CAN WE GROW "WHOLE" PEOPLE?

A PAPER ON EDUCATION

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION ON THE
UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

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1975
"A rose is a rose is a rose."¹ Once it was a tiny seed, then it grew into a rose-bush; now that rose-bush produces many beautiful flowers each year. We can watch each of these flowers grow from a tightly knit bud into a fully developed flower. But, however hard we try, we cannot get that rose to grow into a peach—or a tomato—or an oak tree! The rose is a rose by nature. We can cut it before the bloom has a chance to grow—or forget to water it—or forget to fertilize it—or allow bugs to eat it up; but we cannot change it into anything but a rose. It is a rose by nature. We can facilitate its growth by watering or fertilizing or spraying to remove bugs, and it will forever remain a rose.

"By what divine wisdom do we assert that the child with a straight-A report card is superior to the child with artistic ability, to the child with athletic prowess, or to the child who is considerate, kind, and a pleasure to be around?"² By what divine right do we assert that a red rose is better than a yellow rose or a white rose?

Children are like roses (as well as other growing things). In infancy, they must be carefully cared for: watered, fed, and loved. As growth occurs, this state of total dependancy lessens and the child (or the plant) moves in the direction of independence (being able to stand on his own) or interdependance
(allowing others to depend on him, depending on others, and
being able to stand alone.)

Though in infancy the signs of mind and spirit appear in man, they do not reach the degree of
perfection; they are imperfect. Only when man attains maturity do the mind and spirit appear and become
evident in utmost perfection...In the womb of the
world, mind and spirit also existed in the embryo,
but they were concealed; afterwards they appeared.
So it is in the seed the tree exists, but it is hidden
and concealed; when it develops and grows, the complete
tree appears...all beings whether large or small, were
created perfect and complete from the first, but their
perfections appear in them by degrees.

It is my belief that children also have a given nature to
grow to become themselves much as it is the nature of the rose
to become itself. We "older people" can facilitate or hinder
or even stop that growth; but try as we may, we cannot change
a person into something he or she is not. A person's inner
drives, motivations and interests usually lead him in the
direction of becoming himself or "self-actualization". A per­
son may have potential to grow in many directions as opposed to
the rose which can only grow in one, but a person cannot grow
into someone he does not feel inside and is not by nature.

The method of education which is predominant today seems
to be playing a "hoop-basket-jump" game. Teachers set up a hoop
and expect the students to jump. If the student does so, he or
she receives a doggie-biscuit for a reward. Teacher decides
in what direction a student should grow, then expects the student
to do so. If the student doesn't agree, he or she is penalized
by a poor grade. If the student does as the teacher says, he or
she may find that it is not meaningful for him or her and may
be unhappy because he or she would rather use that energy to
become who they really are. So we have much frustration and
unhappiness in our schools today.

My point of view is that we all have a lot more inside of us that could direct our growth than we like to think of or to use in helping us to grow as people. Instead of allowing our teachers to make us grow according to their plans, we ought to allow our students to decide where that growth is needed and how it is to be achieved. Instead of reinforcing desired behaviors, teaching could become "facilitating" or helping another person to grow in the way that he or she chooses.

Edward Zigler feels that we currently have a

mistaken view of the child's learning process. These (current) philosophies do not appreciate the fact that learning is as natural to the child as flying is to the birds...You do not need to force learning upon a child; learning is an inherent feature of being a human being.

To help the unlearning child, we must discover and remove those events, attitudes or conditions that interfere with learning. Learning is not an alien enterprise which must be forced upon an unwilling organism.²

Paul Goodman believes that the task of formal education is then "...to multiply the paths of growing up instead of narrowing the one existing school path."³

What, then, can "education" do to help facilitate this growth? Many things! Two views are presented below:

In times of tension, speed, and change--times like today and tomorrow--education had better concentrate on the spirit of adventure which rejects fear and welcomes swift and sudden change. Such a spirit implies the joy of recognizing the potentiality in life emerging from faith in oneself as well as in all men.⁴

Education should be a process of enlightening the creative imagination, sharpening critical skills, evoking possibilities of thinking, acting, and evaluating that may run counter to prevailing orthodoxies.⁵

Even as the rose grows, it grows as a totality or a whole.

Who has ever seen half a rose grow? So the person must be
allowed to grow as a unique whole!

Of course, you say, that's obvious! Yet it seems not so, if one looks again into classrooms in today's schools. The "hoop-jump" game as earlier cited leaves no room for feelings, or thoughts that disagree with the teacher's emotions or ideas. Ours is a culture in which we are told to ignore our emotions ("Cheer up. Don't let it get you down" or "Please don't cry" or "Now let's have a rational discussion and keep our feelings out of it") in the name of reason and scientific progress.\textsuperscript{9}

In today's world,

The child has come to be viewed as little more than a computer programmed by a parent (or teacher). In the process, we have lost sight of the child as a whole person with unique personality and abilities, and of the child's parents as the most important people in his or her life. Today, we must help parents (and teachers) relearn that a full and rich relationship with their child will lead to his or her optimal development in all spheres...\textsuperscript{10}

We are often told to learn facts with no room for judgement or feelings concerning them. We learn science and technology, and no reference or guidelines concerning how to apply them. We learn how to control people with ideas about "behavior mod", yet how often do we speak of under what conditions or even if it is right to use these techniques? We are allowed to develop intellectually, but rarely emotionally (affectively) or spiritually.

In order for education to be effective, it needs to deal with each person, each rose, as a whole. (A whole person, as I see him or her, is made up of intellectual, emotional (affective) and spiritual components.)

There is a school of people in counseling psychology who call themselves Gestalt Therapists who are saying the same thing.
The premise of Gestalt psychology is that "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." In education, the child as a whole is greater than his intellectual part or his emotional part or his spiritual part. He is all three of those parts, plus more. Education, then, will be more effective if it can reach each person as a whole.

The need I see is for The Educated Perception. I am tired of psychoanalysis. I want psychosynthesis. ...for we are in an age in which we are in danger of going analytical all the way--on both verbal and non-verbal levels--and thus destroying the human being. Oh, how we need education that creates ability to perceive; the ability to wake up each morning and see the world the good Lord created as it is on a particular morning...

We can also understand education better if we can look at the whole system. Another premise of Gestalt Therapy is that there are opposing forces which must be reconciled into a united or whole view. Such integration presently seems necessary between students and teachers, or teachers and administrators. The whole system could better function if all that worked within it could be viewed as whole people rather than the roles of "teacher", "student", or "administrator". Ivan Illich says, "At present, schools limit the teacher's competence to the classroom. They prevent him from claiming man's whole life as his domain."

Carl Roger's ideal is for:

A person (who) is openly expressive of where he is, who he is. He does not live a facade or a role, hiding behind the conventional front of being a "teacher", or "principal", or "psychologist". He is real and the realness shows through. He is unique...Thus when there are persons in educational institutions they become controversial, difficult, not easily fitted into categories; consequently life is exciting--and even worthwhile.

This system of education also ought to be reconciled with
the community at large. Whether or not we presently recognize it, schools are an integral part of the society in which they function. Eddy says, "Don't try to separate knowledge from alleged reality." Much could be done in order to better connect and integrate, rather than separate school and "real life". Irving Rosenstein says:

The entire community must become an open classroom in which students live and experience their environment through the people who work and live in it.

Also, the school could be opened up for use as a learning and recreational center by the larger community. Integrating school and community life could also be beneficial in helping to solve community problems.

We talk frequently and often loudly about using the best minds in our nation and in our communities to help solve common problems. We have overlooked, I believe, one of our greatest resources and thus some of the best minds: the school teachers who are kept from contributing because of tradition and hesitancy. I think that it would surprise us to discover how vast is this reservoir of ideas and sense if only we were willing to let teachers to be fully qualified and accepted citizens.

In this modern day and age, education also needs to be integrated with the world situation. Postman and Weingartner talk about the "anthropological perspective" as an ideal for this integration. The students of this perspective should be able to look through their own cultural perspective in relation to the world at large.

We are talking about the schools cultivating in the young that most 'subversive' intellectual instrument—the anthropological perspective. This perspective allows one to be part of his own culture and, at the same time, to be out of it. One views the activities of his own group as would an anthropologist, observing its tribal rituals, its fears, its conceits, its ethnocentrism. In this way, one is able to recognize when reality begins to drift too far away from the grasp of the tribe.
Likewise, the integration of education and the world situation has great probability of leading to a "functionally united world". Baha'u'llah, prophet-founder of a world religion, gives education a major role to play in establishing world unity.

It is chiefly through educative influences that we must build up an ideology and loyalty consecrated to the goal of world peace. Only through education of youth and adult can the adverse and chaotic elements which now compose human society be guided and fused into that dynamically functioning world unity which we now have come to believe is the keystone of the arch of human progress. Baha'u'llah had two great aims:—to build up a spiritually regenerate humanity, and to establish a functionally united world. To both of these aims education is intrinsic. 20

Lofty ideals? Perhaps. But only because we have not yet reached them. The question then becomes how to move from the reality of many authoritarian based, repressive, intellectual, segmented (or non-integrated) schools that exist today to the more open, individually oriented, expressive, and integrated schools of tomorrow.

Some have advocated that change can better occur in the atmosphere created by "free schools". Free schools come in many shapes and sizes with many different philosophies to accompany them. In short, a "free school" can be any kind of school not part of the traditional public school system in which most children are currently "educated". Definitions vary about as much as the founders and participants who use the term.

Free schools can and do make some positive contributions, however. The major one is that they serve as a place where new ideas can be tried out without the pressure of the whole community. After seeing a concept work in a "free school", the public school system will probably be more willing to try it. Also, if a free school is too successful, the public schools may become
scared that too many of its students will leave and go to the free school. This puts pressure on the public schools to expand their ways of teaching.

There are, however, some problems inherent in relying on the free school movement for adequate change. First, the financial pressure of being self-supporting is too great a burden for many free schools to bear. Second, it takes a hard core of very dedicated people to keep a free school going. If these people get tired or move, many times the free schools fall apart. Third, it is often difficult to agree on a common basis of methodology and stick to that methodology once it is determined. Fourth, free schools reach a small minority of children, i.e. most are still educated in traditional public schools.21

Allen Graubard sums it up fairly well by saying:

Free Schools should continue to be formed; they can be needed sanctuaries for young people; they should be experiments in how to transcend the limitations of schools as we have known them. But their limitations should be clearly perceived in social and political terms and an emphasis on the necessity for social and political change maintained. Even with this perspective, all the daily problems of being with young people in a school stay problems.22

Although free schools are helpful as testing grounds for new ideas, any real change is better achieved within our present school system where more can benefit from that change and it can be longer lasting. My own viewpoint is that there is much room for trying a variety of techniques within our own system. A school system could provide several alternatives, the traditional as well as the innovative, and allow its students to make a choice that is meaningful to them.
OVERVIEW

In reaching toward some of the ideals already discussed, many ideas have already been tried—in both public and free school atmosphere. Various people (Rogers, Gordon, and others) have tried to integrate the humanistic-philosophy of psychology to the world of education in order to look at the whole person. Others (among them, G.I. Brown, Ledeman, and Perls) have tried to integrate Gestalt Therapy techniques in the classroom. Some have tried to integrate the intellectual world with the worlds of values and religion. Still others (like Maria Montessori and A.S. Nettl) have founded schools based on the their theory the child (like the rose) unfolds in his/her growth and that "teaching" is no more than "facilitating" or helping the child grow. Lastly, a theory on comprehensive theory of growth and learning which is currently in the experimental stages will be presented. This last concept, which is called ANISA, tries to integrate the emotional, intellectual and spiritual parts of man to form a whole.

No school, of course, can be expected to be completely comprehensive in its approach to education. We can, however, examine the various alternatives in order to see which, if any, might work in a particular school system. My description of each alternative is merely a sketch. The reader is referred to the sources indicated in the footnotes and the end for a more comprehensive view of any of the ideas in which he or she might find a further interest.

"A humanistic revolution is going on in psychology and it is beginning to infect professional educators," says Sidney Jourard. What exactly is this "humanistic movement"?
According to Leo Litwak:

The basic commitment of humanistic psychology is to what is called the "experiential". As a spokesman of the movement expresses it, "The most significant part of education is the experience which involves the head, the gut, the whole man. The mind is not in the head. It is in the whole body."

Humanism, then, means to look at an entire person integrating emotional (or "gut") feelings and the intellect (and I would also add the spiritual). This involves not only looking at the students in this way, but also the teachers, principles, custodians, or whoever else might be around. When this happens, it is usually viewed as a positive change.

To the students' delight, we occasionally become teachers who are human; how much better it would be if we were regarded as humans who are also, by chance, teachers.

Dr. Thomas Gordon used his training as a professional counselor and psychotherapist to help unite the worlds of counseling psychology and education. He began a program which is called Teacher's Effectiveness Training or TET. Instead of the old models, Gorden uses "growth" and "facilitating growth" to refer to "learning" and "teaching".

In TET we show what can be done to make growth and development happen, rather than remain an empty ideal...help is supplied in a way that enables the student to find his own solution, as opposed to being given solutions or suggestions--the typical way most teachers respond to student problems.

Gordon's idea is that we facilitate growth in people by helping them to become independant (able to solve problems on their own) rather than dependant on the teacher for the "right" answers, much as the mother facilitates the growth of her baby to a more independant person or the gardner facilitates the growth of the rose. Among the methods for fostering this growth that Gordon refers to are "active listening" and sending "I-
messages. "Active listening" is a "way of responding so that
the listener feeds back or 'reflects back' messages of the
sender." This technique of paraphrasing the sender's message is
used in counseling and helps the sender clarify what he is say-
ing in order to formulate his own solution. To handle discipline
problems, Gordon advocates sending "I-messages". These messages,
sent by the teacher to the student, put responsibility for
changing behavior directly on the student and "give him a chance
to initiate a change in his behavior out of consideration for
the teacher's needs."27 According to Gordon:

It is time adults stopped wishing that our
youth would act more responsibly and instead learned
how to encourage and foster greater responsibility
in the young people they teach.28

His book gives examples of the above methods as well as
presenting more ways that education can become more "humanistic".

Mary Harbage speaks of her experiences in trying to human-
ize education, especially with respect to learning to really
listen, be aware, and be sensitive to her students.

Gradually I learned to talk less, that I might
listen more; to observe carefully with both eyes
and heart so that I could hope to understand...

As learning accumulated there was increased
awareness and sensitivity so that new learning
might not be missed. Relationships began to emerge,
new interpretations suggested themselves. Time
was taken to mull over, to experiment, to play with
ideas, and to gather more and more understanding.

...each student needs to be known and under-
stood--name, face, plus some of the realities of
his or her living and working.
...to know them (students) well, to open up
the way for some, to prod others, or simply stand
aside and watch in wonder as some accomplish near
miracles--this is teaching and bringing self-fu-
fillment to boys and girls, to young men and women.29

Carl Rogers, whose name is big in counseling psychology,
believes in what he calls "growing persons". He asks if our
educational institutions are capable of "growing persons" and
answers, "I have found no institution, no carefully planned program or curriculum can grow persons. Only persons can grow persons..."39

Rogers then cites some ways that teachers who have become people have been able to help their students grow. A high school teacher taught a class in "psychology" or "human relations" where they discussed subjects chosen by the students. Her class was so popular that kids who were to be "kicked out of school" would sneak into her room to participate. Another teacher brought 50 complete non-readers up to third grade reading level by caring for them personally as individuals and never giving them tasks with which they could not succeed. A French teacher let her students choose their own goals in her class.31

Even though the above examples worked out, Rogers warns:

Yet there are risks too. I know of teachers who have been fired for being persons. I know administrators who have been dropped because they believe in growth. Many parents and community leaders are just not ready.32

Since the possibilities are as broad as the minds which conceive of them, Rogers continues to have "...hope that one day, even in our schools, we will have many persons who are helping to grow persons."33

In a primer in Humanistic Education named Will the real teacher please stand up?, many more examples of how "humanistic education" can be brought about are cited. In an excerpt from Schools Without Failure, William Glasser talks about using the classroom group of students to help each other solve various social problems in the classroom.

By discussing group and individual problems, the students and teacher can usually solve their problems within the classroom...to solve the problems of living in their school world.34
By using this technique a social misfit can learn from the others why he is not accepted and then decide whether or not to change a certain aspect of his behavior in order to be better accepted. This technique would not only help children learn better ways of working with people in their classrooms and in the "real world", but also would tend to clear the air of hard feeling which would leave more open room for authentic learning of other things at other times. Energy previously spent on feeling angry or rejected could then be spent on learning and growing.35

In another example from this book, John Holt set aside a "free-period" in his fifth grade class "every now and then". He found, "For one thing, at such times the distinctions between able students and less able broke down". He was able to lengthen the free periods as the children grew used to them.

As the children get used to freedom and find interesting ways to use it, they can be given more of it. In such ways we can break out of the school lock-step and make the classroom a place where more and more independent studying, thinking, and talking can go on.36

On the broader world scale, people in UNESCO have been talking about a "new humanism" in education and in life:

The essence of the new humanism will be that in it the methods of life and of work that Western intelligence has been able to master will be employed in the discovery of long-abandoned spiritual domains...to serve the cause of a man who will be really complex this time; not a man side tracked into the material by the cerebral, but a man who will be united, body and soul, in the bringing of his own mystery before his consciousness.

We believe that if a humanism such as this were to become a reality, East and West would find much that separates them would disappear and everything that unites them—and unites the whole human race—would emerge.37
'Abdu'l Baha', son of Baha'u'llah who is the prophet-founder of the Baha'i Faith spoke of scientific factual knowledge and spiritual faith as the two wings needed for the successful flight of the bird of the soul.

Regarding the "two wings" of the soul. These signify wings of ascent. One is the wing of knowledge, the other of faith, as this is the means of the ascent of the human soul to the lofty station of divine perfections.39

Thinking of a person as a "whole" entity rather than the intellectual part only, led some thinkers to suggest that some of the techniques used in Gestalt therapy could also be used in the classroom in helping to integrate the "whole" person. Since traditional education usually deals with the intellectual, problem solving, or "cognitive" part of the student, these people advocated that "affective" or emotional/feeling part of a person needed to be integrated therewith. The term these people often use for this "flowing together of cognitive and affective domains is "confluent education".

Fritz Perls, the founder of Gestalt Therapy, worked with people like George Isaac Brown and Judet Lederman in initiating this idea. "Esalen" (a center for psychological growth in Big Sur, California) served as the center from which the "confluent education" idea grew. The center is looked upon by some as a model for education.

Esalen pays for itself...seekers pay the fees for seminars and workshops because they feel they are receiving value for money spent...The value is the experience of growing possibilities, the experience of creating body awareness, the experience of enriched imagination and perception, the experience of increased ability to encounter others and sustain dialog with them...What is being explored at Esalen and places like it which are growing up around the country is the experience of becoming more fully human, the experience transcending (not subverting or destroying) one's
culture. In short, Esalen is an institution for education in the sense that I am using the term, not training. 39

Oasis is the Midwest Center for Human Potential in Chicago, Illinois which is patterned after Esalen.

Using an environment enhancing trust and openness, Oasis workshops provide opportunities to heighten self-awareness, increase understanding of the ways others see us, and develop more effective ways of dealing with each other. 40

George Isaac Brown headed the Ford-Esalen Project in Affective Education using Ford funds to help work with affective techniques and bring them into the classroom. The group had workshops once a month and as the projects and workshops continued, it was found that teachers could increasingly invent new techniques. "...the techniques and methodology of Gestalt therapy had great potential significance for our work in the project and in the classrooms." 41 Although attendance at these group meetings was completely voluntary, the group was fairly stable in attendance with some change in members and some guests. The group was able to not only try and transmit new affective techniques, but also to help resolve difficulties that group members were having.

When there was friction within the group, it was faced and resolved at the time. When an individual member of the group needed help, the group was available and could put into practice what had been learned to help him. 42

In his book, Human Teaching for Human Learning, Brown discusses over 40 techniques that have been tried in his group at Esalen and probably in many classrooms. I'll just cite a couple of examples to give the reader an idea of what kinds of techniques could be used. Really, "the sky's the limit!" as far as these techniques are concerned—they are limited only by the imagina-
One technique which has been already often practiced is the "blind walk". In this exercise, students are paired off: one is blindfolded, the other is the guide or leader. The blindfolded one has to trust his or her guide, while the guide tries to point out some sensory images other than sight--such as feeling a brick wall or walking barefooted through the grass. The students can discuss their experiences in pairs or in a group and relate them to "school" material such as Helen Keller's life or being able to trust the class before giving a speech.

"Gang" and "aggression" exercises can be used where some students are asked to be a group and exclude one member or two groups are asked to be hostile to each other (limits must be set previously to insure that no one gets hurt.) The famous Brown-Eyed-Blue-Eyed experiment which was designed to teach about racial prejudice would be an example of this type of exercise. This exercise could then be related to experiences in an urban child's neighborhood or to the book Lord of the Flies or to anything that the teacher can think of.

Through exercises such as these, the child can learn that educational material can be of direct relevance to him in learning about himself and his world. His whole person is accepted including his feelings and thoughts. Learning can become an exciting experiment with personal relevance rather than a drudgery or bore.

There are probably areas that it would be difficult to use these techniques with, although with enough creativity and imagination, they would probably be few. Even if only a minute part of the day is spent in this type of exercise, however, the
benefits of feeling complete as a whole person can help the child feel better about himself and life and hence make learning easier during the rest of the day.

Some problems with instituting these ideas wholesale in the traditional classroom are that these exercises should be voluntary and that the groups should be smaller than the traditional classroom size of 25-40 students. Any student who is forced to participate in these exercises against his will would probably dislike them and not gain any real benefit from them. However, if used in a classroom, there is the question of what to do with those students who do not wish to participate in order that they won't disturb the status quo of the rest of the school. Although some exercises can be done with 25-40 students at once, most lend themselves better to a smaller group of say 5-15 people. These obstacles, however, could be easily overcome by anyone who really wants to try these techniques by enlisting the help of parents, for instance.

Although these techniques may deal with values, there shouldn't be too much controversy concerning them because they don't directly teach or try to change participant's values. Rather, they might help a child to be aware of his or her values or help facilitate the child's forming of his own values. At any rate, the idea of the exercises being optional would allow for any one who thought his or her values were being manipulated to not participate in the exercises.

Janet Lederman worked with George I. Brown in the Ford-Esalen Program. George Brown comments about Janet's experience with "affective" techniques written in her book _Anger and the Rocking Chair_.


It presents a vivid, clear and honest account of what can be done to provide real education for those who are usually not only neglected by affected in a powerfully negative way by an irritated educational system. Such students portrayed here by Janet Lederman obviously don't fit into the system. They are a source of irritation and sometimes provoke even stronger emotional reactions. That is why her class exists. Her methods, employing many principles of Gestalt Therapy, work with these students...

Essentially, Janet Lederman attempts to increase an awareness of reality for each of her students. This includes a "finishing-up" of situations fraught with negative emotions, a "getting in touch" with the real self, its strengths and resources--as opposed to inadequate and distorted concepts of self--and a growing feeling of personal responsibility...

We...believe that approaches like the one above will, in fact, strenghten conventional learning, both qualitatively and quantitatively. By skillfully translating the creative work of Dr. Frederick Perls, founder of Gestalt Therapy, into classroom context, Janet Lederman has dramatically illustrated that these goals can be met.43

Janet Lederman's book is a beautiful poetic story of some of the techniques through which the students in her class grew. An example of how she helped her kids resolve a conflict is the "blaming game":

I suggest you bring the situation into the "now" and have an encounter with whomever you are blaming. Depending on what you can accept, I either stop you with the awareness of both sides of the situation or you go on to explore other possible ways of behavior, which may be more appropriate to the situation.44

Or Janet might have the child fantasize what he would like to do to the other person. Then, she would have him write it down, read it, and share his idea with the others.

The above is a process, not a task, in which reading and writing become an integral and creative way for you to relate to your world. The process deals with your fears, your fantasies, your various personae, your mother, father, siblings, cousins, teachers, and neighbors and not with 'Dick and Jane and the Fireman' who are nothing to you.45
Janet realizes that she "cannot fill all your demands... all your needs", so she also brings in other adults from the community, but gives "...no formal instruction on how you should relate to each other. You will have to find your own level of communication."\(^4^6\)

As the children grow, so does the spirit with which Janet's book ends:

You run to me and give me a hug
I see you,
I feel you, we touch each other's world.\(^4^7\)

Clark Moustakas is an existential psychologist who is mainly known for his work in "play therapy". Although not officially part of the Esalen project, he seems to be saying many of the same things that G.I. Brown and Janet Lederman are saying. In his book *The Authentic Teacher*, Moustakas states 3 ways a teacher can contribute to healthy development of children:

confirming the child as being of non-comparable and non-measurable worth, in his individual way and as a whole person.
by being authentically present and open to honest encounters with children and by being a resource for learning and enrichment.
by making other resources available...based on the child's own interests, wishes, directions and patterns of expression, enabling the actualization of unique potentials and the expansion of reality by furthering interest, meaning and relatedness.

Not all people are so enthusiastic about using Gestalt Therapy techniques in the classroom as myself. Robert F. Biehler in an Educational Psychology Textbook says:

...there is often the implicit assumption in this agreement that once a person has overcome his inhibitions, he will automatically be more creative ...A 'free' person who is ignorant and clumsy perhaps uses even less of his potential than a well-informed, highly skilled individual who is somewhat inhibited. All of which might mean that the emphasis should be on subject matter and skills and that sensitivity training to encourage free expression should be conducted on a voluntary basis outside the classroom.\(^4^9\)
Perhaps this is true, but it disappoints me to see such a negative reaction written in a text which will influence many future teachers. If these methods do not work, they will be proven so by people who try the methods. It seems more likely that any non-success would be because the methods were not ideally suited to the kids and the situation in which they were used. At any rate, both Brown and Lederman claim that their methods actually enhance cognitive as well as affective growth. There seems to be much in this type of approach that can greatly enrich the school day and the lives of many children.

Another variation of dealing with the whole person concerns the formation of values in students. This development of values is facilitated by the humanistic philosophy in education.

Moral development, we have found, is facilitated in open informal classrooms where there is a great deal of interaction among children and where the teacher is concerned with developing patterns of cooperation among the children.

The child must generate moral principles by himself. The task of the teacher is to facilitate this process.

The creation of a moral atmosphere...springs from the moral energy of the educator, of his communicated belief that his school or classroom has a human purpose...it implies that the teacher must listen carefully to the child's moral judgements rather than seek conformity between the child and the teacher.

Learning values, like ideally learning academic material, does not imply a transmission of one idea from teacher to student, but rather a process of allowing the student to formulate his own values. Louis Raths, et al. have written a book, Values and Teaching, that deals with the process of value clarification. For example, the seven sub-processes in formulating values are:
PRIZING one's beliefs and values
1. prizing and cherishing
2. publicly affirming, when appropriate

CHOOSING one's beliefs and behaviors
3. choosing from alternatives
4. choosing after consideration of consequences
5. choosing freely

ACTING on one's beliefs
6. acting
7. acting with a pattern, consistency and repetition

Sidney B. Simon, et. al. picked up on Rath's et. al. idea and wrote a book about specific strategies that teachers might use to help students clarify their values. One example of the many cited theréù is helpful at the beginning of a class. The teacher gives the students a 5" by 7" name card and straight pin, then asks them to put their name in big letters of one side, plus 5 or 6 words ending in "ing" (or equivalent) which describe them as a person. On the other side, they also write their name in big letters, but also put 5 or 6 facts or statistics (like age, phone #, height, etc.) on this side. The students then choose which side (of themselves) they want to present and mill around the room to get acquainted. Discussion in small or large groups may follow to help them see how their choice clarified their values of themselves.

Although there would probably be a major attack by the public on actually teaching values (because this would imply that students were to assume the values of their teachers), I feel that it is important to be able to help children uncover the way in which they form values. In this process, however, we need to remember that there is much room for differences in values in different people. Delmo Della-Dora says that contrary to our usual approach of wanting to turn out (mass-produce) like products (students), we need to learn to derive pleasure from differences in values, goals, and lifestyles.
If we assume that man also has a spiritual nature (as I do), we must also integrate the spiritual with the intellectual in order to have a "whole" person. First, let us define "spiritual". 'Abdu'l Baha' says:

The spirit is the power of life, the mind is the power which appends the reality of things, and the soul is the intermediary between the Supreme Concourse (or Spiritual World) and the lower concours (or material world).¹⁸

Since we cannot comprehend the Spiritual World, but only mediate between it and the material world (the soul's domain), this soul domain is the closest we can get to the "spiritual" while living in this earthly material plane. When I refer to spiritual then, I mean that intermediary domain of the soul where one is striving for spiritual values.

"Religion" has been the usual method of education for spiritual values, but the problem today is that much of what man practices as "religion" is far from being in the spirit that God intended. As Alan Watts has noted:

Irrevocable commitment to any religion is not only intellectual suicide; it is positive unfaith because it closes the mind to any new vision of the world.¹⁹

Even the many religious schools, which would seem to more adequately integrate religion and academia seem to fall into this trap. It seems that instead of fostering an integration of material and spiritual worlds through education (as a growing process), they are trying to transmit the elder's way of thinking through indoctrination to the youth. Heritage Hall Christian School here in Muncie, for instance has as one of its major objectives:

To establish Christian Truth as a guide for life.

2. Through an acceptance that the Bible is the inspired inspired and inerrant word of God
3. Through the knowledge that all men are sinners and can have salvation only through Jesus Christ.56

Although I accept the Christian Faith as is taught in the four gospels, nowhere to my knowledge are the above statements made in the Bible. Yet children which go to this school are indoctrinated to believe these statements of man's belief (earthly plane) rather than God's belief (spiritual plane) and to close their minds to other possibilities.

If this were the only way to teach religion, I would say that it (like values taught in this way), would be better off left out of the curriculum. However, there are other possibilities.

There are many principles which are basic to all religions, be they Buddhist, Christian, Moslem, or Baha'í. This fact and an exposure to the major holy books of all religions are what can be presented to students. The choice of what to believe, then, is left up to the individual student. Baha'u'llah says:

> No man should blindly follow his ancestors and forefathers. Each man must see with his own eyes, hear with his own ears, and investigate the truth for himself.57

Real religion should produce in each a reverent consciousness of a transcendent and benevolent power, irrespective of the individual modes of approach to that power in the form of worship. Such an attitude can be developed only if, even as children our boys and girls are taught that God is one, and that all the prophets teach the same truth. Such a training will develop a sense of tolerance and appreciation and a consciousness of man's journey in the quest of God; and they will begin to identify themselves as fellow pilgrims on a common search.58

Although the previous examples of an integrative education respect the unfolding theory idea that man has inner qualities that need to be helped to unfold and develop, this had not been their central premise. The next three approaches are also
humanistic in nature, but their major premise is that of unfolding the basic inner nature of man. Also, the next two approaches—those of Maria Montessori and A.S. Neill—are of entire schools which have been founded on the unfolding as well as humanistic principles and are currently in operation (to my last knowledge). The last approach, ANISA, is yet in the theoretical planning and experimental stages, but is intended to be an entire school system at some time in the near future.

Maria Montessori was an Italian doctor who believed in spiritual as well as intellectual development of children and felt that education was "the best weapon for peace". She continues:

Since education is the true salvation of humanity and civilization, it cannot be restricted to its present limits nor continue in its present form. Education today has fallen far behind contemporary needs...it might be said that education has remained at the level of the bow and arrow in comparison with today's armaments.59

She feels that the "secret" of bringing education up to the needs in today's world is:

making it possible for man to become the master of the mechanical environment that oppresses him today...

Men can no longer remain ignorant of their own natures and the world in which they live...Education points the way to a new world to conquer; the world of the human spirit.60

The method by which she proposes to do this is by facilitating growth in each child. She says,

I believe that the child himself must be the pivot of his own education—not the child as people ordinarily think of him, but rather his inner-most soul, seen from a perspective that was unprecedented before the advent of what has been called the Montessori Method.61

She believes that the child is, in a way, like a diamond. By removing the dirt and polishing, it becomes a diamond, yet no
man has created the diamond or the child. 62

Teaching, then, to Montessori becomes a matter of polishing the diamond inside the child.

Two factors must be present if the child is to develop. It is necessary to create surroundings for the child that answer his needs not only from the point of view of his physical health but also from the point of view of his spiritual life. The child must be able to act freely in such an environment. There he must find motives for constructive activity that corresponds to his developmental needs. He must have contact with an adult who is familiar with the laws governing his life and who does not get in the way by overprotecting him, by dictating his activities, or by forcing him to act without taking his needs into account.

In such an environment, the child proves to be something quite different from a creature who enjoys wasting time and wants to do nothing but play. He becomes an individual who works very hard, who is very observant, who is not destructive.

The subject matter and the educational process, then, is very different from the way it is presented in public schools.

True knowledge consists, not in the awareness of isolated facts, but in ordered systems of related facts... Real education comes only when the intellect rises above and dominates the information it has received. The mere facts presented are like iron filings lying in disorder on a piece of paper. The intellect is like the invisible magnet underneath, which by its compelling power, works out and systematizes the unrelated raw material of experience into an organized system of thought. 63

As to the "bugbear of discipline" that so often concerns teachers in public schools, Maria Montessori cites the following based on many years of observation and evidence in her schools throughout the world:

The real aim of all children was revealed as constancy in work and spontaneity in choice of work, without guidance of teachers. Following some inner guide, they occupied themselves in work different for each that gave them joy and peace, and then something else appeared that had never before been known among children, a spontaneous discipline. (The children continue to occupy themselves so even in the absence of supervision.)
...evidence accumulated from all countries; a common factor was the extraordinary discipline of the "normalized" children, as we called the type that developed in our schools...

According to Montessori's observations, there are four levels to the process of education. The first is individual freedom of the student to choose the type of activity or work in which an adult serves as a helper. The goal of this stage is for the learner to be able to function autonomically without needing direction from the "teacher". The second level of education is the creation of a special environment to facilitate learning. Montessori had created various special materials for use in the classroom to facilitate this goal. The third level is the creation of an environment where children and adults can develop socially. This stage is "characterized by the preparation of the human soul for work as the vital function that is the cornerstone of social experience." On this level also are examinations, which Montessori feels should be spiritual ones. She feels that "The student should be asked to demonstrate his ability by showing the kind of work he can do." The fourth and final level of education is life itself:

All mankind must be united and remain united forever. The masses must be educated and education must be available at all times. On this fourth level society must help every human being and keep mankind at the same level as the evolving environment, and then elevate man above the environment so that he may further perfect it as he perfects himself.

Montessori schools (or children's homes' as Montessori refers to them) have now been established in many places throughout the world. There is at least one currently operating close to Muncie in Yorktown, Indiana:

The Children's House provides an environment in which each child constructs himself using the
material designed by Dr. Montessori to build muscular control, refine sensorial impressions, develop mastery of language, permit expansion of the mathematical mind and introduce cultural areas such as history, geography, biology, art and music.\(^6\)

Although there are many beautiful ideas and much hope contained in Montessori's system of education, Paula Lillard warns:

> Montessori education is not a panacea for the problems of our society today...(However)

Montessori philosophy and method then deserve credit as a beginning--the first real beginning--to seeking the answers to the child's education and life out of his experiences and not out of our own. As such, they represent an excellent foundation on which to build the education of the future.\(^7\)

"Summerhill" is a boarding school located in England which was begun in the 1920's by a man named A.S. Neill. The 60 some kids who could attend Summerhill at any one time were given complete freedom to do as they wanted, providing they didn't hurt anyone else. Neill felt that the various destructive activities (such as breaking windows) engaged in by students were only the expression of pent-up hostility brought on by some experience before coming to Summerhill. He found that by tolerating and ignoring such behaviors, they soon disappeared and students found more positive ways to ventilate their energy.

The school policies and rules were set up and run by a "group meeting" where every member of the school alike (teachers and students) got one vote. Classes were held where teachers would not only teach the subject as planned, but also anything else that he or she knew as a person. Attendance was of course optional, and not everyone who went to Summerhill finished an equivalent to high school diploma; but for those who wanted it, the opportunity was ample to achieve this status. Students and teachers were encouraged to abandon the normal role models and
to relate as friends. The atmosphere was very relaxed.

The informality and humanism of Summerhill are exemplified by the title by which one of Neill's students referred to him:

"Neill! Neill! Orange Peel!". Neill comments,

The little boy's chant shows that there is no necessity for a gulf separating pupils from teacher, a gulf made by adults, not children...

The Summerhill rhyme tells the world that a school can abolish fear of teachers and, deeper down, fear of life. And it is not only Neill that the kids treat with equality and fun and love; the whole staff are treated as pals and playmates...

More and more, I have come to believe that the greatest reform required in our schools is the abolition of that chasm between young and old...

Erich Fromm writes a good summary of Neill's system of education in the introduction to Summerhill:

Neill does not try to educate children to fit well into the existing order, but endeavors to rear children who will become happy human beings, men and women whose values are not to have much, not to use much, but to be much.

A former student of Neill's school, Joshua Popenoe (at age 16) writes with insight about his experience at Summerhill:

...my four years at Summerhill traced the sort of life I wish I could lead always. If everyone went to a school like Summerhill, and followed its philosophy, the world would no longer be made up of stereotyped plastic people who conform to their nation's ideals rather than their own. Their souls have been lost in the glove compartments of their annually new, annually bigger, and annually more powerful automobiles.

Each child is the only person on this earth who knows what is best for himself, and no one has the right to act as his boss, for that will inevitably harm rather than help the child's emotional development. More and more people are coming to realize this truth. But unfortunately, the power is held by those who think differently, and undoubtedly a great many years will pass before a complete change is made to a natural and more humane form of education.

Whether or not that change is modeled after Summerhill, will remain to be seen. The problem with the Summerhillian type of
change is that it is a boarding school and takes for granted that the child can be separated from the controlling environment of the larger society and parents. I don't think we could afford or would want this kind of education for everybody. Certainly, however, we can learn from the humanism exemplified at Summerhill. Neill's goal of abolishing the "chasm between young and old" seems to have direct application possibilities in the public school system.

According to the founders of the ANISA model, even the total image or Gestalt is inadequate to integrate the many fragmented parts of our world today. This is because it "is derived from lower orders of existence" and does not deal with the spiritual nature of man.74

The purpose of education according to the ANISA model is similar to Montessori's of Neill's:

to provide each child with experience and knowledge that will ultimately enable him to direct the process of his own becoming and to cope with the tests and difficulties he must face as he strives to transcend himself and change his world...75

The ANISA model is based on a redefinition of education as those processes or experiences that underly the development or release of human potential.76

ANISA is an Arabic word which means "a tree in a high place that sheds a fragrance all around".77 This symbolic meaning is further explained:

The symbolic meaning of ANISA--"The Tree of Life"--with its connotation of perpetual fruition and beauty is reflected in the theory of development. Each child is a precious sapling in the process of progressively manifesting his beauty—the fruits of his efforts at self-actualization—in association with his peers and teachers. But only those who have seen the forest and come away with a deep appreciation for the uniqueness of each tree, will be commissioned to teach in an ANISA school. For only then will they be empowered to impart that vision with a method that will ensure the creative advance of our children.78
The initials of ANISA stand for American National Institute for Social Advancement. Currently the program is using a $242,000 grant given to them by the New England Program in Teacher Education in Durham, New Hampshire. Research and experimentation is undertaken at the Center for the Study of Human Potential, School of Education, University of Massachusetts, in Amherst, Mass.79

The model is based on the Baha'i principle that the purpose of life is to know and love God. Since there is a bit of God's spirit everywhere, this is also "to know and to love". The purpose of education, then becomes to learn how to best know and apply that knowledge in love.

The field of learning, then, is comprehensive and could include anything:

The ANISA educational model is based on synthesis and application of a vast body of scientific research from many disciplines, including extensive information which defines the critical role played by nutrition in the release of the potentialities of the child.80

This vast body of knowledge is broken down into 5 basic categories of potentialities--each considered to be an important part of the knowledge needed to integrate human learning. These categories are psychomotor, perceptual, cognitive, affective, and volitional (or will). In each of these areas, learning has two sets of goals: 1) to learn the information and 2) to learn the process by which that information is acquired. Learning competence then is "the ability to differentiate aspects of experience, whether internal or external, integrate them into a new whole; and generalize the whole to different situations. Teaching becomes a process of helping the child (or adult) to learn the subject matter and the process of learning it."81
As the reader can see, the ANISA model is very comprehensive in its scope. Please refer to the sources in the footnotes for more complete information. It is still in the process of development by Dr. Jordan and his staff at the Center for the Study of Human Potential in Massachusetts. There are plans to begin a small experimental school based on this philosophy (which may even have begun by now). Although this method of learning has not yet been put through the test of reality in order to determine its workability, the ANISA model certainly provides a positive direction in which education can grow!

We have re-examined education, looking at it from a more "whole" or Gestalt point of view as well as from a "humanistic" point of view. We have seen several examples of how this way of looking at education works in reality. These ideas are not widely used at present because many segments of our population do not adequately understand or want to take the risk to try these methods. Yet we see more and more innovative changes happening on a wider scope all the time. We see more people learning to relate beyond their roles in some schools and in some parts of society as a whole. We see more people refusing to submit to blind authority and wanting to "find themselves" or find their own center and direction from which they can grow (rather than having the growth imposed on them from the outside). We are beginning to "grow people" as Rogers so aptly stated.

People, like flowers, do not grow overnight. It will take time to change and it will take patience. Yet I believe that we are moving towards more humanistic growth. It is our decision as to how fast we will travel.
-footnotes-

1Frederick Perls


5Edward Zigler, p. 67.


10Zigler, p. 66.


12Peter Drucker, "How to Be an Employee", printed in Will the real teacher please stand up? by Mary Greer and Bonnie Rubenstein (Goodyear Publishing Co.: California), 1972, p. 212.


14Ivan Illich, "The Alternative to Schooling" printed in Readings in Education, p. 120.


16Edward Eddy, p. 6.


18Eddy, p. 4.


31. Rogers, p. 216.

32. Rogers, p. 217.


34. William Glasser, *Schools Without Failure* printed in *Will the real teacher please stand up?*, p. 159.

35. William Glasser, p. 159-60.


39. Sidney M. Jourard, p. 35.


44 Janet Lederman, Anger and the Rocking Chair, p. 42

45 Lederman, p. 44.

46 Lederman, p. 56.

47 Lederman, p. 56.


50 Lawrence Kohlberg with Phillip Whitten, "Understanding the Hidden Curriculum" in Readings in Education, p. 205.

51 Louis E. Raths, Merrill Harmin and Sidney B. Simon, Values and Teaching: Working with Values in the Classroom (Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co.: Columbus, Ohio), 1966, p. 30


54 'Abdu'l Baha', Tablet of 'Abdu'l Baha' as quoted in Baha'i References in Education, p. 93.

55 Alan Watts as quoted in Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, p. 5.


57 Baha'u'llah, Baha'i World Faith.

58 A.R. Wadia, "The Concept of Man and the Philosophy of Education in East and West" in Humanism and Education in East and West, p. 188.

59 Maria Montessori (trans. by Helen R. Lane), Education and Peace (Henry Regnery Co.: Chicago), 1972, p. 32.

60 Maria Montessori, Education and Peace, p. 32.

61 Montessori, Education and Peace, p. 90.


63 Montessori, Education and Peace, p. 91-2.


68 Meremec Montessori Children's Center pamphlet.


77 Jordan and Streets, p. 22.

78 Kalinowski and Jordan, p. 25.

79 Kalinowski and Jordan, p. 17.


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