UNC-Greensboro, said using accountability tests to drive
education reform 'generally doesn't work. . . . 'I've seen no
evidence. . . .that it is producing results. This usually rears its
ugly head once a generation. I think it's a simplistic reaction
to a problem far more pervasive than any test or testing
program can solve.' (p.6A)

As long as the emphasis in schooling remains in this obsessive

comparison mentality, the students and teachers will only continue

to bear the brunt of the test-taking frenzy of a fragmented

curriculum that does nothing to foster community, compassion, or

self-direction. It is a sickness that is in desperate need of a cure.

This aspect of the schooling sickness is like a doctor who refuses

to find out what the patients' needs and concerns are and then

proceeds to administer to those patients' their prescription for

wellness, whether they want it or not, and whether it is actually

good for them or not. Schooling does just that to the students; it

forces a curriculum onto them that supposedly has all the "right" answers, (but largely to questions that no one is asking) under the guise of knowledge and education.

This coercion or forcing of facts onto students, without considering their individual and specific needs and concerns only breeds resistance and contempt for that curriculum. The students choose to be disengaged; they "tune out" and "turn off" to the teacher and the lesson because they see no relevance to their lives. It is no different than patients refusing the doctor's prescribed treatment of a sedative when their sleep patterns are fine, but the doctor forces it onto them anyway. In the end, this process causes more problems than it solves and this is what is happening in the schools. Just as patients have the right to voice their preferences as to how they are to be medically treated, students should have the right to choose the nature and substance of their educations. Of course, schooling squelches those voices and proceeds to coerce the students to follow the mandated curriculum or they will be branded (i.e., troublemaker, complainer, whiner, behavior-problem, or failure). This concept of how schooling is to be conducted is sick and merely exacerbates the problem.

Purpel (1989) supports the idea of teachers being individuals who share and suggest ideas and questions rather than a collective

body to coerce students to memorize government-mandated

curriculums for standardized tests. He insists that:

> . . .educators must respond to these concerns within the canons of our professional ethics: we are educators not indoctrinators; we persuade, we do not force; we are primarily social and moral leaders, not partisan politicians; we examine political, religious, and moral issues, we do not promulgate political, religious, and moral dogma. (p.64)

The coercion of state-mandated facts, manipulation, and

indoctrination is like pouring salt into an open wound. Purpel

reminds us that:

> As educators we must recognize and confront this dilemma and be mindful of the difficulties and risks involved in teaching. There is no way of avoiding this risk, but attempts to avoid it are bound to distract and deceive us and, hence, will likely exacerbate the problem. Educators can be more authentic by sharing the problem with each other, the public, and their students. We also should be mindful that there are both gray areas and black-and-white ones in this realm. We can easily point to conditions which we can call manipulative and oppressive-situations in which coercion is used as a teaching technique (either crudely, as in punishment and grading, or more subtly, as in the denial of affection), or situations in which undue pressures are used (such as ridicule and ostracism). (pp.119-120)

It is possible that the very origin of the notion of "teacher" has

been taken so literally that schooling embodies too much of the

negative aspects of the concept. "Teach" occupies a lengthy section in the Second College Edition of the American Heritage Dictionary (1985) and provides enlightening and interesting variations of what it means to teach. The word inculcate, however, more addresses the point I am trying to make in context with the schooling sickness. Inculcate's definition is "to teach or impress by urging or frequent repetition; instill." It originates from the Latin "inculcare, inculcat-,to force upon : in-, in + calcare, to trample < calx, heel" (p. 653). Schooling has managed to incorporate the very literalness of the Latin origin of the notion to teach to the point that the forcing of students and teachers to comply and conform to government-mandated curriculum and rules, and the subsequent trampling of their individual freedoms and rights has become the norm rather than the exception.

This is hardly a healthy environment in which to educate students of the ideals and principals of a democratic society. I do believe, however, that there is a fine line between the idea of authority and coercion in the classrooms and schools. Purpel (1989) also makes the distinction between authority and coercion. Authority is more aligned with the ideals of the healing curriculum. Coercion is a prime ingredient in the recipe for sickness. Authority is the concept that refers to:

. . .some shared set of principles as to what constitutes the true, the good, and the beautiful. . .crucial in this general attitude toward decision making is a reliance on general principles that have wide acceptance, and so it can be said that when we make a decision in this mode, we are trying to persuade and influence through mutually accepted moral, intellectual, professional, or spiritual criteria. . .those who make decisions based on coercion brush aside these considerations and, instead, simply impose their will by dint of their power, whether it be direct brute power or the more indirect coercive power which implicitly stands behind people who have been chosen not to exercise authority. Schools in their acculturation and socialization functions put great stress on obedience and deference to established power, which would seem to undermine their educational commitment to authority, as well as to the scholarly tradition of skepticism. Students are told generally of the value of critical thinking but quite directly that operationally it is neither proper nor wise to think critically of their school environment. . .Schools glibly adapt and utilize grading systems of a profoundly dubious nature without a murmur of apology or regret. Indeed, a powerful and effective part of the school curriculum is to do what the teacher and administrator tell students to do and to come to see this as inevitable, necessary, and routine. For those who do not, the school has its own arsenal of coercive weaponry--suspension, verbal abuse, corporal punishment, withholding of affection, denial of 'privileges' (recess, athletics, bathroom), and above all else the dreaded lower grade, or 'bad' reference. (p. 47)

Freire (1990) also discusses the distinction between having a healthy educating environment and one where choice and voice are denied. He relates that:

I began to understand at a very young age, that on one hand, the teacher as a teacher is not the student. The student as the student is not the teacher. I began to perceive that they are different, but not necessarily antagonistic. The difference is

precisely that the teacher has to teach, to experience, to demonstrate authority and the student has to experience freedom in relation to the teacher's authority. I began to see that the authority of the teacher is absolutely necessary for the development of the freedom of the students, but if the authority of the teacher goes beyond the limits authority has to have in relation to the student's freedom, then we no longer have authority. We no longer have freedom. We have authoritarianism. (p.61)

Schooling today is much too close to authoritarianism where teachers and students are allowed autonomy only within the present paradigm of governed schooling. Unfortunately, that paradigm has little to do with participatory, liberating, or empowering education and everything to do with maintaining control of and perpetuating a very sick institution. The question at this point is where do we go from here. I believe the developing of the language of healing is the first step. We attempt that step in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER III

THE LANGUAGE OF HEALING

When we speak of healing in education, we must begin to search for the language to begin that process. It seems that too many of us have lost the real meaning of becoming educated. However, whatever that meaning might connote, I believe it must be contexturalized with the ideas and language of healing. The following is a list of words and terms to begin the healing vocabulary: God, love, help, hope, belief, faith, truth, joy, peace, energy, strength, vitality, warmth, charm, pleasure, natural, lovely, dialogue, goals, expectations, discovery, healing imagery, relief, relaxation, acceptance, exercise, endorphins, placebo, grace, miracle, wholeness, holistic medicine, healer, meditation, self-hypnosis, freedom, creativity (right brain), imagination (right brain), adventure, exploring, play, work, music, harmony, balance, compassion, and caring. Of course, this is only a list of words. It is how we come to know them and to use them, though, that lead us to healing.

We must consciously choose to begin the process that will bring healing or we choose to remain static and sick. We cannot

say that we will just "remain neutral on the matter;" that we will just "wait and see," or "reserve judgement." If we are ever going to effect a cure for the sickness in schooling, we have to choose between staying as we are or move toward getting better. There is no such thing as neutrality. As Miles Horton (1990) reminds us, neutrality is just a code word for the existing system. "Neutrality is just following the crowd. . . .neutrality is just being what the system asks us to be. . . . you've got to take sides; you should be able to justify it" (pp. 102-103). Freire (1990) responds to him by saying that, "neutrality always works in favor of the oppressor. . . . it is impossible for education to be neutral. . . ." (pp. 103-104)

I believe the first step toward healing begins when we look inward rather than outward for the cure. There is a need in education to bring back into focus the inner needs of students and teachers and to re-address the moral and spiritual nature of humans being. The ability of looking inward and dealing with questions of life and death is a dimension of education that is needed now more than ever with issues like embryo research, abortion, specific-part surgery, life-support machines, surrogate motherhood, and euthanasia.

There needs to be a redefining of our concept of knowledge. The sickness in schooling is that this idea is not up for discussion. The

curriculum calls for the teaching of specifics as if they are the "only" knowledge, while areas like the teaching of human values is shunned. And yet, the question must be asked that if humans are moral in nature, what is a human without moral and spiritual values? The current school and societal behavioral problems would certainly suggest a species with little regard for anything other than the basic servicing of hedonistic self-gratification. The healing of education would offer opportunities for students to explore what it means to be human and to think about human values as an integral part of getting an education as opposed to the present schooling process where the industrial and mechanical paradigm prevails.

In thinking about the student as a person, schooling tends to perceive the student as a person in the "legal sense," as to how he or she acts in legal transactions such as attendance, correct behavior in the school setting, receiving diplomas, etc.. The student is more of an object than anything else in this view and things do not have self-value. Schooling treats students as if they are an "it" rather than a human being. The healing curriculum views the student as a person with a sense that "to be a person involves self-consciousness and self-knowledge, in which one is aware of oneself as having perceptions, dreams, thoughts, goals,

and desires. There is a phenomenon called a person and that person has self- value that is different from the value placed on humans by societal hegemony and political doctrines. The value a teacher must place on the student is that the student is intrinsically more than an object to be filled with facts. The student is a spiritual unity not unlike the description given to explain the functions of the brain by Dr. Frank Wood (1990). He likened the neural networks of the brain as a series of 'sparkles' in varying degrees of intensity and brightness. If the teacher begins to think of students with this idea in mind, that the student is a spiritual being responding to his or her environment in a dynamic, constantly developing consciousness, then the first step is taken in treating that student as if he or she is a person and not a product.

The relationship between the teacher and the student is crucial in this line of thinking as Holbrook (1990) in discussing Sartre's view of what a person is asserts that:

> Sartre felt that the person is not something self-contained in itself, but is dependent for its very existence upon its relationships with others. Our experience of others is a precondition of our being aware, not only of others, but also of ourselves as persons. (p.23)

So, a source of values to aid in discovering what it is to be human could be that every human wants to be himself or herself

and to realize their dreams and potential. The present approach has created a society of just the opposite, plagued with amorality, rootlessness, hopelessness, and the lack of that special interest or passion in which to believe. Holbrook (1990) mentions that:

> Maslow offered a psychology in which the healthy capacity for 'peak-moments' is a primary reality . . . we all experience moments of transcendent being, which gives us a sense of meaning in our lives, emerging from our creative acts, and the realization of our potentialities. (p.30)

This idea is certainly true for me in playing the guitar and writing music, as well as running long distance. I think this idea is also what Norman Maclean (1976) is addressing in his *A River Runs Through It*. He says that "one of life's quiet excitements is to stand somewhat apart from yourself and watch yourself softly become the author of something beautiful, even it is only a floating ash" (p. 43).

Schooling tries to explain the world and all that is in it. The sickness inherent in that concept is that schooling's way attempts to be the *only* way to know something. It strips away the phenomenological aspect that meaning is a creation of the mind. Schooling, like the scientific paradigm cannot accept humans making sense of the world - so it tends to make the world (and all of us in it) seem meaningless. Creativity is stunted and inhibited

in the schooling paradigm because it has no place in it. The answers have already been given.

The healing curriculum would, conversely, center on understanding, rather than explaining. Understanding is all about the individual's consciousness intentionally trying to make sense of the world. The understanding comes about through the student's relationship with that which is sought to be understood. It is an intentional seeking and searching, an inquiry, rather than a static, motionless object, merely to be filled with explanatory facts. Knowledge would be construed as being bound up in one's quest for meaning and values.

Indeed, we must break away from the Newtonian-Galilean model of fragmenting and analyzing knowledge and mankind. That model omits "intentionality," creativity, individual choice and vision, the moral nature of man, and in essence, the very humanity of humans. Without these qualities, humans just cease to be. It does not take very much reflection to realize that the destruction and self-destruction rampant in society is proof that the positivist paradigm of schooling is not working, regardless what the test-scores imply.

We must acknowledge that there is a healer within each one of us and developing that side of our consciousness begins with

opening a dialogue with the other self. And the first step in opening that dialogue is telling yourself that you love you who are, even if at first you don't really believe that you do. Siegel (1986) writes that " the fundamental problem most patients face is an inability to love themselves, having been unloved by others during some crucial part of their lives" and that "the ability to love oneself, combined with the ability to love life, fully accepting that it won't last forever, enables one to improve the quality of life" (p.5) But there is a tension with the inner self and the external world that needs to be acknowledged and resolved so that the healing can begin.

Heschel (1973) seems to speaking of this idea when he writes:

> Both Kierkegaard and Reb Mendl the Kotzker understood the tragic void in the inner life of every individual, the tension between the ideal and the real-between what is expected and what can be accomplished. The vast majority of people are satisfied with compromises, or they remain unaware that they are worshipping a multitude of gods, that their actions constitute a maze of contradictions. For both the Lutheran and the Jew, the essential problem was the individual, his attitudes, his aspirations, his inner life. Both strove to re-create man whole. (p.91)

The sickness in schooling, also is a maze of contradictions with administrators, politicians, parents, community leaders, and teachers all striving for issues from a multitude of perspectives

and interests with increasingly failing insight into the essential problem. That essential problem, of course, is the individual student, his/her aspirations, attitudes, and inner life. The healing of education would serve to produce a student who is whole, mind and body, rather than a fragmented, frustrated, spiritually weakened person cast out into society, expected to succeed.

It is important to look inward and to try to understand oneself so with that understanding, a love for oneself might begin. Without it, all the other knowledge we might possess means little in the healing mode. Heschel (1973) writes that "Kierkegaard maintained that the most distressing way to live was to be capable of explaining nature without understanding oneself" (p.107). What good is it for students to take course after course of fragmented knowledge without ever being provided a lens with which to put the facts into a personal perspective, to internalize it, if you wish, and to make it part of who they are. Heschel continues to say that "Kierkegaard's existential philosophy took the actual existence of an individual as the basis for its approach to reality" (p.108). The sickness in schooling is that the existence of the individual is too often sacrificed to the collective. Any truly individual behavior is immediately identified as disruptive or antisocial and behavior modification procedures quickly begin. The impetus is that

individuality is servile to the group and group control is
paramount. Heschel writes that:

> . . . both Kierkegaard and the Kotzker were more concerned with
> man in relation to his own soul than with his relationships to
> other men. Their constant effort was to expose the individual
> to the absolute and its unconditional requirement. Neither had
> respect for the public. When regarded as judges of ethical or
> religious matters, the crowd is untruth. (p.139)

Continuing with this idea of individuality and group, Plato is
given credit for writing the following:

> Did you ever observe that there are two classes of patients in
> states, slaves and freemen; and the slave doctors run about and
> cure the slaves, or wait for them in dispensaries-practitioners
> of this sort never talk to their patients individually or let
> them talk about their own individual complaints. The slave
> doctor prescribes what mere experience suggests, as if he had
> exact knowledge, and when he has given his orders, like a
> tyrant, he rushes off with equal assurance to some other
> servant who is ill. But the other doctor, who is a freeman,
> attends and practices on freemen; and he carries his inquiries
> far back, and goes into the nature of the disorder; he enters
> into discourse with the patient and with his friends, and is at
> once getting information from the sick man and also
> instructing him as far as he is able, and he will not prescribe
> until he has at first convinced him. If one of those empirical
> physicians, who practice medicine without science, were to
> come upon the gentleman physician talking to his gentleman
> patient and using the language almost of philosophy, beginning
> at the beginning of the disease and discoursing about the whole
> nature of the body, he would burst into a hearty laugh- he
> would say what most of those who are called doctors always
> have at their tongues' end: Foolish fellow, he would say, you

are not healing the sick man but educating him; and he does not want to be made a doctor but to get well.

In many ways Plato is not only discussing the doctor and patient relationship, but the student and teacher relationship as well. In public schools where the teacher often is found scurrying from one student to the next and from one class to the next, one can almost visualize in them the slave doctors of Plato's day. So many teachers in this scenario find themselves rarely able to talk to their students individually or to let them talk about their own individual complaints or problems. Too many teachers offer facts as if they had indisputable, exact knowledge and then prescribe from the government's curriculum what is best for their students to learn.

Then the bell rings, buzzes, or clangs and the teacher starts all over with the next group of minds to inculcate them with the same prescription of knowledge. Meanwhile, the freeman doctor (or the individual teacher, if you will), begins a dialogue with the student/patient; creates a relationship with him/her; and, while initiating a course of study with the interests and abilities of the individual student foremost in mind, takes into account the importance of the nature of the whole body and administers accordingly. And so, those who are called educators, but who are

better known as administrators might say: Foolish fellow, you are not teaching the ignorant student, you are educating him to the truth, and he does not want to be a philosopher. I wonder, though.

"IT'S NOT ALLOWED!"

The sickness in schooling can be seen in many scenarios. One day, as I was leaving the school and signing out at the front office, the secretary informed me that the school had yet another rule. The new rule was "no flowers allowed." It seems that a teacher's husband had sent her flowers, and the secretary innocently had them sent on to the teacher's classroom. The principal was "concerned" that the students might be distracted by someone receiving flowers, and so, no flowers allowed at all, by anyone, at any time, during the entire school day. For myself and many others, the no flower rule epitomized the oppressive and repressive nature a school can acquire when acts or gestures of love, caring, or just appreciation of someone as a human being is "not allowed." The reason, of course, was that the flowers would disrupt the students' concentration in the class and "instructional time would be lost." There were some of us, however, who believed that the joy, the color, the fragrance, and the touch of flowers, not to mention the thoughtfulness of flowers being sent

to someone would be an attribute and a worthy lesson to the school day. Our suggestions to that effect were cast aside and the rule remained in effect for as long as I was there.

This case is not an isolated one, however. Lisa Pollak (1993) reports that in Lenoir, Caldwell County, a "floral flap" over whether students were to be allowed to have flowers delivered to them at the school prompted local florists to collect 1,441 signatures on a petition drive protesting a proposed ban by school officials on flower deliveries in schools. The reason for the ban on flowers was the "administrators desire to limit class interruptions" (p. 1C). In another article by Pollak (1993), she cites the reason for the ban as "the superintendent and a small group of principals will begin work on a policy to limit classroom interruptions which include surveys, blood drives, ticket sales, spelling bees, poster contest, science fairs and announcements along with the flowers" (p. 1C). Pollak quotes one of the principals as saying, "all these activities are valuable educational experiences, but I assure you if a student is doing a lot of things that are very educational and exciting during the day but they're not in algebra class they're not going to learn algebra. It's just that simple" (p.1c).

I think this mentality to discard those activities in schools that are joyous as well as educational simply dulls the school day into a mindless morass. Of course, it matters little that few people are interested in algebra or see any relevant application of it to their lives. While the movement continues to remove everything spontaneous and joyous in schools (all for the sake of control and test score manipulation) violence in schools continues to escalate. Why is it that so few of those in power can see the relationship between the two? As administrators promote the "time on task" mentality and subsequently disallow tokens and activities of community and caring, violence and other dysfunctional behavior proliferates. We should not be diminishing the spontaneity, the aesthetic, and the joyful activities in schools (e.g, giving gifts and flowers, playing games, etc.), we should be emphasizing and promoting them. Why is it that schools must absolutely be a sunless, dreary, and joyless life of mindless routine and drudgery; why not something as basic as more fresh air and sunshine for everyone in the schools? The whole atmosphere breeds a contagion of spiritual and physical sickness that is hard for most of us to overcome. It just does not have to be this way.

In a healing environment, flowers would be welcomed. They are an accepted part of hospitals, outpatient clinics, churches, and

other healing environments. They help to promote wellness and give the sense of healing taking place. Schools should be full of .them! They should be everywhere! The glorious sights and pungent fragrances of flowers should be an integral part of the school setting. If we ever accept the fact that the schools are, in reality, just as much places of sickness and healing as hospitals, maybe flowers will be just as important in the classroom as end-of-course tests. The greatest indicator of the effectiveness of bringing joy and beauty into the schools will not only show up in report cards; it will show in the glow and smiles of children's faces. It doesn't matter if someone has suffered a terrible loss; if someone is recovering from an illness or a broken heart; or if simply life has lost its luster for someone, flowers can do much for the healing process. They represent so many wonderful qualities and images of a healthy life, it seems that they would be a priority for the healing environment in a school. Why aren't flowers and other symbols of caring and love openly endorsed and displayed in public education classrooms? If healing is to take place, then flowers are a good place to begin in creating a healing environment in the school setting. I believe that they give hope to students in a way that the students not only do not lose concentration because of them, but rather, receive inspiration

from them, deducing the possibility that there are people "out there" who care.

It is important for all of us to feel that someone cares for us. It is a healing gesture to hold someone's hand who is in need. It is healthy to hug someone for no other reason than you would like a hug. We all need those simple reassuring touches to feel good about ourselves and others. Therefore, school rules such as "no kissing;" "no hugging;" "no holding hands;" and, "no public display of affection" create an unhealthy environment that is emotionally and spiritually debilitating. This is too often the case in public schools where the schooling process is concerned so much with control and mind manipulation. It is important for some school administrators to make sure students understand that such outrageous behavior like walking down the hall holding hands or hugging someone is just not "proper" and something one just does not do in a public setting. Evidently, it doesn't matter that holding someone's hand can be immensely reassuring; or that hugging someone is a healthy way to express one's caring and understanding of another human being. It doesn't matter that students get a daily dose of movies and television where adults and young people alike meet and find themselves in bed, overcome with uncontrollable sexual passion within minutes of their first meeting. With such

divergent streams of thought to consider, it is difficult for the student to even have a clue as to the "real world."

Unfortunately, too many young people who have systematically been deprived of the opportunity to learn how to express affection for others in healthier and safer ways like holding hands, hugging, even kissing leap to the dangers of sexual intercourse just to get the feeling that they are loved and cared for. This is such a prevalent perversion of a healthy attitude toward one's body and caring relationships with others, that there are schools dotted with young, pregnant girls and young, unattached fathers who never first learned to care for each other. They suffer, the people around them suffer, society suffers, and most of all, the new life coming into the world suffers.

The sickness in schooling is that while current research and the media make it clear to us all that sexually active teenagers is a big problem, it takes on even greater seriousness when we consider that most of them are unmarried, unemployed, well-schooled, but uneducated, and living at home with parents, often with serious problems of their own. This scenario is common and it can be called a panorama of pain, because it is as far as the eye can see in this country. We need to get the students well, then we need to get them back to work.

An important first step in getting students out of this sickness is not to thwart their efforts to show basic human caring and affection for one another, but to encourage it! Holding hands and hugging should be allowed. They are healthy activities that build a person's faith that caring for someone and showing it by squeezing a hand or hugging a shoulder is normal and okay. Maybe, if more students knew how to show compassion and understanding in such innocent and simple gestures, there would be less of a craving for sex as the only way to get some compassion and caring.

Jaffe (1980) writes on the importance of touch and its healing properties. "Loving, accepting, and nurturing your body and living fully within it can have a positive effect on your health" (p.80) He asserts that touching is a basic need and that Freud and others have suggested that a deficiency of touching is the core of neurotic and psychosomatic disorders. As a practicing physician, he regularly prescribes a program of hugging and massage for patients and their families who do not hug or touch very much. He claims patients received numerous benefits from this treatment including an increase in energy, strength, and a more positive self-image. Schools would do well to follow his lead.

EDUCATION AS HEALING: ISSUES OF TRUTH

When we think of someone as seriously hurting, either emotionally or physiologically, we agree that they need something to help them to begin the healing process. In a school, as elsewhere, there are a lot of people who are hurting and who are suffering. I think society needs more people who have managed to learn how to give an encouraging word or a friendly hug. As Fritz Mengert has stated, "there are only two types of people in the world, those who are sick, and those who are getting better." When will the leaders in education realize the hurts the students and teachers bring to the school setting and change the supposedly unchangeable sick rule of "no public display or show of affection" to the healing atmosphere of showing others compassion and caring as much as possible, even if it means condoning holding hands and hugging someone in public. Too many of us in society today are walking around with such repressed emotional baggage and the lack of enough hugs and pats on the back, that we become numb and starved for the basic human touch of compassion. We can begin to address this situation in the schools where a healing atmosphere is the impetus and students and teachers alike learn the importance of gestures of compassion. I believe that a little compassion goes a long way in a school setting.

If you feel this idea of schools needing to foster symbols and gestures of love rings true, consider the importance Heschel (1973) places on love and Truth. He asserts that:

> Love and Truth are the two ways that lead the soul out of the inner jungle. Love offers an answer to the question of how to live. In Truth we find an answer to the question of how to think. It is impossible to find Truth without being in love, and it is impossible to experience love without being truthful, without living Truth. (54)

Heschel tells us that the Baal Shem believed "that Man exists by virtue of his goodness and love; he taught that love ranked higher than Truth; what really counted was a little compassion" (p.57) When will trails to truth and compassion become part of the curriculum? The answer is when school leaders want the healing process to begin. As educators, we must remember humility and how little we really "know." It is perfectly all right, even healthy to admit that "I don't know."

As Purpel (1989) mentions to us:

> . . .nowhere is intellectual arrogance more inappropriate than in an educational setting, since the basic canons of educational inquiry include an awareness of the complex and elusive nature of truth and the vital importance of openness to and awareness of emerging consciousness. Education involves inquiry, and the inquiry requires care, caution, and humility in the face of the enormity of the task. (p.52)

In the healing curriculum, there is not necessarily a "right " answer for anything, but there is always the search for the answer and an acknowledgment of the possible truth in an answer. Part of the truth is in admitting that sometimes, we just do not really know. Purpel (1989) continues on this idea of intellectual arrogance by saying that:

> . . . certainly, as educators we know that the more we know, the less sure we become, and that there is a high correlation between an academic's intellectual strength and humility. We are not equating humility with modesty; to be humble is not to disregard one's achievements but to be awed and amazed at the intricacies and complexities of what is being studied. Instead of teaching students of the limitations of our research techniques and the extent of our ignorance, we have grossly distorted the state of intellectual life by utilizing a curriculum that has been accepted as true and valid. We need to not only teach what we claim to know but to speak to what we know we don't know. (pp. 52-53)

In the healing mode, honesty and truth play important roles. Patients want to know what is wrong with them and the best way to get better. Conversely, dishonesty, especially if it is the form of self-deception merely exacerbates the illness and slows the healing. For me, when I realized that I was not going to win in the grievance process, the truth of that realization released a tremendous burden from my shoulders. Being a product of the schooling sickness, I had learned the lessons of competition only

too well, and the idea of being a loser, even though I felt the truth was on my side was a difficult pill to swallow. When I did, though, I began to heal. Purpel speaks about this idea in the collective sense. He relates that "self-deception not only involves denial, fear, avoidance, and fragmentation, but it is also ultimately self-defeating. When we deceive ourselves and our community, we undermine our efforts to act upon our deepest beliefs" (p. 62). He also points out that:

> We recognize that the paths to truth are many, that they sometimes crisscross, and that we need to both challenge these paths as well as affirm them. Our culture values knowledge and the pursuit of knowledge, and indeed part of our myth (or faith) is that knowledge or truth or science or whatever it is called can help make us free. (p. 72)

The healing curriculum would help educators to break away from the idea that any statement or proposition must necessarily be true or factual. Indeed, it is likely that such proclamations are misleading and inconsistent. Purpel says that:

> . . .rigorous criticism is an antidote to such thinking, since it attempts to test thoroughly the validity of propositions, statements, policies, and pronouncements by carefully examining their logic, assumptions, evidence, and coherence. The skepticism and modesty rest not only on a degree of suspicion and a dash of cynicism but more broadly on a sophisticated understanding of the perplexities, subtleties, and elusiveness inherent in the pursuit of truth. (p. 131)

When we think of education as healing, we must consider the issue of Truth. Heschel writes that Kierkegaard was "concerned with Truth for himself and for his concrete situation; that Truth is subjectivity. Yet Truth---may prove useless if it does not shape the thinker's existence, transform his personality, to be what one says; the truth consists not in knowing the truth but in being the truth" (p.104) The sickness in schooling is that we know the truth of the situation, that we are more engaged in schooling than education. Consequently, decisions continue to be made by those who know the truth, but will not "be" the truth. The sickness only worsens, the vital signs continue to diminish, and the report to loved ones is that we are still trying to raise the test scores of standardized tests. When will the truth be lived by those decision-makers?

Heschel (1973) tells us that the road to Truth for both the Kotzker and Kirkegaard was through self-examination. Heschel felt that in the absence of Truth there were only imitation and pretense, which inevitably led to corruption. (p.126) Only intense self-reflection--at least as powerful as the conditions and falsehood it sought to transcend-could alleviate corruption. As such, this cure arrived at Truth by way of authenticity; it required unrestrained introspection and reflection. He writes that:

This search for increasing, progressive intensity is usually distasteful to man, to whom the outward life appeals because it is familiar and secure. His inner self is allowed to remain vague and obscure, and only the challenge of an extreme peril compels him to investigate it...in today's disintegrating world, where all inwardness is externalized, our inner selves face a wasteland. (p.127)

In order for the sickness in schooling to be remedied, the same type of self-examination must take place. The difference, however, is to approach the self-evaluation process from the perspective of discovering the truth; the truth about the needs of the students and teachers; the truth about the actual merits and benefits of programs; the truth that such a self-reflection will be painful and distasteful; the truth that many things familiar and secure must be changed; and most importantly, the truth that a healing paradigm is in order to address these issues and to foster the healing and rejuvenation.

Heschel's answer to the question of what is one of the major roots of evil in our insane world is:

. . .mendacity, falsehood, wantonness of words, perversion of the heart. . . rarely does an individual's falsehood remain a private affair. It is so dynamic, so infectious and expansive that it bursts all secrecy, all privacy, affecting ever more people. Truth is not a feeling, a mere thought. Truth confronts us as a behest, an insistent summons, austere, uncompromising; Truth is often gray, and deceit is full of splendor. One must hunger fiercely after Truth to be able to

cherish it. A lie may be defined as an attempt to deceive without the other's consent; to live without deception presupposes standards beyond the reach of most people, whose existence is largely shaped by compromise, evasion, and mutual accommodation. Could they face their weakness, their vanity and selfishness, without a mask? Could they bear the discovery that they had lived for goods they had never believed in or cherished, that they had been committed to ideas they had never been convinced of? (pp. 158-160).

Heschel writes that honesty was the essential ingredient for the spiritual life for both the Kotzker and Kierkegaard; they regarded honesty "as the central or supreme religious virtue." (p.162)

He goes on to say that:

Truth leads to love, whereas love may be blind and yield to untruth; Truth is always with God. It is the mystery of being. Therefore, the way that always leads to God is Truth; yet truth is buried and remains hidden. In a world full of falsehood, Truth can survive only in concealment, for lies lie in wait everywhere; as soon as Truth is disclosed, it is surrounded by forces seeking to destroy it. (p.165)

Heschel states that Mahatma Gandhi, one of the twentieth century's great seekers after justice, shared the insight of Kierkegaard and the Kotzker. On this point, Gandhi wrote at the end of his autobiography, "My uniform experience has convinced me that there is no other God than Truth." (p.166)

And yet, if Truth were manifest and strong, man would lose his major task, his destiny: to search for it...thus, concealing the Truth was necessary in order to make possible man's greatest adventure: to live in search. If Truth had not been concealed, there would be no need to choose, to search. If Truth had been permitted to prevail, Divinity would have overpowered the world and humanity would not have been possible. The sickness is schooling is that there is too much dishonesty. We are dishonest to the teachers, to the students, and to the public at large. Sadly, the truth is that public education does not prepare the vast majority of students for much of anything, all the while veiling the reality of its malaise.

THE STUDENT/TEACHER RELATIONSHIP

In the healing classroom, the teacher and the student are enjoined in a relationship that is very much like Plato's freeman doctor and his gentleman patient. The teacher begins a dialogue or discourse with the student that goes beyond memorizing facts and beyond testing and grades, which are the great irritants in the open wound of schooling. Rather, the healing teacher would want to allow the student the opportunity to relate his or her dreams, goals, interest areas, or problems, before ever prescribing what it is the student needs. I found that the way schooling is structured,

there is practically no time for a teacher and student to ever develop this type of dialogue or relationship within the confines of the regular school day.

The only time I ever managed to have any semblance of a dialogue with a student was when he or she could stay after the regular school day. Since most students, of course, had no transportation other than the school bus or had jobs and other activities after school that prevented them from staying, dialogues happened rarely. Dialogue between student and teacher is important, but in the healing curriculum, dialogue becomes important as a subject in and of itself. With whom or what can one engage oneself in dialogue? What would be the most healing dialogue we could have with someone? With whom would it be? Would it be a close friend? A relative? A preacher? Teacher? God, Almighty? Or one's own self? It seems to me that healing does not come from without as much as from within, especially emotional and spiritual healing. In a sense, opening a dialogue with one's self is a step closer to finding Truth and I believe that the closer we get to Truth the nearer we get to the feeling of healing.

Heschel (1973) reminds us that "self-knowledge implies honesty, wholeheartedness. Self-inspection is a necessary

technique for the purpose of attaining Truth because we know that a person may sincerely believe something about himself that is not true" (p.96).

It is important then to develop dialogue with the self and to believe that we have the ability to heal ourselves and to keep ourselves healthier than ever before. So, how do we begin? First, it involves becoming conscious of consciousness or "experiencing the experience." This concept tacitly implies that we have accepted the idea of a duality in the human personality and that a conversation can take place between the two. William James (1890) said that:

> ...it must be admitted therefore that, in certain persons at least, the total possible consciousness may be split into parts which coexist, but mutually ignore each other and share the objects of knowledge between them, and - more remarkable still - are complementary. Give an object to one of the consciousness, and by that fact you remove it from the other or others. Barring a certain common fund of information, like the command of language, etc., what the upper self knows, the under self is ignorant of, and vice versa... (p. 89)

The idea here is that we all possess within us another self and through the command of language and learning, we can open a dialogue with that consciousness and be conscious that we are doing it. Jaffe (1980) credits Jung with:

. . .the psyche consists of many semi-autonomous unconscious archetypes, which are almost like individual selves requesting conscious expression. Rather than having one personality, each individual is a collection of different people with various talents, abilities, and modes of expression. (p.23)

We have within us the ability to heal ourselves as we develop the healing consciousness. Language is the way to do this. It can be as simple as hearing, seeing, speaking, or writing words and expressions of healing. For many of us, those words of healing are not as much a part of our lives as they should be. Solomon's proverb that any rebel can make cutting remarks, but a wise man's words soothe and heal warns us of the potential power of language. As teachers and students in the healing spirit, we have to be consciously vigilant of using the healing language more than any other if we want to experience healing in ourselves and in others. What then is the healing attitude, especially with regard to the student?

The healing attitude of the student is to view his or her education as a way to understand the Truths in life and to acknowledge that study and spirituality is closely aligned. As Heschel (1973) tells us:

. . .the Baal Shem Tov felt that it was beautiful to be submerged in Torah study, but the most urgent goal was to be close to God. According to a legend, the Baal Shem commented

one day upon a scholar immersed in study, 'he is so deeply absorbed that he has forgotten there is a God in the world. Awe of Heaven was above learning, he taught. . . Yet the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples set awe above learning. What good was a head crammed with knowledge if the heart was haughty? Could wine be any good if fermented in a contaminated vat? He believed that hard work was needed to attain awe. Dutiful study was not enough. Study should be a means, not an end in itself. (p. 62)

Becoming educated in the sense of the healing metaphor is much like the way the Baal Shem taught that:

Torah study is a way of coming upon the presence of God. . . . A man learning Torah should feel like a son who receives a letter from his father and is most anxious to know what he has to say to him. The letter is precious to him upon every rereading, as if his father stood there beside him. (p.62)

(Students in the classroom should feel much the same way

about what the teacher is attempting to bring to their lives)

Heschel also relates that:

'I' (anokhi), the first word of the Ten Commandments, consists of four letters in Hebrew and forms an acrostic for the words 'I give Myself in written form,' it is said in the Talmud. God has given Himself in the words, and man must learn how to encounter Him. He is concealed in the letters, and through their mystical contemplation one can discover His light. The purpose of immersing oneself in the Torah is not only to understand its rational meaning but also to become united with the divine presence therein. He was persuaded that one should be capable of learning more from people than from books. (p. 63)

Consequently, it is important for students to have both head and heart in their studies or how can this be achieved? One way is to approach it from an ontological perspective and literally get the body and mind working together. This involves, of course, physical movement and interaction with teachers and other students. Too often, though, this is something that is just not allowed in the "keep your hands to yourself; no talking, keep your eyes on your own desk," etc. dictums that are so much a part of today's classroom environment.

PITIFUL TO BE CRITICAL

While Purpel (1989) tells us about the importance and need for critical consciousness and critical inquiry, teachers are especially prone to the wrong kind or negative aspect of being critical. Somehow, it has become an accepted part of our jobs. We tend to be critical in our daily activities of finding flaws in students' work, correcting their behavior, and marking errors and mistakes rather than praising the good. Rather than affirming students' work with a simple "good job," we must pinpoint the mistakes, "count off" for them and then assign a grade. All this process is a sickness that repels students from the joy of learning, all the while pushing them to the stressful drudgery of tests and grades. It would be much better if we could break away from the mentality of comparing, finding flaws, and correcting students to an atmosphere where the teachers and students are engaged in learning to appreciate one another.

Heschel (1973) seems to speak to this idea when he explains that:

> . . .the Baal Shem had the genius of discovering ways to live in accord with the world, with people. He thought of the holiness and beauty every man's soul contained, and whenever he met the plainest man, he would offer love first and only then ask him to divest himself of the shackles that prevented him from being in love with God. (pp. 65-66)

As teachers, dealing with all types of students from a kaleidoscope of abilities, interests, and ethnic backgrounds, we must be also conscious of developing the ability in seeing the holiness and beauty in the souls of all our students, even more so, because the children spirits which pass before us are still growing and changing and are subject to the moldings and manipulations of the teacher. The Baal Shem Tov could do that. Heschel writes that "he related to people as if everybody were his equal. The glory in being human--enchanted him. He could discover jewels in every soul, and wherever he went he sought to foster conciliation. The most important prerequisite of love is appreciation" (p.66).

In the classroom, students can feel a special sense of caring from the teacher, if only the teacher can show the students that they are appreciated in just the form and abilities they bring to the classroom; that their mere presence in the class setting is appreciated. The students can then feel the force of love that compels them to respond to it accordingly. Heschel says that "the test of love is in how one relates not to saints and scholars but to rascals" (p.66). How important and also how often overlooked is the skill of the teacher to find an admirable quality in each and every student, even the students who have given up the faith that school will help them in any way.

So often, the teacher fails to appreciate the students who admit that they are not good students. We immediately label them as lazy, underachievers, apathetic, complacent, slow, and much worse. In actuality, this situation is no different than the society which prefers the self-righteous person who proclaims their virtue over the sinner who knows what he is and faces the Truth. The students who are willing to say that they are making mistakes as students are facing the same type of truth and should be appreciated rather than chastised and berated by the teacher.

Heschel writes that:

> The Baal Shem Tov established an important maxim; when we detect a mean quality in a mean quality in a man, we do so because we possess it ourselves. Heaven wants us to become aware of it, thereby hinting at the need for our repentance. The Baal Shem believed that the scholar could be a scoundrel and that the lowly man could perform an action that justified the existence of the whole world. (pp. 67-68)

As teachers, this is a particularly hard lesson to learn because when we detect those negatives in our students, do we not often fail to accept that we may be able to recognize those flaws so well because we possess them ourselves, but are unwilling to admit those failings to our consciousnesses? If we are able to remember this maxim in the classroom, it would definitely help us

to be less critical and judgemental with our students. In addition, if we are able to think of ourselves as just as flawed as those we wish to deride, would it not be the first step in working on our own weaknesses and inadequacies and start the healing process for ourselves, as well as allowing us to view the students in a less prejudicial manner? This seems especially true for those teachers who tend to think of the scholarly, grade-conscious student as a saint, meanwhile undervaluing the human worth and divineness of all those not so academically inclined. Understanding that the brilliant, bookish students can be scoundrels just as easily as the lowly, lazy students can be saints can help bring a balance and a healing attitude to the classroom.

Finally, Heschel tells us that the Baal Shem Tov added a new and vital element to Hasidism when he initiated the idea of a relationship between the Hasid and the rebbe. In essence, the term 'Hasid' no longer "meant a man who possessed only certain qualities and adhered to a certain type of conduct. It came to denote a relationship" (p.74). The student's and teacher's "relationship" today is also an essential component in a healthy learning environment. If there is learning being accomplished; if students are coming to know certain things, their trust and faith in the person imparting that instruction is paramount.

RULES, ROUTINES, REPETITION, AND RITUALS

So much of our lives is roped in by routine and repetition and rituals. Heschel (1973) writes that:

> The Baal Shem thought of the Jew's relationship to God as a romance, and it disturbed him to see how many rituals had become routine rather than rapturous acts, exercises in repetition rather than gestures of surprise. . . . one of his contributions was to awaken a zest for spiritual living. He revived the ancient Biblical spirit of joy; joy is wisdom, preparation for prophecy. (p. 51)

This in turn can lead to a banishment of sadness. Why can this not be a goal of schooling? Why is there such a lack of humor and joy in the present curriculum? Why is there so little delight and spontaneity? If these are important spiritual goals, then why are they so void in the schooling curriculum? What are we doing to our children when we deny them opportunities day after day of experiencing and expressing moments of delight or joy with what they are learning? Why do we insist that an atmosphere of moroseness pervade the classroom? Heschel tells us that the Baal Shem felt that "even lowly merriment originates in holiness. . . ." "The fire of evil can better be fought with flames of ecstasy than through fasting and mortification" (p.56). I think so, just as I believe the quagmire of ignorance can better be fought with

fountains gushing joy and delight than stagnated pools of the morbid melancholy of ritual and repetition.

The Baal Shem Tov restored and strengthened an old Jewish precept whereby learning without awe was of questionable value. Is it not equally true in the classrooms of today? As long as teachers present material to the students without a sense of awe that should go along with the lesson, and as long as the students receive the knowledge in a complacent, nonchalant demeanor, the impact of that lesson is certainly questionable.

Is this not what is happening in the schools today when so many devices are installed to limit anything that might cause wonder, excitement, or any vestige of emotion? Control the students at all costs regardless if the result is an intellectually numb student who has lost all sense of wonder and awe about learning or coming to know. Attaining a certain score on an end-of-course test means little to nothing to anyone, except administrators who are trying to justify themselves and the testing mentality. Meanwhile, a student picking up a book and, on his or her own volition, looking inside with a sense of excitement and expectancy of the possible treasures within means everything. What is a better indication of the schools' success with students, comparing their latest test scores from flawed and irrelevant

testing instruments or their individual decisions to read a book rather than watch another night of television? Heschel (1973) says that "endemic to all traditional religion is the peril of stagnation. What becomes settled and established may easily turn sour. Faith is replaced by creed, spontaneity by hackneyed repetition" (p.86). Is this not true as well for the traditional schooling that has become so settled and established that faith, trust, and spontaneity is practically nonexistent in the classroom?

The sickness in schooling is the tediousness of unlimited repetition. Even if a teacher was able to get the student to renew his or her commitment to learning, without the surprise of adventure, variety, and flexibility in the school day and in the curriculum, that commitment is difficult to sustain. The healing of education would stress that routine yield to spontaneity, that repetition be merely the stepping stone to spiritual discovery, and that the rote drilling and control mentality give way to individual freedoms and flexibility. The sickness in schooling is that since honest reflection about what is happening within the schools by the people who control the purse strings and wield the power is not taking place, the result is that the sickness is merely spreading. We can see it in the faces of our children and in the perils of just trying to exist in our society.

THE SADNESS OF SELF-LOVE AND SELF-INTEREST

Heschel (1973) mentions the story of Narcissus, then goes on to say that the tale:

> . . .describes a condition that affects most of us, touching upon the very nerve of our inner life. It is not self-love as such that is inherently wrong but, rather, its consequences: the lack of concern for others so easily fostered by self-love, the increasing isolation of the self. Self-love in its extreme form brings about man's destruction; it is its own enemy. (p.98)

The sickness in schooling is that the institution, the administrators and politicians who are in control of the policies and curriculum that school must carry out is in love with itself to the point that the lack of concern for teachers and students is rampant. The people making the rules are isolated physically and emotionally from the day to day activities of students and teachers. They are not teaching classes. They are not in the classrooms teaching on a daily basis. They are not in touch with either students or teachers. How could they possibly know what the ailments are and how to cure them? Is it any different than doctors trying to cure patients they have never met? That is certainly an absurd scenario, but why is it any less ridiculous in the school setting? Why aren't administrators required to teach at

least one class a day, every day just as teachers are required to teach five, six, and more classes every day, every week, every month? Is it not the idea of self-interest of those who have manage to remove themselves from the classrooms, the sick wards, if you will, and now can make choices for those settings from a safe, isolated distance? Would not policies, rules, and curriculum decisions change if they were in the classrooms themselves every day engaged in teaching? With the schooling process, too often it seems that the teachers and students exist to support and validate the central hub of the "downtown" administrators. When we can get away from the notion that the central office is the center of what is important in schooling, then we will be moving away from the sickness and more toward the healing.

FAITH, SHARING, WHOLENESS, AND CONNECTEDNESS

It will take a certain amount of faith of all parties involved to make the healing education the primary objective and not subservient to the sickness of the present schooling process. It will take a special kind of faith, a faith that has all but been forgotten. This faith is akin to the sense of the heroic which needs to be recalled to our consciousnesses. Heschel (1973) felt that:

. . .both the Kotzker and Kierkegaard believed the life of faith had been made too easy; it had lost all sense of the heroic, had become a relative ingredient. Both men felt that everyone was yielding, faltering, and compromising. With people satisfied with things only half done, compromise was taken as the norm, the tentative was seen as final, and the vision was consigned to oblivion. (p.125)

This situation is all too true for the schooling process across America. In deciding to go with the healing of education rather than the stultifying schooling scheme, a commitment to the new direction means seeing the healing process through, not half completed; faith that the healing of education is worth the commitment rather than accepting compromise as the panacea for dissension; being assertive and resolute as opposed to tired tentativeness; and not losing sight of the vision of a healthy school system producing healthy and successful students. What then is the truth about the expectations and goals of faith? As Heschel encourages us to do, "let us ponder on the question of whether the requirements of faith be adapted to the weaknesses of human nature, or should human nature be raised to a level of greatness?" (p.125) What is it that can steady and comfort the teacher? As Heschel says, "this means being faithful to Him even in extreme misery. When we have every reason in the world to grieve, to lament, we shall be able to lean on faith" (p.190). He continues:

Faith is not a state of passivity, of quiet acceptance; to join others in assenting to certain principles will not suffice. Faith requires action, a leap. It is an enterprise, not inertia. It requires bold initiative rather than continuity. Faith is forever contingent on the courage of the believer. . . To get that strength of believing, it takes the experience of awe. Our hearts must be embedded in faith. We should expect nothing less than to face the truth through deep insight. We cannot be satisfied with half-learned views, half-baked truths. (p.194)

As a teacher, I want to share ideas I have come to know, but I don't want to force those ideas onto my students. I am not an inculcator. An inculcator is often used as a substitute word for teacher. I am willing to offer what I know to those who want to listen, but forcing, coercing, threatening, or intimidating someone into learning something is not what I intend to do as a teacher. I do not plan on grinding my heel on anyone. I do want to treat my students as if they were individual flowers in a bed of flowers and will try my best not to trample on their rights and freedoms as students and as human beings. The idea that there are "right" answers to questions and that to understand we must fragment, analyze, and force those facts onto students (i.e., to fill them with knowledge) comes directly from the 17th century scientific paradigm of coming to know.

Fortunately, the influence of the Cartesian-Newtonian concept of the universe is beginning to lose some of its influence. Science

is beginning to view the world in a more connected and interdependent way. Cummings (1991) tells us that:

> . . .all living and non-living realities compose an organized, interlocking system. All components interact through processes that have ripple effects over the entire network. . . In the long run, all are essentially dependent on all others. The individual survives and thrives if the entire ecosystem thrives. . .The cosmos resembles the orderly unity of a living, acting being more than the juxtaposition of parts in a giant machine. Living and non-living components depend on one another in a network of relationships. The whole interconnected network is in constant, dynamic flux: from the activity of particles within the atom, to the firing of nerve cells in a human brain, to the rotation of galaxies and star clusters in outer space. (p. 63)

An finally, Purpel (1989) mentions this idea of wholeness in relation to creation theology in which he says:

> . . .there is an esthetic of wholeness and relationship, harmony, joy, justice, and love, an esthetic which can be applied to our institutions. . .the esthetic of creation theology is one in which...resonates with much of mainstream American thinking and beliefs. It is an esthetic which at the very least is not alien to us and provides no particular barrier to the development of teaching strategies which can sustain and nourish such sensibilities. (p. 92)

I believe this esthetic is exactly the kind of thinking to bring to the healing curriculum and to the public school setting.

AESTHETICS, HEIDEGGER, AND TIME

The utilization of the healing potential of the aesthetic language in educational philosophy today is much like an elusive, distant echo reverberating through the canyons of commensurability curriculum. It is an enchanting, alluring call to the senses that merely bounces off the rigid, inflexible, stone facade of today's facts-based, test-oriented public education structure. The healing of the aesthetic language needs to be more than just an echo. It needs to be the invocation to the Muses for a new way of teaching or maybe a battle cry for change in the schools in America. It will be a difficult process for that to occur because the aesthetic language is neither an easy language to define nor is it conducive to conventional modes of measurement and those two characteristics seem to be prerequisites for contemporary curriculum. But it does not have to be that way. If more people become aware of the virtues of the aesthetic experience, maybe the curriculum would shift more toward humans learning to 'be.'

Several contemporary writers of the aesthetic curriculum can lead us in the right direction by reminding us what it is not. Eisner (1991) tells us that the aesthetic classroom is not modeled after the "standardized procedures of the factory;" does not seek

"uniformity of outcome;" does not employ the multiple-choice test; necessarily forgoes commensurability; and ceases to put children on the "same statistically derived distribution."

Janet Miller would tell us that the aesthetic approach to education would not include further splintering of the disciplines into discrete subject matter areas; would not continue to emphasize students' mastery of factual details nor preparing them for end-of-course tests; would not perpetuate a curriculum of predetermined objectives; and would not have teachers accepting conceptions of knowledge as "fixed and immutable packages" that they are to dispense to their students. (Miller,1991)

Alex Molnar (1991) would not have the teacher manipulation and intimidation of students in his version of the aesthetic curriculum. Students' acts of rebellion would not arbitrarily be squelched; students' venting their displeasure, resistance, and frustration with the inequities of school would not necessarily be punished; and the curriculum would not have the "relentless and remorseless quality" of American industrial culture.

Robert Donmeyer (1991) also voices what the aesthetic curriculum would not be. It would not be merely transforming students into obedient, well-mannered, and unquestioning followers; it would not be a list of behavioral objectives to be met

as part of "measurement-driven instruction;" nor would it be a narrowly defined notion of knowledge and cognition that restrains and constrains the students' affective and aesthetic responses. His voice, added to the others, should enlighten us that the aesthetic language is not the language spoken by school principals, superintendents, curriculum packagers, or administrators empowered to effect change.

However, if the aesthetic language was the predominant language, new relationships would result. First, the most basic relationship between the teacher and the student would change. It would be a dialogical process, a sharing of lived experiences which would enrich both learner and inculcator. They would see themselves as part of the whole, much like the view expressed by James Macdonald in his writing of a "transcendental developmental education" where people begin to see themselves as a "part of the world and not apart from the world. (Macdonald, 1974)

Maxine Greene (1974) sees the teacher as a guide leading the student to an awareness that "reality, truth, and meaning" are not static concepts to be learned, but rather dynamic, growing, and changing ideas as one considers them from new perspectives and vantage points. Certainly, the aesthetic classroom would necessarily lend itself to more creativity, more opportunities for

personal expression, and time allowed for spontaneity and "flow." Students would have more freedom to move, to examine, and to resist. The lesson would move beyond the right way to view the world and knowledge and on to understanding that there can be and should be new ways to consider knowing and how we come to understand our world. With the aesthetic language as the impetus in curriculum design, teachers and students would have more than an echo in the contemporary curriculum canyons. We would possess a new vocabulary and voice to not only discuss but to experience what it is to 'know.'

If we examine the etymology of aesthetic, we can discover from The American Heritage Dictionary (1985) that it comes from the Greek asthetisch which comes from the Latin aestheticus which derives from the Greek aisthetikos, (of sense perception) which comes from aistheta, (perceptible things) which has its roots in aisthenasthai, which means to perceive. Aesthetic, then, has to do with the "criticism of taste; pertaining to the sense of the beautiful; artistic; or having a love of beauty." While aestheticism or estheticism deals with "the pursuit of beauty," or the "belief that beauty is the basic principle from which all other principles are derived," the branch of philosophy called "aesthetics" is probably the closest definition to apply to

educational curriculum. This "aesthetics" provides a "theory of the beautiful and the fine arts"; "theories and descriptions of the psychological response to beauty and artistic experiences"; and in the philosophy of Kant, it is the "branch of metaphysics concerned with the laws of perception."

The aesthetic language, then, has a vocabulary which that describes the present with individuals' personal, reflexive responses to a variety of stimuli, including music, art, drama, dialogue, and lived experiences. The aesthetic vocabulary includes words like harmony, wholeness, symmetry, beauty, nurturing, compassion, freedom, liberation, revelation, and sharing-- especially sharing one's lived experience in a way that evokes response from others. The aesthetic curriculum relies on the intuitive, tacit, and spontaneous ways of "knowing" that lead the individual to new heights of discovery, self-discovery, creativity, and understanding. Freedom and liberation from old ways of looking at knowledge and "knowing" are the fruits of the aesthetic language.

The language of aesthetics is a language of beauty; a language to enhance one's ability to sense or perceive that beauty, and to have a response to beauty and artistic experiences. George Santayana (1896) had this idea of the aesthetic. He felt that "the

sense of beauty has a more important place in life than aesthetic

theory has ever taken in philosophy; to feel beauty is a better thing

than to understand how we come to feel it. To have imagination

and taste, to love the best, to be carried by the contemplation of

nature to a vivid faith in the ideal, all this is more, a great deal

more, than any science can hope to be." For Holderlin, the language

of Beauty was the pastoral setting which can be felt in his hymn,

"Germania":

> And secretly, while you dreamed, at noon,
> Departing I left a token of friendship,
> The flower of the mouth behind, and lonely you spoke.
> Yet you, the greatly blessed, with the rivers too
> Dispatched a wealth of golden words, and they well unceasing
> Into all regions now.

Heidegger comments on this 'flower of the mouth' as being

language and that "in language the earth blossoms toward the

bloom of the sky." (Heidegger, 1959)

For me, the language of the aesthetic experience in teaching

and in creating educational curriculum is very much like the

visions of Santayana, Holderlin and Heidegger. We need to feel; to

develop imagination and creativity; to have a passion for the best;

to sense our interdependency with Nature; and to have faith in the

ideal. There is also another extremely important aspect of the

aesthetic, an intuitive dimension that both they and the dictionary definitions imply, that I will argue is the impetus of the aesthetic language. This tacit quality is the pervasive characteristic of "relationship" developed between the person and object, between student and teacher, and the "personal experience" of the perceiver. Ted Aoki (1991) talks about these types of interpersonal relationships. In particular, he speaks of the resonance between the student and the teacher that involves "tensionality," or the attunement of the present moment and situation so the participants become more alive and reflexive in the relationship. He cites Plato in his notion of "inspirited curriculum" and how music, with its rhythm and harmony touches the spirit in quite an aesthetic mode. He employs the senses of sight and sound to differentiate the abstract thoughts or "voices" with the concrete voices of the "situationally lived." The abstract leads us away from our consciousness that we are humans being--and as teachers, humans being in relationship with students. Aoki would have us to become less abstract, get back to the senses and feeling, "retouch the earth" and remember we are "earth dwellers." Finally, he resorts to the intuitive, tacit language of the aesthetic when he relates the metaphors that involve sound such as "listening to callings," seeking attunement," finding resonances,"

and, "the tonal quality of voices" which all relate to the personal or the human being.

Donmeyer (1991) feels that the language to describe the aesthetic moment must be poetic because ordinary, everyday prose is inadequate. He uses the art form of drama to give voice to the aesthetic because it has the "potential to be most lifelike." He lists three potential qualities of how drama and the aesthetic language personalizes thinking and knowing. It can add an "aesthetic, visceral, feeling dimension to our thinking; it can alter the abstraction of thought with "flesh and blood concreteness;" and it can make "intensity, passion, and motivation a part of intellectual activity." Donmeyer goes on to say that the arts and the aesthetic curriculum is a source of inspiration and insight and provides a different rationality of the world where the things we can easily measure matter the least, while what matters most is ostensibly impossible to measure. The aesthetic helps to legitimize the person--the individual, and who and what that person is. Finally, the aesthetic fosters the nurturing and caring which must come when the person is perceived, accepted, and understood.

The healing of the aesthetic language would also bring us a healthier concept of time. Teachers and students need time

incorporated into the school day for reflection and rumination. We are all in such a rush that we hurry by the very meaning of life. That meaning is to be alive and to be conscious of being alive; to be thankful for another moment of breath, to make the most of the present. The very idea of rushing is that we are in a hurry to be somewhere we are not. We rush to make a deadline; to get to the next stop or place along the way; to get to that place where we can rest. Tacit in all this rushing is the fact that we are not savoring and celebrating the present. We are, instead, gulping and enduring life, but hardly enjoying our present moments. It is difficult to experience joy and fulfillment if we are always in a rush to be in some place that we are not. Our time-conscious society (or maybe unconscious) says that we should rush through things. It is indeed a mindless rushing in that we schedule little time to be aware of our humanity. That humanity is what the healing curriculum is all about and is the core of the discussion in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER IV

CONCEPTUALIZING THE HEALING CURRICULUM

And what scares people the most? It's a new step, an authentic
new word,...
-Raskolnikov (from Dostoyevsky's Crime and Punishment)

The authentic new word in education needs to be "healing." As
teachers and students, we must recognize the truth that we are
caught up in a sick institution with a plethora of tumors and
malignancies that must be healed before schools become places of
education. We must begin the healing curriculum in the schooling
process. Just like the fear of dying often times prevents people
from doing those things that might give them personal satisfaction
and even joy, students' fear of failing school often keeps them
from taking an interest in learning and becoming educated.

Getting a student to want to learn is similar to getting a
patient to want to get better. Both are beginnings, and both
involve similar types of responses from the learner/patient. First,
attitude is so important. The participant must want something to
happen. The learner must want to learn; the patient must want to
get better. The healing teacher aids the learning process for the

student by asking questions that help the student to identify interests and needs, just as the healing physician inquires information of the patients concerning their ailments. Then, to foster the learning process for the student, the healing teacher seeks to evoke an emotional commitment from the student, even as the physician attempts to solicit an emotional decision from the patient to want to get better. The success of either is contingent on what the student or patient desires even if that decision involves a radical change in life-style.

One of the first tenets of the healing curriculum must be the absolute emphasis of the world (Nature) as a living, breathing organism that is intertwined with the survival of our species. We must become ecologically conscious of the interdependence of ourselves with the environment in which we exist. What good is it to heal ourselves individually when our planet is being destroyed to the point that the very existence of our species is threatened? Just as Mengert (1993) tells us that as we must remember the language of reconciliation in terms of our own personal healing processes, we must also reconcile ourselves with our environment called Earth. We are long overdue to begin the process and the schools are the places where the reconciliation must begin and must begin soon. As David Briscoe (1994) writes in an Associated

Press article, "slowed growth in world food supplies provides real evidence that the planet's biological limits may have been reached. . . ." (p.11A). He cites among the signs: "a three-month doubling of world rice prices, billions of acres of rangeland chewed down to uselessness, spreading water shortages and an $80,000 tuna." He quotes Worldwatch's 11th annual 'State of the World' report on global environment and social conditions, which states that 'as a result of our population size, consumption patterns, and technology choices, we have surpassed the planet's carrying capacity.' Lester Brown, president of the group asserts that 'human demands are approaching the limits of oceanic fisheries to supply fish, of rangelands to support livestock and, in many countries, of the hydrological cycle to produce fresh water" (p.11A).

With this idea of global healing, Lewis Thomas (1983) in Purpel's, *The Moral and Spiritual Crisis in Education* tells us to:

> . . .teach ecology early on. Let it be understood that the earth's life is a system of interliving, interdependent creatures, and that we do not understand at all how it works. The earth's environment, from the range of atmospheric gases to the chemical constituents of the sea, has been held in an almost unbelievably improbable state of regulated balance since life began, and the regulation of stability and balance is accomplished solely by the life itself, like the internal environment of an immense organism, and we do not know how that one works, even less what it means. Teach that. (pp. 151-152)

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COSMIC STORY

All facts are parables: their object is God.
-Heschel

The healing curriculum would emphasize the need to better understand myths and their importance in culture. Without them as an underlying structure we lose our sense of the quintessential questions of who we are and where are we going. As Purpel (1989) articulates:

> Myths provide us with stories of creation, meaning, and fate populated by personifications, metaphors, and parables, although they are taken literally by some. Myths provide bridges between the Other and us-between the Absent and the present, between mystery and what is known, between heaven and earth, religion and morality, religion and politics, and so on. Another way of formulating our cultural and educational crisis is to say that we no longer have myths and seem incapable of creating, sustaining, and energizing them. Furthermore, it can be said that although we differ on what constitutes a legitimate source of myth and which myths are acceptable, we must recognize that there is a great deal of agreement on the value and need to have such myths. By myth we obviously do not mean ideas that are demonstrably false or wrong but rather imaginative constructions of the meaning of universe and our place in it. (p. 70)

Just as Purpel discusses the importance of being able to distinguish between the sacred and the profane, or what it means to be holy, it is equally important for educators and students alike to discern between those things that lead to sickness and those that lead to healing. The goal would be to accept the fact that society is already sick and that the students are also already sick (in varying ways and degrees) and to create an environment that administers to their ills and nurtures them in a healing fashion. This philosophy, in effect, would consider the teacher as healer, as one who enables the healing process rather than adding to the already momentous malaise. Teacher as healer is not an aberration. In fact, it may be that healer was the role meant for the teacher from the very beginning.

When we can begin to see the relation between the schooling process and the prevailing societal sickness all around us, maybe we also be able to visualize the healing that can come if we use education to help students come to the truth about their situations in our culture, as well as, coming to understanding and knowledge from where they are. It is at that point that we can begin to surmise how everything in the universe is about interdependence and

relation. We can begin to understand ourselves in relation, which Fox (1991) believes is everything. "Even Creation," he says, "is about relation. It is the spiraling, dancing, crouching, springing, leaping, surprising act of relatedness, of communing, of responding, of letting go, of being. Being is about relation." He reminds us that Eckhart believed that relation was "the essence of everything that exists." (Fox, 1991) When we apply this concept to the notion of 'story,' we can immerse ourselves in the shaping and reshaping of who we are, what we are, why we are, where we are, and where we are destined to go. We become characters in the cosmic story even as we are in relation to its ever-unfolding narrative. Hopefully, the students and all of us would begin to understand that we are characters in the "Cosmic Story." We are creators and artists in our own time, unique and precious. So many of us need to be constantly reminded of this, because the schooling sickness so effectively diminishes in us the miracle and wonder of being human. Our stories help create and define who we are.

Fox (1991) discusses art-as-meditation in terms of this idea of 'creativity and birthing,' 'centering,' and returning to the source. (Fox, 1983 p. 188) He quotes Meister Eckhart to

voice the mainspring of his concept. Eckhart confides that "whatever I want to express in its truest meaning must emerge from within me and pass through an inner form. It cannot come from outside to the inside but must emerge from within" (p.190) That substance that emerges from within, Fox believes, is art--not conventional, traditional notions of art, but art as prayer, art as meditation. "Only art as meditation reminds people so that they will never forget that the most beautiful thing a potter produces is... the potter" (pp. 191-192)

Fox directly addresses and advocates storytelling when he states that we express ourselves too much in words. He says that:

> . . .if we can let go of our overdependence on words,we allow images, symbols, pictures to emerge, and we express them by drawing, painting, body movement, music, poetry, etc. . . Art as meditation takes one on deeper, more communal journeys than words can ever do. Storytelling is more than words, it is words serving the form of stories, thus pictures of our lives. (pp.193-194)

Letting go and trusting the images experienced in art as meditation leads us to a new awareness of ourselves in the universe and the ability to understand the cosmic story of

creation and humankind's destiny. This idea is at the very heart of the word story, especially of the original Greek word histore, meaning learned man. My conception of story is that it is an ongoing life force of creation and destruction, searching and finding, losing and regaining, death and rebirth. Certainly, story is the narrative of events, but that narrative needs to be put into context with the 'one story' that drives us all and forever dwells in the shadows of the human subconscious. Stories, or the creation of stories begin with imagination. Imagination is a way to separate ourselves from the world in which we have to live and to begin a process to alter that existence. It is the impetus behind art, which is not the intellectual world we see, but the emotional world we construct, the way we want the world to be. The relevance of the story and the storyteller is that they belong to the world that humans construct and not necessarily to the world they see. It is as though the storytellers are dissatisfied with what they see, or are convinced that something else should be instead, and finally try to make believe or create the language to bring it into existence.

The core of all story is the attempt to identify, connect with, and explain God. Stories are told about Gods and they become a mythology. Storytellers' desire to tell a story comes from their previous experience with a story, and often they imitate the form of the story. The story often has some principle of repetition or recurrence; in Nature this repetition is most obvious in the cycle of the sun, moon, the seasons, etc. Some literary critics suggest that all stories go back to one, single, mythical story, which may never have existed as a whole story anywhere, but which we have constructed by piecing together parts of myths and legends we have. With regard to this idea of mythos, Purpel (1989) says that:

> . . .a profession without a mythic dimension that provides a vision of ideals and goals is not capable of providing serious cultural leadership and instead serves as a tool that is manipulated by those who have such a vision in place. (p. 105)

As educators, we must have the vision of healing in place and using story to communicate that vision can be an effective method. Often, the story begins because the storyteller feels cutoff from the immediate surroundings and wants to somehow reconstruct the world, to explain it

in more personal terms. Even deeper, the storyteller wants to tell the story of how humankind has lost its world, who it is and how that original paradise and identity is regained. This idea is at the very foundation of the family of stories and poetry. Frye (1964) alludes to this when he discusses the "feeling of lost identity, and that poetry, by using the language of identification, which is metaphor, tries to lead our imaginations back to it." Certainly, this is the setting for our present position in America's public schooling, and I think it is time to lead our imaginations to a new vision of a healing curriculum in school. Part of this process is to emphasize the essence of story and how we are all part of the story.

This story is at the heart of all literature. It is the story of Joseph Campbell's "hero with a thousand faces" where the hero becomes aware of the "calling," goes on the adventure, is initiated into understanding through trials and hardship, and finally returns. It is part of what he calls the monomyth. (Campbell, 1988)

The storyteller must, as Frye says, "not to tell you what happened, but what happens: not what did take place, but the kind of thing that always does take place." (Frye, 1964)

The story then is not one separate recounting of events, but rather part of a whole world of stories. In other words, every new story told has the old in it that has been reshaped. Still, we revere the world of the story because it gives us insight into the consciousness of humankind and subsequently knowledge of who we are as individuals.

The essence of the best stories seem to be involuntary, because the forms or the archetypes of the 'whole' story are taking control of them. They offer a pattern or structure within which the human imagination begins to show itself. They are not as much a part of reality as they are of the imagination. Still, this is when the story takes on the form of art in the sense that it bridges the conscious and the unconscious mind to a world of new perspectives and understanding. Plato might be speaking of the quintessential story when he talks of art as something like a conscious dream where it is a product of the imagination removed from everyday existence, controlled by the same forces that rule the dream, and yet, offering us a new look and meaning to reality that we don't get from any other approach to reality. (Hutchins, 1952)

The primordial story myth is a simple and primitive attempt of the imagination to relate the human with the nonhuman world, and characteristically the consequence is a story about a god. The Christian Bible serves as the foundation of this story, with the Classical mythology giving us a clearer framework of the main episodes of the hero story, such as his or her mysterious birth, triumph and marriage, death and betrayal, and eventual rebirth. These literary patterns are not merely coincidental, but have a way of showing up in cultures all over the world. It is important that these stories be read or listened to purely as stories. As Frye (1964) tells us, "the art of listening to stories is a basic training for the imagination. You don't start arguing with the writer: you accept his postulates, even if he tells you that the cow jumped over the moon, and you don't react until you've taken in all of what he has to say." Storytelling speaks the language of the imagination, and we can train and improve our imagination by better understanding the essence or nature of the story.

As Frye reminds us, the nature of stories is that all themes and characters that we encounter in literature belong to one big interlocking family...we keep associating

our literary experiences together: we're always reminded of some other story we have read or movie we have seen. (Frye, 1964) So, even though stories remind us of the realities of life, they remind us more of other stories. There are numerous conventions and patterns to a story, but the central problem or conflict is the impetus for all the other structures. These conflict structures can be organized in many ways, but there is one that is particularly useful. It is the journey framework in which the characters make either linear or circular physical journeys. Another way to organize the story is by genre. Broadly speaking, traditional stories or those that were originally transmitted orally from one generation to another might be divided into three genres of folktale, myth, and hero myth. Literary critics might classify stories that follow the rules and conventions of the laws of nature and science as 'realism' and those stories that defy and suspend those conventions as 'fantasy.'

I like the idea of the cosmic story, in which the story deals with the hero's loss and regaining of identity. For Frye, these stories can be grouped into the four categories of romance, tragedy, satire, and comedy. Moss and Stott (1986) summarize these categories. The romance is

concerned with the hero's birth, education, and initiation. It involves a quest with a series of tests and is "nearest...to the wish-fulfillment dream." Tragedy deals with the "finite condition of human beings." While human aspiration is limitless, the power to achieve goals is limited. Tragedy may thus end in the death and destruction of the hero. Irony (and the closely related form, satire) emphasizes the "contrast between the ideal and the actual." In some ironic stories the expectations of the characters are reversed. Comedy focuses on the notion of "rebirth and renewal" after the obstacles to happiness and the threats to a secure social order have been overcome.

The cosmic story sets us on a journey of liberation to free our conceptions of who we are and what we are. The ideas of mystery and history, and beauty and justice must drive the story to a conclusion that will set us free spiritually and move us to action. Fox feels that we need to "act to be still," to disengage ourselves from the panic pace of life and take time to meditate on the awesomeness of creation and our relationship to that wonder. We are co-creators in the cosmic story and the conflict is for humans to come to the realization that we are denying our divine

existence by struggling against Creation. Fox says that "all creation is a trace, a footprint, an offspring of the Godhead. Creation is the passing by of divinity in the form of isness. It is God's shadow in our midst. It is sacred. All our relationships are sacred." (Fox, 1991)

Poet and potter M. C. Richards seems to be commenting on this cosmic conflict of determining who we are and our divine destiny when she writes, "there is palpable disunion...this split obstructs the poetic consciousness; it is a characteristic malady of our society...the inner soul withdraws, goes underground, splits off from the part that keeps walking around. Vitality ebbs. Psychic disturbance is acute. Suicide may be attempted." (Richards, 1964) When we don't understand the idea of the monomyth or the cosmic story and that we are writing our own story by living it, we lack the necessary language with which to understand our very existence in the world. The story always moves us toward a better understanding of our divine destiny. To realize that we are part of the cosmic story is to experience a type of spiritual awakening. We begin to see the difference between the superficiality of those material things outside the story and the spiritual entities within.

I think Eckhart is commenting on characters in the cosmic story when he explains the outward and inward persons. He says that, "the outward person is the old person, the earthly person, the person of this world , who grows old 'from day to day.' That person's end is death....The inward person, on the other hand, is the new person, the heavenly person, in whom God shines." (Fox, 1980) To fathom this "God who shines" in ourselves as characters in the cosmic story is to discover our destiny and to live a life rich with relevance and purpose.

Words, our language, the very way we perceive our existence takes on significantly new meaning when we put those ideas and perceptions within the framework of the cosmic story. Even the idea of the path is different when we put it into the context of the one story. As Fox relates, "taking a path is different from driving down a highway to work. A path has something personal about it; it implies choice or even mystery. To choose one path is to reject another. A path is a meandering walkway--you do not rush or even drive down a pathway. A path is not goal oriented. A path is the way itself, and every moment on it is a holy moment; a sacred seeing goes on there." (Fox, 1991)

At the heart of the cosmic storyteller and the story that is told is the idea of the journey that we all should be in the process of taking. It is not only a journey of learning our destiny, but a spiritual one as well that opens our minds to the development of the psyche as co-creators with God. It is the wellspring or fountainhead of the notion of the aesthetic and Fox's art-as-meditation concept. He talks about this process as the "wrestling with the demons and angels in the depths of our psyches and daring to name them, to put them where they can breathe and have space and we can look at them. This process of listening to our images and birthing them allows us to embrace our 'enemies' -that is, the shadow side of ourselves- as well as to embrace our biggest visions and dreams. (Fox, 1991) This is the core conflict of the cosmic story. We must all take or refuse the calling to comprehend our destinies and to acquire spiritual equilibrium.

In many ways, the story of the hero in the monomyth is the story of creation spirituality and its basic prayer form of art-as-meditation. The hero must be willing to accept the call, undertake the journey, experience the aesthetic encounter, share the suffering, and return to a new sense of

awe in the creation of all things. When this happens, the one story has been told and becomes the genesis for all the yet untold stories to come.

ORALITY AND ITS PLACE IN THE HEALING CURRICULUM

Part of the healing process seems to be accepting the Truth about who we are and what we are. Part of the answer to those questions lies in our pre-linguistic origins. Before we can accept the Truth about ourselves, collectively and individually, we must find it. The healing paradigm in education would take us to a study of orality and the notion of humans being oral creatures by nature. To get to orality and the very essence of what it is to be human, we can begin with some thoughts from Heidegger concerning language, the orality of language, and how poetry can be the impetus in coming to know language, as well as, ourselves.

The healing curriculum would begin with poetry. The orality of poetry draws us into relationship with language, as Heidegger (1959) asks the question: "How else can we be close to language except by speaking?" (p.58) And then, language speaks itself as language when "we cannot find the right word for something that concerns us, carries us away, oppresses or encourages us. Then we leave unspoken what

we have in mind and, without rightly giving it thought, undergo moments in which language itself has distantly and fleetingly touched us with its essential being." (p.59) It can be said that Heidegger did not readily accept the journey of naming language. He once stated that he waited twenty years after his doctoral dissertation to even "dare discuss in a class the question of language." When he did, he addressed language in relation with poetry. He sought to find "in the neighborhood of the poetic experience with the word, a possibility for a thinking experience with language." (Heidegger, 1959) He felt that "when we reflect on poetry, we find ourselves at once in that same element in which thinking moves...but no matter how we call poetry and thought to mind, in every case one and the same element has drawn close to us-saying-whether we pay attention to it or not."

Heidegger continues by saying that "we speak of language, but constantly seem to be speaking merely about language, while in fact we are already letting language, from within language, speak to us, in language, of itself, saying its nature." (p.85) Therefore, the poetic experience with the word gives us an insightful clue. "What the poetic experience with language says of the word

implies the relation between the "is" which itself is not, and the word which is in the same case of not being a being...It shows what there is and yet 'is' not."

Language also speaks to us through the poetic experience. Heidegger calls that "nearness that brings poetry and thinking together into neighborhood...Saying...and that what concerns us as language receives its definition from Saying as that which moves all things." (p.95)   From there Heidegger explains that "language is represented in terms of speech in the sense of vocal sounds," and then finally, "the sound of language, its earthyness is held with the harmony that attunes the regions of the world's structure, playing them in chorus." (p.101)   And yet, Heidegger continues the dialectic of this "Saying, as the way-making movement of the world's fourfold, gathers all things up into the nearness of face-to-face encounter, and does so soundlessly, as quietly as time times, space spaces, as quietly as the play of time-space is enacted.   The soundless gathering call, by which Saying moves the world-relation on its way, we call the ringing of stillness.   It is: the language of being." (Heidegger, 1959)

The language of poetry greatly attracted Heidegger and I believe that his immersion into it was due to his belief that the nature of poetry was the essence of language and also the way to

recover the 'lost identity' and Paradise. In order to do that, he says that "language must, in its own way avow to us itself-its nature. Language persists as this avowal. We hear it constantly, of course, but do not give it thought. If we did not hear it everywhere, we could not use one single word of language....The essential nature of language makes itself known to us as what is spoken, the language of its nature. But we cannot quite hear this primal knowledge, let alone 'read' it. It runs: The being of language-the language of being." (Heidegger, 1959) He selects poetry to discuss this very core of his thoughts on Being. He chooses a line from Stefan George's, "The Word" as the marker to keep true on his "way to language."

That line is: Where word breaks off no thing may be.

In English-speaking countries, English, of course, is the mother tongue. Without it, it is difficult to understand anything or take part in society without it. The literary critic, Northrop Frye asserts that "wherever illiteracy is a problem, it is as fundamental a problem as getting enough to eat or a place to sleep. The native language takes precedence over every other subject of study: nothing else can compare with it in usefulness." (Frye, 1964)

Literacy is defined in The American Heritage Dictionary

(1985) as the condition or quality of being literate,

especially the ability to read and write. Literate can also

mean knowledgeable; educated; familiar with literature;

well-written or polished; or a well-informed, educated

person. When we speak of literacy in contemporary public

school classrooms, the word usually means simply that a

person can read. According to many statistical reports,

there are still many in this country who do not qualify as

literates and the number continues to increase. According to

Jonathon Kozol's book, Illiterate America (1985), the United

States was at that time in 49th place among the 128

countries of the United Nations in terms of literacy rate.

Current news reports have claimed that present day

illiteracy in America has gotten even worse. If we include

the technological skill of writing, then the number of people

who get to qualify as being literate decreases even more as

writing requires an even deeper ability with written words.

(Ong, 1982)

How can this possibly be in an era that has been labeled

the information age; when the chirographic and typographic

technologies have proliferated? How can children be getting

through the public education system without attaining rudimentary skills of reading and writing, especially in a time when children are starting school earlier and spending more time getting classroom instruction than ever? Are students unable to read because they are unable to understand their own experiences in the world? (Freire & Macedo, 1987)

Are teachers struggling to teach literacy because they really don't understand it? Is it possible that our present English curricula are merely perpetuating antiquated notions about literacy and who gets to be literate, and subsequently advocating teaching strategies and tactics that repel the students' curiosity toward the written word rather than pique their interests? Since so much of traditional education and schooling has been about preparing students for the university setting(even though only a very few of those students actually go on to the major universities and colleges), is it possible that the way learning takes place in higher education also needs to be reexamined? Why is it that the acquisition of literacy gets so much attention in the educational process, while its progenitor (orality) has faded into relative obscurity? Is it possible that language

teachers and curriculum designers do not understand or are not aware of the dialectic of orality and literacy in the classroom? Is it possible that the very methodologies, strategies, tactics, goals, and objectives presently employed by the majority of English teachers across America today are fallacious and actually contribute to the illiteracy problem by squelching the curiosity of the students toward learning to become literate? Even Freire tells a story from his high school experience with learning language. He recounts that in his high school, "students hated reading literature because it was something that you had to learn, memorize, and you hated it." (Horton & Freire, 1990)

Finally, is it reasonable to suggest that part of the problem is the very definition of literacy itself and that we need to create a new definition of what it means to be literate? I think our present notions of what it means to be literate do indeed need to be reexamined. We need to re-invent a model that encourages, emboldens, and nurtures students' relationship with their language and its oral traditions as well as its written form. We can begin to do this by helping students to acquire the ability to speak, read,

and write the "cosmic story." This of course is the monomyth, the one story that attempts to explain Creation and humankind's destiny, and which serves as the wellspring for all other stories. (Campbell, 1987)

However, before we can even begin to arrive at this point, there must be a discussion, and hopefully, some resolution to a tension between orality and literacy in the classroom. I want to broach the subject and begin to address some the above questions by offering the idea that there is a dialectical relationship between orality and literacy in general, but even more specifically in the classroom. I believe that it is very possible that a literacy-based curriculum, designed by literate educators is being imposed onto students who are still largely functioning at different levels of rudimentary orality within an orally-oriented culture---the classroom. I would like to suggest that a current lack of perception by curriculum creators and teachers of this tensionality between an oral culture being schooled by a literacy-based curriculum sets a variety of educational problems into motion. Some of the most evident of those problems include student apathy, frustration, confusion, and antipathy toward the learning process. Ong

(1982) offers some clues as to why this scenario might cause problems. A truncated list of the tensions between orality and literacy might include: 1) oral cultures have no dictionaries and are indifferent to definitions and semantic discrepancies, while literacy emphasizes these ideas; 2) in oral cultures, words acquire meaning from gestures, vocal inflections, facial expressions, and the entire human setting in which the authentic word is used in 'real-life' situations, while literacy focuses on textual, chirographic, and typographic expression; 3) oral cultures tend to think in situational, operational frames of reference, while literate-based education requires students to think in more abstract, analytical modes; and, 4) oral cultures are capable of producing amazingly complex, intelligent, beautiful organizations of thought and experience, but since literate cultures have difficulty understanding those ways of expression, the false assumption is made that the oral mind in not capable of 'intelligence.' (Ong, 1982) Of course, there are many more examples of this dialectic between orality and literacy, but the above situations are merely presented to offer credence to the notion that there is a distinctive difference between the oral and literate ways of knowing

and coming to knowledge, and that there is a tension between the two in the classroom.

From here, can a case be made that the classroom is a type of oral culture? If such a hypothesis can be effectively argued, then it seems reasonable to suggest that curriculum creators and classroom teachers would need to rethink the English classroom and their methodologies of inculcating English. Ong clearly cites the differences between orality and literacy and how this dialectic affects the very nature of human consciousness and ways of knowing. He reminds the reader that orality came first and that there was a chasm of years before literacy emerged from it. He estimates that humans have been in existence for 30,000 to 50,000 years, but the very earliest scripts date back only 6,000 years. (p.2) Humans began to experience their world in orality and they expressed their knowledge of that experience in speech, not writing. Speech was the expression of humans and their relationship with the world, and it was only much later in human history that literate thought and consequently writing emerged.

Ong offers a plethora of characteristics of oral cultures and many of those characteristics can ostensibly be

applied to the psychodynamics of the classroom. An abbreviated list of some of those characteristics might include: 1) while writing enlarges the potentiality of language to over a million words, a simple oral dialect contains only a few thousand words (as a practicing high school English teacher for six years, I can personally attest to the extremely limited vocabulary skills of the majority of my students in all ability levels); 2) oral cultures have always been fascinated with the beauty and power of oral speech (students are drawn to music, poetry, anecdotes, etc. which contain 'catchy' sayings and phrasing); 3) because oral thought patterns are not the same as literate ones, those thought patterns are considered naive, but oral thinking can be sophisticated and even reflective. An example of this is the Navaho folkloric animal stories which deal with physiological, psychological, and moral issues, and yet, in the classroom, the emphasis is getting the student to understand and express those orally structured thoughts with the literate mind; 4) oral cultures conceptualize and verbalize knowledge within a "human action" context (classroom knowledge that can somehow be made to simulate 'live action' or the 'real world' piques student

curiosity, otherwise, textual or book learning meets with apathy at best and total rejection at worst--it should also be noted here that even scholars of education like Paulo Freire, Donaldo Macedo, and Myles Horton, among others, are beginning to try to bring the lifeless world of the text to life by 'speaking books.' Freire, especially likes the "order of the spoken word" particularly in dialogic form, as it "gives a duality in conversation, a certain relaxation...a result of losing seriousness in thinking, and captures the movement of the conversation." Horton & Freire, 1990); 5) oral cultures often strike literates as antagonistic both in verbal performance and life-style (a plethora of studies have been done examining the problems and solutions with violence and discipline in schools and classrooms---often the confrontations are between the literate teacher and the oral student--is it not possible that the feelings of classroom antagonisms could be better addressed if teachers were more aware that the literate teaching paradigm might actually be causing the classroom tensions and difficulties rather than solving them? Are there not necessarily tensions arising from an oral cultural setting being imposed upon by a literate philosophy toward learning

and knowledge?); 6) oral societies live very much in the present moment (for most children and adolescents, there is truly no tomorrow, only now, with all their hopes and dreams contingent on the passions of the present); 7) oral communication unites people in groups (from six years of personal observation, I have witnessed dramatic examples of how all aspects of orality affect the grouping and interaction of student social involvement with one another and with teachers); 8) for oral cultures, the cosmos is an ongoing event with man at its center (while all of us operate with varying degrees of self-centeredness, students tend to see their world as the 'only' world, showing difficulty in relating their lives and experiences within a context of a greater society); 9) to understand oral cultures, we need to understand the nature of sound itself---in the classroom, sound is often something to be controlled by the teacher rather than a means to understand the very nature of the teaching process and the psychodynamics of the classroom setting. If sound only exists when it is going out of existence, then there is no way to stop sound and have sound. So, what is actually happening in the classroom when the teacher silences the individual and collective voices of

potentially an entire mode of students coming to

knowledge?; 10) bringing knowledge readily to mind to

'speak' connotes intelligence, even our literate society

places great value on individuals who can publicly

demonstrate those mnemonic abilities(actors, singers,

speakers, etc.)---memory is crucial then in oral culture to

show 'intelligence', but in the classroom, especially in the

higher grades, memory verbalization skills have been

forsaken in pursuit for "higher level thinking skills.' By

requiring students to bring knowledge readily to mind and

subsequently placing value on demonstrating that knowledge

orally, without emphasizing the memory processes and

practices to do it, are we not just setting the students up

for failure?); 11) in an oral culture, experience is

intellectualized mnemonically; if knowledge can be defined

as one's lived experiences, and if students are denied

mnemonic skills in favor of those 'higher level' ones, aren't

they being deprived of gaining the very knowledge the

teachers profess to be delivering?; 12) orally-oriented

students learn differently than literate-based students, but

contemporary curriculum is predominately designed for

literates--why is there not more balance between the two

and more cognizance of the fact that society places great worth on oral ways of knowing and expression while schools attempt to teach mostly the literate paradigm?; and finally, 13) oral speech is natural---writing is completely artificial, (there is no way to write "naturally," but every human in every culture who is not impaired learns to talk. Of course, many more parallel characteristics could be noted here, but these can serve as the genesis for the argument that the classroom is indeed an orally oriented setting.

It should be noted at this point that Ong does distinguish between primary orality and secondary orality. Primary orality is that of persons totally unfamiliar with writing. Secondary orality is that of persons who are aware of chirographic and typographic technologies, but prefer to communicate mostly in verbal exchanges. With telephone, radio, television, etc., we are presently in an age of secondary orality. This new orality has a striking resemblance to the old in its participatory mystique, its fostering of a communal sense, its concentration on the present moment, and its use of formulas (Ong, 1971, pp. 284-303; 1977, pp. 16-49, 305-41) This secondary orality relies on the use of writing and print. Consequently, there is

very little spontaneity, excitement, agonisms, etc. involved in its expression. In other words, it is very much a lifeless form. The type of orality in this paper would more likely fall into this secondary orality mode, although parallels of both dimensions of orality can be found in the classroom.

Still, this dialectic by itself is not the problem. The confusion and frustration begin when the paradigm of the literacy-based curriculum becomes the predominant methodology and is indiscriminately imposed on the orally-oriented setting of the public school classroom. First of all, it is difficult for fully literate cultures to even understand oral cultures. Since there is a change in human consciousness and newly perceived ways of coming to know, difficulties arise in the literate mind in understanding how the oral mind attains knowledge. (Ong, p.32) But it is imperative that the literate mind begin the process of learning more about orality and its relationship to literacy. Ong seems to say as much when he asserts that "to construct a logic of writing without investigation in depth of the orality out of which writing emerged and in which writing is permanently and ineluctably grounded is to limit one's understanding." (Ong, 1982 p.77)

Secondly, the very nature of literate thought processes are distinctly different from orally-grounded processes. Ong calls it the "new world of autonomous discourse." He asserts that "without writing, the literate mind would not and could not think as it does, not only when engaged in writing but normally even when it is composing its thought in oral form. More than any other single invention, writing has transformed human consciousness." (p.78) This transformation, though is not an easy process. The Englishman, Orderic Vitalis said that "in the physical act of writing, the whole body labors." (Clancy 1979, p. 90) While I completely concur that the development of literate thought processes is an exemplary goal of public education and subsequent teaching strategies, if the teaching methodology fails to take into account the psychodynamics of orality in the classroom, then the success of those teaching strategies will be minimal. Ostensibly, the proliferation of newspaper articles and scholarly reports concerning the increase in illiteracy in contemporary America would substantiate this prediction.

The problem with the issue of the dialectic of orality and literacy in the classroom is that unless students have

already been exposed and have deeply interiorized the technologies of writing and print, the classroom will only serve to further alienate and disempower those students who rely more heavily on an oral way of acquiring and expressing knowledge. Too many students are being asked to perform chirographic and typographic skills when they are still attempting to make the transition from their oral ways of knowing and coming to knowledge. These skills supposedly are demonstrated in various forms of written 'testing'. While teachers are notorious for offering their own share of these literacy based instruments of measuring a student's knowing, the worst of these devices is the standardized· test.

Despite admonitions from scholars and researchers across the country, standardized testing, in an insidious variety of forms is proliferating rather than subsiding. In July of 1992, even the National Education Association (NEA) which is the nation's largest teachers' union overwhelmingly adopted a resolution against "standardized testing that is mandated by a state or a national authority" and the "use of these tests to compare one school or district to another." (AP, 1992) Mary Bell, a library media specialist in

Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., described standardized tests as "high-stakes testing" used to "sort and sift students based on their performance on a single test, rather than looking at what it is that a student is truly able to do." (AP, 1992)

Unfortunately, I think that the situation is even more oppressive in the sense that it completely denies those students without the refined literate ways of coming to knowledge. Since in an oral culture, there are no such things as lists, written texts, how-to manuals, or print technologies, the orality-oriented students in today's classrooms have significant difficulties in preparing for and scoring well on these types of testing instruments. Because of this, the questionable practices of grading, labeling, and naming of students based on these instruments sends the inaccurate message that these students are somehow less intelligent, when in fact, their ways of coming to knowledge and expressing that knowledge is better done verbally.

When we begin to combine the dialectic of classroom orality and literacy with the role of narrative in students 'coming to know' and the experiences that they bring to the classroom, we delve into an even deeper dimension of the problem. There has been much study done in the orality-

literacy transition using the narrative or the story line. Narrative is considered a major genre of verbal art, from primary oral to high literacy to electronic information processing. It serves as an underlying support for other disciplines as well. For example, science students are often required to "write up" their experiments or 'tell' what they did and what happened when they did it.

Human knowledge is a collection of experiences coming out of the past. This collection of memories provides the pulse of proverbs, aphorisms, philosophical speculation, and religious ritual. It becomes particularly understandable and applicable to humans when it takes on story form. Ong expresses this idea by saying that "knowledge and discourse come out of human experience and that the elemental way to process human experience verbally is to give an account of it more or less as it really comes into being and exists, embedded in the flow of time. Developing a story line is a way of dealing with this flow." (Ong, 1982 p.140)

In a writing or print culture, the text is the bonding agent of thought and makes it possible for the reader to retrieve complete or partial organizations of thought. The oral story line is especially important in primary oral

cultures where text is nonexistent as it serves as the glue to also hold together large amounts of knowledge over long periods of time. Ostensibly, the same oral narrative is important in the orally-oriented classroom where students are repelled by the rigors of literary exegesis and frustrated with the functions of writing, both requiring highly interiorized literate thought processes. The narrative could be utilized in the classroom much like primary oral cultures use it. In those cultures, narratives (especially of human action) are used: 1) to store, organize, and communicate the large part of their knowledge; and, 2) to tie and hold together substantial, lengthy bodies of thought over relatively long periods of time.

Another aspect to consider in the discussion of narrative is the different ways in which primary oral culture perceives and experiences the story line as opposed to the literate mind. I will continue my contention that orally-oriented students in the classroom also perceive narrative differently than those who have significantly interiorized the chirographic and typographic technologies. An abbreviated list of some of those differences might include: 1) while literates tend to think of the consciously contrived

narrative or story as the climactic linear plot with the familiar components of rising action building tension to a climactic point, followed by the falling action which leads to the denouement, the oral mind wants to immediately get to the "action" with little regard for temporal sequence; 2) while literates are capable of effectively experiencing a long, novel-length, climactic linear plot, the oral mind has no such capability, preferring instead the real-life, present-moment accounting of the action and then later going back to collect the details; 3) while the literate mind wants the events in chronological order, the oral mind likes to begin in the "middle of things" and to rely on devices like flashback to get the story told; 4) as Peabody (1975) suggests, there is a certain incompatibility between oral memory and linear plot - suggesting that the Greek epic singers used thematic, formulaic, and stanzaic patterns rather than consciously contriving a chronological 'plot' to tell the story; and, 5) as Ong (1982) states, "oral narrative is not greatly concerned with the exact sequential parallelism between the sequence in the narrative and the sequence in the extra-narrative referents. Such a parallelism becomes a major objective only when the mind interiorizes literacy."

The way that this orality-literacy dialectic has relevance in the classroom is that it affects the very way in which the students view their world, how they come to know, and what the human existence is like for them and thus covers the range of epistemological, ontological, and axiological paradigms. It also sets the stage for a discrepancy in the way the students' present-day consciousness is considered. There is a different feeling for human existence if that feeling has been processed and filtered through writing and print. As Ong states, "it is salutary to recognize that this sense depends on the technologies of writing and print, deeply interiorized, made a part of our own psychic resources. The tremendous store of historical, psychological, and other knowledge which can go into sophisticated narrative and characterization today could be accumulated only through the use of writing and print (and now electronics). But these technologies of the word do not merely store what we know. They style what we know in ways which made it quite inaccessible and indeed unthinkable in an oral culture." (Ong 1982, p.155.)

So, if orally-oriented students are limited in their ability to access the literate style of knowing, but are

forcibly inculcated with a literate paradigm which has been designed by and for the literate mind, it is easy to see the reason for the frustration, disenchantment, and consequential disempowerment of an entire group of students. To size up the scenario, imagine a teacher and a small group of students engaged in a conversation. The conversation, though, is conducted in a code that is incoherent to a large part of the remaining students. It is not difficult to fathom the culminating scenes of this scenario. I conjecture that it is a familiar scenario in many contemporary classrooms in schools across America.

While there are many ways to approach the process of re-inventing programs of instruction in reading and writing which take into account the orality-literacy dialectic in the classroom, the classroom teacher is the impetus for change. I believe, along with Purpel, Freire, Horton, Macedo, and others, that we must reexamine our roles as teachers. Are we in the classroom to just pass along facts, or are we educating to empower the students to gain control of their lives? Horton and Freire (1990) agree with each other that the role of the teachers must begin with their understanding that 'participatory education' is a viable way to educate the

poor and the powerless. I would argue that the 'poor and the powerless' student and the orality-oriented student are very much akin.

The type of educating of which Horton and Freire speak requires the teacher getting the students involved in more than textual learning. This participation must come in the form of orality, of dialogue and discussion, because reading and writing are primarily isolating, interior, and intellectual processes that require the distancing of oneself from others rather than a coming together in orality (Ong, 1982) There can be little of Freire and Horton's 'participatory education' occurring in the classroom if students are isolated at their individual desks engaged in the very non-participatory, solipsistic activities of reading and writing. If students are not engaged in a participatory type of learning which is liberatory in the sense that it involves the students themselves in the creation of their own new knowledge, then youth empowerment will only continue to be an oxymoron.

LIBERATION: A HEALING HEURISTIC

Liberation is a kinetic concept that requires movement and change, sometimes radical change. Purpel (1989) is greatly concerned with:

> Developing ideas that can serve significantly to liberate these people from poverty, bigotry, and alienation; a major educational strategy for us is to develop an education aimed at those who tacitly and often overtly support those policies and programs that serve to keep the poor and powerless poor and powerless. An absolutely fundamental tenet of our social and educational orientation is the supreme importance of liberation for all-liberation from hunger, disease, fear, bigotry, war, ignorance, and all other barriers to a life of joy, abundance, and meaning for every single person in the world. (p. 30)

To have real liberation, active participation in the process is essential. Participation in turn is realized through an educational practice that simultaneously creates a new situation and involves the participants themselves in the creation of their knowledge. Important questions to consider here might include: Can there be space for liberatory education within the state-sponsored educational system, or must change come from somewhere outside the system? What is the role of the teacher in the process of change? Can society be transformed by education, or is the first step changing education itself?

In order to effect a cure from a century of the schooling sickness, we must begin with a critical reflection of the praxis and then move toward that end. Education must be viewed as a liberating activity and not as some process to perpetuate values that have left our society on the brink of complete social dysfunction. Until that happens, education will just be a euphemism for a sick institution whose actions merely produce an ever increasing number of sick individuals and sends them into society; intellectually numb, physically unhealthy, unskilled and unmotivated to become skilled, disinterested and disengaged, and spiritually void. The situation will continue to be pervasive until the lethargy to liberate ourselves from the victimization process is lifted. As Purpel (1989) tells us:

> Many members of the profession have come to accept the existing framework as reasonable, perhaps needing adjustment from time to time,and have failed to reflect seriously on its inadequacies. A related explanation speaks more clearly to the basic fear in our profession, a fear which produces our prodigious docility and passivity. What one hears regularly from many professionals in response to the pitiful working conditions for teachers is the belief that 'we' should not seriously rock the boat lest 'they' react in anger and retribution. This is the employer-employee, master-slave mentality in which we are reminded of our place and our powerlessness, urged to count our blessings, and warned about the consequences of protest. We are a profession which has, to a very large degree, internalized the oppressors' consciousness. (p. 107)

I feel the time has come (indeed, it is long overdue) to invoke the language of liberation as the empowering ethics in education to overcome the victimization of students and teachers, to break the cycle of victim-blaming and romanticization of those victims. We all seem to tacitly know that things are not "alright" in the schools, but real change will not occur until we realize just how sick the patient is and begin to accept the graveness of the malady. Purpel (1989) offers a glimpse of what is needed when he cites Brueggemann (1978) who tells us that:

> . . .the criticism for change begins in the capacity to grieve because that is the most visceral announcement that things are not right. Only in the empire are we pressed and urged and invited to pretend that things are all right-either in the dean's office or in our marriage or in the hospital room. As long as the empire can keep the pretense alive that things are all right, there will be no real grieving and no serious criticism. (p. 28)

Ostensibly, we are living in a time when the school setting has become a hunting ground, complete with victims and their stalkers. What is happening to the schools when students bring weapons on campus because they fear for their very lives? One mother called me at home recently to express her deep concern that her daughter's life was in danger at the very school at which I am now teaching. It appears that her daughter has become the target of a

group of students with a gang mentality and who have already attacked her twice on the school premises. Fortunately, I managed to personally thwart the third attack by happening to walk by when the students were just starting to make their move. I told the mother I would continue to be as vigilant as I could to protect her daughter, but what if the group actually manages to inflict serious bodily harm upon the girl? What effect has this sick situation already had on the fifteen-year old girl? If we use this example in context with Purpel's tenets, what kind of identities are the group members seeking with this type of behavior? What kind of life is it for individual students in schools across America who wake up each morning with the prospects of going to a place where they are in fear of aggression from others? Healing is needed in the worse sort of way for all of us when, as teachers, we find ourselves in educational institutions not to engage in those marvelous moments of enlightenment, but rather to protect individual students from gangs, breaking up fights, not to mention defending and protecting ourselves.

I think the setting itself is part of the problem. Many schools are vastly overcrowded where the halls are almost like gauntlets through which students are herded every fifty-five minutes. In my present school, 1200 students are stampeded through the halls

that were meant to contain only 900. The students are pushed and prodded, poked and knocked from all sides and often in places that one would just as soon not be pushed and poked. We need a healthier environment and it is time to grieve for the victims and the situation in general. When we begin that process, then hopefully, we will finally take steps to begin the healing.

NOTIONS OF THE HEALING CURRICULUM

In addition to emphasizing the idea of the cosmic story and the importance of addressing orality in the classroom, the healing curriculum would certainly endorse plenty of opportunities for creativity and freedom for expression. Purpel (1989) feels that "critical to this emphasis on creativity is a faith in the creative process itself when seen in its constructive sense as part of the sacred responsibility to create a world of love, justice, and joy" (p.92).

Fox (1979) says that:

> . . .creativity is a way of living, a spirituality, just as compassion is. It is a way that all persons travel in responding to life and we call it 'the art of survival.' Everyone who survives, we might say, has proven what an artist he or she is. But of course there are qualitative differences in the way some persons choose to survive. The fullest of the arts of survival would be the creative art of compassionate living. (p.111)

The healing curriculum would endorse Purpel's (1989) idea that "both the culture and individual educators need a profession with a critical capacity and the courage and expertise to provide insights into cultural problems and suggest reasonable responses to them" (p. 104). The healing curriculum would have the educator's main concern "with the search for meaning through the process of criticism, imagination, and creativity" and to seek to "orient the educational process toward a vision of ultimate meaning" (p. 105).

The healing curriculum would take into account and encourage the wonder and the mystery of the universe. But as Purpel reminds us:

> This awe and wonder need not and should not be sentimentalized, nor should it be a matter of indifference. It is intellectually honest to recognize the mystery and to examine ways in which to reduce the needlessly mysterious-that is, to do the research and the teaching designed to reduce ignorance. It is intellectually necessary to be honest not only about what we do know but about what we do not know. This is not humility for the sake of religious ritual, but necessary for the pursuit of truth, knowledge, and meaning. (p. 114)

The healing curriculum would address the idea that whatever new program or policy to be considered, we would do that which is the fair and the right thing to do. Purpel articulates this idea differently but I believe we are saying the same thing. He says that:

> . . .when the public asks us as educators to deal with a particular concern...., our professional response must include consideration of intellectual, professional, and moral dimensions, as well as the nature of the resources required to meet the new or reconceptualized challenge. (p. 122)

The healing curriculum would address issues related more to how we come to knowledge rather than meeting minimal requirements on state-mandated tests. Purpel says that:

> We need to know about the process of learning, the nature of knowledge, and the ways in which we seek and present truth. Students will need to study what has been called the structures of disciplines, not so much so that they might themselves become members of the disciplines or admirers of them but rather to gain insight into how we come to know and how we come to accept knowledge. (p. 125)

Healing is more about building the communities in which we live rather than the emphasis on individual striving and competition. We need to learn more of critical inquiry processes, imagination, and creativity. We need to heed Purpel's advice that:

. . .we at all times be sensitive to our concern for joy and individual fulfillment. There can be no question that we should allow opportunities for people who are genuinely interested in the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake (i.e., for esthetic reasons). This is in the realm of specialized and individualized education, and it is important to affirm and provide for those who want to know simply because they want to know. (p. 129)

The healing curriculum would address the importance of developing the critical consciousnesses of the students and teachers. Purpel feels that critical inquiry is very important as he reminds us that "people have a responsibility to be critical once they decide on a life of meaning, for they must then discern the degree to which their lives are in concert with that sense of meaning. Human dignity entails responsibility, and responsibility entails being critical" (p. 132).

We must follow the direction of Purpel's thoughts and allow them to lead us into a healing curriculum that will help us to become the creators of our own knowledge. He tells us that:

Creativity is not an exotic and mysterious quality but rather an inevitable and inherent aspect of human experience. All people constantly create: we create meaning; we create our responses to nature and culture; we create culture. It is our images that we use to make sense out of the world, and it is our imagination that enables us to give moral and religious significance to life. It is through play and imagination that we encounter our world and give shape to it. The capacity to play, to imagine, and to fantasize allows us to create visions and frees us to transcend the forgotten boundaries that we once

ourselves established. We have created our world, and as good artists we should be able to be critical of our work since artists know that they must continue to create or, more accurately, re-create. Thinking of creation and re-creation as play provides us the freedom to escape hegemonic thinking-that is, to go beyond what seems fixed and irreplaceable. (p. 134)

Creativity, though, is difficult to measure on standardized end-of-course testing and so rather than place emphasis on the importance of developing imagination and creativity in our children, schooling just casts them aside and proliferates standardized testing. The healing curriculum would move us away from the testing frenzy and more toward an individualized accomplishments design that would help diminish our present comparisons emphases. It would highlight programs that foster creativity, imagination, and spontaneity.

The healing curriculum would place a priority on offering ways in which students would be allowed to study areas of interest rather than these arbitrarily mandated subject areas. Teachers would offer more opportunities for the students to express their desires (tell their stories) and facilitate students moving toward studies in areas that have meaning, relevance, and application for them. The healing curriculum would place an emphasis on students bringing a curiosity to class that would have them asking for

answers to those things they wish to know rather than to passively sit still and allowed to be filled with the teacher's knowledge. As Purpel reminds us, "let us inquire into what we need and want to learn, not simply learn what has already been studied" (p.155).

The healing curriculum would be one of humility, commitment, and courage and not of avoidance, arrogance, and alienation. It would have to also create a language that is quite unknown to conventional curriculum. It seems that educators and the schooling process have difficulty in even broaching the concept, possibly from the lack of this conceptual language with which to discuss it. Since faith is part of the healing process, maybe that would be a way to introduce the healing concepts but Purpel feels that direction is also problematical. He says that "it is not only that we want to have deep faith and thus find it very difficult to commit ourselves to some faithing process in authentic and satisfying ways, but we have difficulty in the language of faith. (p.60)

An education based on healing principles is much like Purpel's "serious education" which "has a way of forcing continual confrontation with our basic moral commitments and, more unnerving, with our failures to meet those commitments" (p.8). When we can begin to realize the importance of dealing with these

issues, then we can begin to move in a more positive, healthy direction.

The healing curriculum would take education more seriously by taking cultural concerns more seriously. Purpel argues that "if we are to take cultural concerns seriously within the context of education, then what is required is far more structural change than the mainstream leadership is suggesting" (p. 22).

In the healing curriculum, we must continue to think about the health and well-being of the individual teachers and students in context with the school and society at large. Purpel feels that:

> . . . this idea is perhaps the most basic and serious single cultural issue facing us, namely the matter of individuality/community. . . . this issue has to do with our impulse to define, maintain, and nourish both a self and group identity; we are interested in being unique, autonomous, independent, and in having a strong and well-defined ego, and at the same time we seek strong human and symbolic relationships in which our identities are connected with those of others. Not only is there an impulse to seek group, interpersonal, and symbolic identity, but we also recognize the social character of our lives: whether we like it or not, we are interdependent, having symbiotic relationships with others, and are by nature socially defined. (p.31)

The healing curriculum would have much more to do with Purpel's idea that:

> We thirst for true community, for a broader context to individually struggle and share authentically our joys, confessions, and heartbreaks. When we go to school, we are taught mostly to learn to be alone, to compete, to achieve, to succeed. The emphasis on individual achievement is not uniform in the schools since there, as elsewhere, the concern for community also gets expressed however modestly and infrequently." He concludes this line of thinking by saying that "it is certainly not that the schools, like the culture, are not mindful of a social identity, especially as it relates to our obsession with personal success and achievement. (p.34)

The healing of education would deal with the kind of morality to which Purpel alludes which:

> . . .focuses on principles, rules, and ideas that are related to human relationships, to how we deal with each other and with the world" where the "concern is for the attitudes, values, and behaviors that constitute one's way of being with (other people). Moral theories and codes serve to regulate and legitimize proper ways of dealing with these human relationships. (p. 66)

We must follow the direction of Purpel's thoughts and allow them to lead us into a curriculum that will heal. He tells us that:

> Creativity is not an exotic and mysterious quality but rather an inevitable and inherent aspect of human experience. All people constantly create: we create meaning; we create our responses to nature and culture; we create culture. It is our images that

we use to make sense out of the world, and it is our imagination that enables us to give moral and religious significance to life. It is through play and imagination that we encounter our world and give shape to it. The capacity to play, to imagine, and to fantasize allows us to create visions and frees us to transcend the forgotten boundaries that we once ourselves established. We have created our world, and as good artists we should be able to be critical of our work since artists know that they must continue to create or, more accurately, re-create. Thinking of creation and re-creation as play provides us the freedom to escape hegemonic thinking-that is, to go beyond what seems fixed and irreplaceable. (p. 134)

I believe that the public wants the schools to be healthier. Parents and community groups continue to involve themselves with the school's activities. The public continues to voice its displeasure with the increase of guns and violence in the schools. Health agencies and community leaders try to lead the struggle of slowing down teen pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. Unfortunately, the educational leaders seem to offer only superficial and perfunctory responses to the problems. Ostensibly, Purpel talks about this type of cultural unrest which is directed at education. He says that:

The public is trying to grasp what is fundamental to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and in response educators give them more standardized tests; the culture yearns for meaning and hope, and the schools suggest more homework and a longer school year. The world teeters on the edge of a new holocaust, and our leaders urge us to consider merit pay. (p. 22)

The healing curriculum would nurture and foster allowing students to open dialogues with the teacher. Just as Freire (1990) talks about how he learned to "discuss with the people," teachers must allow the students to discuss with them."(p. 65) Freire says that:

> I learned to respect their fears, their hopes, their expectations, their language. . . nothing can be done if the teacher does not respect the people. We cannot educate if we don't start ... from the levels in which people perceived themselves, their relationships with the others and with reality, because this is precisely what makes their knowledge...the question is to know what they know and how they know, to learn how to teach them things which they don't know and they want to know. . . .one of the tasks of the educator is also to provoke the discovering of need for knowing. . . . (p.65)

Horton (1990) echoes this thought when he asserts that "an educator must start where the people are" (p. 98). As teachers, we must get to the lessons to be learned by first hearing the voices and stories of the students. Students must be involved in the material to be learned by communicating their needs and interests. The teacher serves as a guide or facilitator who leads them to the material to be examined. All this would be contexturalized within the parameters of where they have been, where they are, and what knowledge they bring to the class setting.

In the healing curriculum, schooling would be more about education and much less about "organizing." As Horton (1990) tells us:

> Solving the problem can't be the goal of education. It can be the goal of organizations..organizing implies that there's a specific, limited goal that needs to be achieved, and the purpose is to achieve that goal... but if education is to be part of the process, then you may not actually get the problem solved, but you educated a lot of people..the problem is confused because a lot of people use organizing to do some education and they think it's empowerment because that's what they're supposed to be doing. But quite often they disempower people in the process by using experts to tell them what to do while having the semblance of empowering people. (p. 119)

I think this idea of organizing is a description of what most of schooling is. It is specifying a specific objective and reaching that objective regardless of how the process works. The schools and the educational process need to be about *serving* the students. In the present system, we must ask ourselves, who is being served? Horton (1990) reminds us, "existing structures and institutions don't earn respect just by age, legality, or tradition. . . . they have to earn that respect by serving people" (p. 136).

The healing curriculum would not be so much about program, content, method, and objectives, but more about helping students to come to know who they are and what they can become which is

all about developing democratic ideals. As Freire (1990) mentions, "the more people become themselves, the better the democracy . . . .the less people are asked about what they want, about their expectations, the less democracy we have" (p. 145)

The healing curriculum would utilize the teacher as more of a questioner and inquirer to pique student interests rather than the present notion of the "expert" who tells the students facts and "right answers" as well as how to use them. It would be more like Horton's (1990) style where he says that:

> I use questions more than I do anything else. They don't think of a question as intervening because they don't realize that the reason you asked the question is because you know something. What you know is the body of the material that you're trying to get people to consider, but instead of giving a lecture on it, you ask a question enlightened by that. Instead of you getting on a pinnacle, you put them on a pinnacle....you can get all your ideas across just by asking questions and at the same time you help people to grow and not form a dependency on you...to me it's just a more successful way of getting ideas across...then it become their idea..because they're the ones who come to that idea..I've never hesitated to tell anybody what I believe about anything if they ask me...I see no reason to tell them before they get ready to listen to it, and when they ask a question, then they're ready to listen to it.. (p. 146).

The healing educator would do as Freire (1990) tries to do and not:

> . .come to the classroom and to make beautiful speeches analyzing, for example, the political authority of the country, but the question is how to take advantage of the reading of reality, which the people are doing, in order to make it possible for students to make a different and much deeper reading of reality.....how to make this walk with people starting ...from people's experiences, and not from our understanding of the world...to help them to go beyond us afterward.. this is an important role of the progressive educator..another virtue of the educator is to become ..more open to feel the feelings of others..to become so sensitive that we can guess what the group or..person is thinking at that moment. (p. 157)

In the final analysis, the educational process may be as simple as laughter itself. As Freire (1990) reminds us, "it's necessary to laugh with the people because if we don't do that, we cannot learn from the people, and in not learning from the people we cannot teach them. . . . " (p. 247).

So, as educators, let us make our move toward our students to live, to learn, and to laugh together. Let us sing the songs and read the poetry. We need to go to the people; learn from them; love them; start with the knowledge they have and build from there.

The healing curriculum would introduce the concept that when we go into the teaching profession, everyone would accept the possiblity that they would be "called" to rotate in and out of

administrative responsibilities (e.g., assistant principals, principals, system or "downtown" positions, even to the level of superintendent. It would operate much like the present legal juror system and those teachers, of course, would return to their classrooms when they finished their service. With this idea, salaries could be realigned so that the present astronomical income disparities between teachers and administrators would be eliminated and everyone involved in the teaching business would be paid for their professional status, not to mention eradicating the contentious dichotomy between teachers and administrators.

And finally, when the discussion moves to the "grading" of students, the healing curriculum would assess what the students are accomplishing in more individual, creative ways which would utilize the "comparison mentality" as little as possible. I propose a "projects accomplished" concept that would emphasize the students building a portfolio/resume of successful completions of projects worked out with the teacher that not only would incorporate the attainment of state-mandated objectives, but would also reflect the interests and concerns of the students. Each student could then transform the present system of meaningless numbers and letters on computer printouts to a portfolio product that could act not only as a type of resume for

future career possibilities, but also as a self-revealing memoir of experiences for the students. Inherent in this concept is the idea that once projects are timely completed, students are allowed to "move on" with their education (i.e., new projects) or allowed social/recreational time.

With the "projects accomplished" curriculum (among other things): 1) students would learn the process of pursuing activities and projects until they are completed; 2) they would gain better insight into their interests and abilities as they would be involved in the self-direction of their studies; 3) they would be allowed to become whom they want to become and study what they want to study rather than being coerced into a lifeless existence of "containers" into which fragmented facts can be "deposited"; 4) the subjectivity of personal situations and circumstances would be considered in the assessment process, which is not deemed "objective and fair" in the present grading practices; 5) would emphasize and encourage the wholeness, connectedness, and interdependence of all knowledge and creation in the universe, rather than the present disjointed, departmentalized "sacred five" structure of curriculum; 6) would foster an active, movement oriented school day rather than the present unhealthy sedentary life-style most students lead today (this idea came to me recently,

when on a beautiful day, I noticed there were no students outside enjoying the absolutely gorgeous weather. I instantly became aware that while many schools have vast outdoor and indoor facilities where students could be involved in a plethora of active and vigorous learning situations, the majority of the students never use the football and soccer fields, the tracks, the gyms, the campus area. Their predominant experiences with school are closed cavelike classrooms, sitting hour after hour, day after day in uncomfortable plastic and wooden desks, sedentary and physically stunted; 7) would offer limitless opportunities for students to develop a sense of cooperation, community, and compassion; 8) would introduce the concept that while it is okay to want to "work extra," homework would always be voluntary and never "assigned" (students should never be penalized nor degraded because they want what many of us want (i.e, to do a good day's work; go home; "leave the job at the plant," and be able to "have a life,") and finally, 9) since grades would be abolished, diplomas from high school would mean nothing more than attendance standards attained. The students' portfolios would be the measurement for awards, college placement, and jobs. In the end, diplomas would actually gain in status because everyone would know exactly what they mean, rather than the present situation

where no one is exactly sure of what they mean or what they should connote.

The "projects accomplished" idea would work in the healing curriculum because the first project to be undertaken by many would be to develop a sense of well-being and wellness. Students have to feel like they are "getting better" with whatever it is that is troubling them before they can ever get back to their "work."

One thing is for sure. The present system of "grades" which only reflects numbers from irrelevant test scores has proven to be ineffectual in many ways, but its worst outcome is that students have minimal awareness of the skills and knowledge they have attained as students and practically no concept of who they are, where they are going, and what they stand for. Indeed, there is no reason to perpetuate the present grading system because even as we try to rationalize its virtues to the students and community, it is "degraded" with the prevalent practice of "social promotion," "weighted courses, and "adjusting" grades to keep students from failing, when in reality their grades reflect just that situation. Students end up with poor and misguided notions of what their grades actually mean and that confusion only adds to their apathy and antipathy toward the learning process. If the sickness of schooling is all about confusion and frustration rather than the

conscious effort of decision-makers to hurt and oppress, then education is indeed the relevant answer and hope to solve the malaise. Education can lead out of this dilemma. As Purpel (1989) relates, "when we look at our problems as rooted in evil, then the only alternative to despair is prayer; but when we are able to see them based more on confusion, then we can put our hope in education" (p. 30).

Grades just do not work for many reasons, but the most serious one may be that they give the students no concept of who they are or what they are capable of doing. In other words, they do not give the student a sense of identity. Being human, we all identify ourselves and others (in varying degrees) by what we "do." We are teachers, preachers, plumbers, carpenters, musicians, etc., with skills developed for those roles. With grades as the sole identifier, students enter society with little idea of what it is that they "do." Grades are meaningless. The skills and knowledge that we can call our own are not emphasized in the compulsory schooling process. They are at the very core of our attempts to understand who we are. As long as schools remain in the present grading mode, confusion and frustration will continue to prevail in the schools.

CONCLUSION

The journey of this dissertation has left me a changed person with a much clearer idea of who I am as a teacher in a compulsory school setting. I now know that my developing notions of the flaws in the schooling process were not isolated ruminations of a high school English teacher. I discovered that there are many of us in the "business" of schooling trying to somehow positively affect how our students come to knowledge and their own self-education. I have come to agree with Gatto (1992) that schooling itself is the contagion that is adversely affecting the spirits and minds of our children. Gatto states that he:

> . . . began to realize that the bells and the confinement, the crazy sequences, the age-segregation, the lack of privacy, the constant surveillance, and all the rest of the national curriculum of schooling were designed exactly as if someone had set out to prevent children from learning how to think and act, to coax them into addiction and dependent behavior. (p. xii)

So much of this study speaks the ills of state mandated schooling. In schooling's present setting, what real purpose can there be in parents aware of the plight of their children participating in this fatally flawed, wasteful, and ineptly managed institution have in allowing their children to be coerced to serve

as Gatto (1992) asserts, a "twelve-year jail sentence where bad habits are the only curriculum truly learned" (p. 21). To do so is much like them sending their children to a house full of contagious patients and thinking that their children will somehow not become infected. I am now painfully aware of what my own daughter is experiencing on a daily basis. She is learning the seven lessons of which Gatto (1992) writes (i.e., confusion, class position, indifference, emotional dependency, intellectual dependency, provisional self-esteem, and the fact one cannot hide) (pp. 2-12). The sickness in schooling is so potent and pervasive that students are perennially "graduated" into society with a deficit of skills and values that leaves them bewildered and ill-equipped to lead informed, productive, and meaningful lives. I want to think that Gatto (1992) is wrong in that "government monopoly schools are structurally unreformable" and that they "cannot function if their central myths are exposed and abandoned" (p. xiv). In reality, though, this study has led me to believe that he may be right. It could be possible that public education is actually the force that is taking the entire society into a downward spin. New York columnist, Russell Baker (1994) writes of this downward direction. He says that:

Down is becoming the place to be. . . . public education has been
dumbed down. Deviancy, as Sen. Moynihan points out, has been
defined down; meaning that standards of acceptable behavior
have dropped so low that we will put up with almost anything.

Language has been coarsened down. That's why you hear so
many ostensibly civilized people, female and male, using
language so blue it would make a sailor blush . . . .

As time builds its callus over memory, people forget that
dumbness this deep, behavior this squalid and language this
low were once regarded as, respectively, inexecusable,
criminal and vile. The downing trend numbs us as we adapt to
ever-falling standards, so that we don't notice how dumb we're
becoming, how nastily we behave and how crudely we talk. (p.
1D)

If compulsory education can be the problem, it can also be the

solution. If the reality of schooling is turning us into a

civilization of intellectually numb, valueless, philistine brutes,

the healing of education cannot begin too soon. The healing entails

parents rediscovering their children and coming to their rescue. It

is up to the family to bail them out of jail because they have

committed no crimes; to remove them from the contagion because

the home is a better place in which to learn; to take charge of

educating our children in our own homes. Gatto (1992) writes that

the family must be the "main engine of education" (p. 37). He says

the schools must release the "stranglehold of institutions on

family life, to promote during schooltime confluences of parent

and child that will strengthen family bonds" (p.37).

In the meantime, however, the only alternative this study has left me to spare my only child from the deleterious experience of compulsory schooling is to educate her at home. I agree with Gatto (1992) that schooling is "anti-educational" (p. 19). I agree with Gatto that the government controlled schooling business needs an injection of competition. Gatto (1992) writes that:

> Some form of free-market system in public schooling is the likeliest place to look for answers, a free market where family schools and small entrepreneurial schools and religious schools and crafts schools and farm schools exist in profusion to compete with government education. I'm trying to describe a free market in schooling exactly like the one the country had until the Civil War, one in which students volunteer for the kind of education that suits them, even if it means self-education; it didn't hurt Benjamin Franklin that I can see. These options exist now in miniature, wonderful survivals of a strong and vigorous past, but they are available only to the resourceful, the courageous, the lucky, or the rich. The near impossibility of one of these better roads opening for the shattered families of the poor or for the bewildered host camped on the fringes of the urban middle class suggests that the disaster of seven-lesson schools is going to grow unless we do something bold and decisive with the mess of government monopoly schooling. (p.20)

The alternative to all this leads my wife and me to take a chance that we do not need to wait for those "other people, better trained than ourselves, to make the meanings of our lives" (Gatto, 1992, p.8). As parents, we can choose to join the million or so

other parents who are educating their children at home. It appears that if there is any way we can do it, we will.

Nevertheless, this study has strengthened my resolve to continue my attempts to be a teacher, as well as, to somehow positively affect those students with whom I come into contact. The study reaffirms my desire to not be the inculcator that forces knowledge into unwilling minds. I want to be the type of teacher that offers the bits of knowledge I have gained merely to help the students to their own self-knowledge; to help them learn how to learn; and, to open their minds to new possibilities. I am not sure at this writing how I might accomplished this and in what capacity, but that question seems to be the threshold of yet another journey; a journey on which I am ready to embark.

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