

Learning In An Integrated Environment

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International Council for Higher Education

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LEARNING IN AN INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENT

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*. . . dedicated to my late parents who sacrificially
enabled the start of my educational exploration*

Preface

This book is about learning... and learning in the integrated environment. I do not make any claim to these thoughts being “new” or “revolutionary” or “path-breaking” as most of the concepts explored have been around for more than a century. And if you find the teachings from Confucius as being relevant, then they are even before Christ.

But I am certain that the book will stir the heart of any sincere reader as it comes from the heart. My burden has been to place learning within the context of life. The problem has been that education seemed to go further and further away from real life and operating in various isolated compartments. Gradually it became disintegrated. On the one hand, this has largely been the case with forms of education that our modern and post-modern world has entertained. And on the other, education has been taken over by people with restricted agendas. Francis Bacon said – “Knowledge is power” and as with all forms of power, few people take it over and exploit it for their own ends.

The reader may not have any problem in accepting the pressing need for integration. But the important question is how this is to be applied into our educational endeavors. I leave the "how to" for specialists to handle and so want to make clear that this is not a workbook. "Learning in an Integrated Environment" only aims to provide the philosophical or ideological foundation through thoughts drawn from a variety of highly influential thinkers. But then, I do not intend to deal exhaustively with these philosophies. The primary intention is to motivate educators to grasp the significance of these thinkers, even though superficially, and then move on to seeing their significance to integrated learning.

In a big way this book unfolds a major part of my own personality. God has given me an array of "interests" and I have tried to integrate these together in my own experience. I purposely do not term these as "talents" as that may be far too presumptuous! But, whether it is art, music, sport, writing or the several other expressions of my mental faculty, I have not seen any conflicts. My love for music makes me attempt to bring harmony into everything; and my interest in art wants me to see beauty all over. If this is what integration is all about then a humble personal statement is – "I am an integrated person!"

But integrated thinking is not just for integrated people (that is if there is a breed thus branded). The teacher or mentor if truly pursuing his or her calling must focus attention on the student. One of the damaging factors in contemporary education is that teaching has become a career. Its value is now measured according to status, money and professional skills taking away the personal touch from the profession. There is need for radical change and I believe the principles outlined in this book will bring this about.

I increasingly believe the teaching profession will be totally transformed if the principles of integrated learning are intentionally applied. Passion must be restored to the teaching profession. Passion brings pleasure or even the pleasure of fulfillment. Aristotle is claimed to have said - "Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work." And this needs to be urgently discovered.

Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere, a Chinese proverb states. Integrated learning is not a time bound classroom specific activity. It is the kind of possession that will become part of the whole life of the learner and that is what is exciting. Gandhi said – "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever." It is a breed of life-long learners that we must build.

Finally, I must make a clarification. My colleagues in Christian higher education may ask – Why do you not write about Jesus Christ, the greatest teacher and one who demonstrated such powerful teaching. I have chosen not to do so mainly because Jesus Christ, my Lord and savior, does not merely stand as one alongside these great thinkers. But Jesus gave some very sound advice for us as integrated educators. When asked – "Teacher, which is the great commandment?" He replied - "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself." This is integration.

Ken Gnanakan

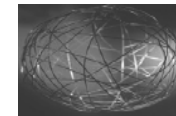
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CHAPTER ONE

Education for Life

A case for integrated learning



The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.

Alvin Toffler

I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.

Albert Einstein

The teacher if he is indeed wise does not teach bid you to enter the house of wisdom but leads you to the threshold of your own mind.

Kahlil Gilbran

I

Our modern education systems, whether in Asia or Africa, are heavily dependant on Western modularized and disintegrated learning models. In recent years, the relevance of these educational systems to their surrounding context has come into question. What is education? Why are we doing what we are doing? What kinds of products should be delivered? What effect is it having on students within their own local contexts?

We seem to be suddenly discovering that our classrooms are appalling environments for true learning. The same lectures are delivered year after year, with little motivation to update the knowledge or delivery approach. Our students are viewed as containers into which certain facts and figures must be poured, without consideration for what must happen inside. One educator even made a parallel between traditional teaching and a packed suitcase, noting the suitcase is only “unpacked” for examination.¹

If examinations are based on reproducing lectures from classrooms, then preparation for such evaluation methods is purely dependant on rote learning. While it may be required to memorize certain excerpts from poetry, scripture or the classics, the problem is that there is no application of those passages to real life situations. It seems the most successful students within our current educational systems are those with sharp memories and that demonstrate the clearest reproduction of the notes and lectures.

Early Asian educational methods tended to be more integrated and drawn from real life. Take for instance the arts, which in most traditional Asian cultures is integral to life. Art in these cultures is not so much “fine arts” as understood in western urban settings, but more an expression of the living traditions deeply rooted in local communities. Art was used as an expression of life’s experience, not simply for the creation of “artworks” that were unrelated to actual life. Dance, painting, music, communication methods and other art forms had a major role in education as the primary vehicles of knowledge. Art kept older traditions alive and was a powerful tool in social integration and transformation.

Even when more formal learning forms were employed, our traditional systems had clear objectives which followed a particular path. Traditions had to be preserved, harmony in community was to be restored or religious practices were to be observed. For example, Confucius aimed to reform society and the government and his goals for education were to place those capable to serve in government in decisive roles. His system aimed at producing people of character, or “chun tzu”, by using observation, study and reflective thought.

In Colonial times, educational objectives abided with colonial policies, as familiar within Asia and Africa. Lord Thomas Macaulay, for instance who served in the House of Commons and a member of the Supreme Council of India, presented his case to the British Parliament to produce a class of people who would be “interpreters” between the colonial rulers and the millions they governed. They were to be “Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect.” There was no desire to educate the masses, only to raise up “Indian gentlemen” who would fall in line with colonial objectives.²

Rather than attempting to provide education for everybody, the British colonialists chose to educate the chosen who would “refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge.”³ There was the goal to propagate Western or even more specifically British culture. Although this is a negative insinuation, the reference to the power of education to accomplish stated goals is clearly illustrated.

One of India’s Nobel Laureates Tagore, though surrounded by such Western models, attempted to put education into the context of Indian life. Having “dropped out” of regular school which he found to be dull and uninspiring; Tagore developed a dynamic open model of education in his Shantiniketan. He felt that a curriculum should be built around the child and his or her environment and that classes should be as open and natural as possible. This served to provide a spontaneous learning environment within a real life context and the desired goal of education for life.⁴

EDUCATION TODAY

It seems that within our global context, the problem does not lie within the content of our educational models, but more with achieving an appropriate setting for real learning. Such a setting must be rooted in reality and sadly, most modern educational systems are found wanting. From childhood learning through the higher levels of research study, most students are floundering in unfamiliar worlds. A child is straightaway introduced to the alphabet, with no concept of how it relates to the life around them.

In very basic terms, learning is most successful when we go from the known to the unknown. A child will learn from what is already familiar to him or her and then grow to absorbing additional information. We often find learners grappling with unknown facts and figures and never reaching known educational destinations. Education must be the journey from learning through what is observable and then to becoming better informed in how to put that body of learning into practice.

Even our teachers have become frustrated by overloaded syllabuses, course materials and the pressure of examinations that allow for little time to enable deeper thinking and application among their students. In fact, questions are often discouraged as the teachers themselves are not fully informed. No wonder some students ask, “why mathematics?” or “why geography?” There is very little effort from teachers to set these subjects within a real life context. Haven’t many of us wondered the relevance of trigonometry and calculus and how it will be used within our life? Education will only be meaningful once the subject matter is integrated with the real life setting around us.

It is encouraging to know that today’s educators are interested in integrated learning. While there are numerous terms being used – integrated curriculum, interdisciplinary teaching, thematic teaching, synergistic teachings – most discussions focus on primary education, there is a growing interest in the interdisciplinary, integrated curriculum from higher education experts. Even higher levels of research are being encouraged to integrate the very fabric of socio-economic structures to make the learning more meaningful.

It is shocking to review some of bi-products of theological education. Take for instance some dissertation titles such as

“The concept of wheat and tares in Matthew”; “Paul’s concept of Salvation by works with reference to Galatians”; or even “Jesus’ response to Pontius Pilate’s question.”. With some researchers investing as much as five years for such studies, how much relevance is this to their future teaching positions within a college or church? How much more useful would such studies be if they integrated the Old and the New Testaments, not just from academic points of view, but also the actual contexts in which they will enter for their ministry? If the Bible is not presented in a relevant manner in theological training, than it becomes nothing more than a lifeless text from our past with only academic value to the present.

Before we even begin to looking at some relevant expressions of integrated learning, it must be emphasized that integrated learning is learning within real life. While it has been said that “education is life”, we must also add that “life is education”. The classroom is a limited setting for such learning and only a small, thought important, part of life. In this sense, the world is the real classroom and we must engage students within this wide environment for integrated learning.

WHY INTEGRATION?

We will be using the word “integration” frequently, so let us define our terms. Integration comes from the Latin word “*integer*”, meaning whole or entire. It is normally taken to mean combining parts so that they work together to form a whole. It has become an integral part of conversations at various levels and disciplines within education. One illustration is from the information technology world. Microsoft, in describing its Internet Information Manager (IIS), said that it is “tightly integrated,” indicating that it held together a number of criteria

and conditions demanded by manufacturers, quality controllers and end users.

The term integration is much broader than one would first expect. No longer do professionals approach problems from a narrow perspective. Psychologists and psychiatrists treat the personality as being closely bound together with events that seem far apart in time but impacting any given action. Integrated approaches have become the basis of treating various human disorders.

So what does integration mean? The best place to start is with the environment or that which surrounds us. Those who study the environment through its ecological dimensions frequently will hear of cycles, chains, webs, even “integrated wholes” and “interrelatedness”. When we study basics of ecology we speak of an “interconnectedness” that is characteristic of ecological interactions. There are no isolated events that are not in some way connected to the rest of the natural world. Interrelatedness and integration is key. With increasingly intense discussions on ecological issues such as global warming one is beginning to see that it is not some sudden isolated happening. Deforestation, population, pollution and a host of other factors over centuries are all contributing in an interconnected manner.

Therefore the meaning of a part can only be understood in the context of the whole. In short integration refers to making connections between elements that must be held together in order for their meaning to be explored. In education, integration related to how the various components of education – the subjects, teacher, classroom, student and real life, etc. – are held together.

A strongly related word to integration is “holism.” Holism is a term being employed frequently in contemporary conversations and one which has an underlying reference to integration. The term is derived from the Greek word “holos” meaning “whole”. But ironically, holism refers to something even more than the whole. The Oxford English Dictionary defines holism as “[the] tendency in nature to form wholes that are more than the sum of the parts by ordered grouping.” The term is derived from the Greek word “holos”, meaning “whole.

Basically, holism refers to the theory that the parts of any whole cannot exist nor be understood, except within their relation to the whole. This theory emphasizes both the whole and the interdependence of its parts and underlines the fact that the combined effect of the interaction of two or more forces is greater than the sum of their individual effects. In business terms we speak of holistic alliances or mergers that are collaborative interactions among groups in order to create an improved mutual advantage benefiting both groups.

Another related term is “synergy.” It comes from the Greek “synergia,” meaning joint or cooperative action. Synergy must be understood in relationship to holism, in that combined forces produce much more than individual efforts. For instance, two people can work separately and add their individual efforts. However, the outcome will be much less than what could have been accomplished if they combined their energies. In simple terms, one plus one normally equals two, but in the theory of synergy it equals three, four or much more.⁵

Within education, synergy refers to various faculty working together and discovering that there is greater effectiveness in fulfilling our learning goals and outcomes together. If all we needed was to produce pure engineers, doctors, community

workers or pastors, then we specialized isolated environments would be appropriate for each. However, we need professionals with holistic perspectives and faculties and departments must interact frequently to establish connections and explore real world applications. Such integration among disciplines will bring synergistic results with mutual benefits.

WHAT IS INTEGRATED LEARNING?

The question now arises – how can learning be integrated? We have already established the first goal in integrating learning with real life to maximize the learner’s experience. It was Maria Montessori, an Italian educator who demonstrated that children are capable of learning the things that they need to know as long as they have the right environment. Her bold claim that children learn more directly from their own environment and relatively little from listening to a teacher talking to a class, led to the Montessori education method which is characterized by self-directed activity on the part of the child and deliberate observation on the part of the teacher. The emphasis is on the importance of adapting the child’s learning environment to his/her developmental level and on the role of physical activity to acquire knowledge and gain practical skills.

A second area of integrated learning is to integrate theoretical knowledge and concepts to real life. Here, we can look at theological education and the theologies that students are required to learn. Most of this tends to be conceptual learning; however, such theologies are not only learned better, but remembered better, when they are related to real contexts. When liberation theologians took theories and concepts and applied them to the poor, this integration into real life made the theologies come alive.

A third area of integration is for learning to be related to the particular gift of the learner. Not all of us grasp concepts, and similarly not all of us enjoy accumulating facts and figures. The Theory of Multiple Intelligences proposed by psychologist Howard Gardner, suggests that each individual possesses varying levels of different intelligences. The theory first appeared in Gardner’s book, “Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences” in 1983 and has been further refined in subsequent years.⁶

Gardner’s theory argues that intelligence, as it is traditionally defined, does not consider the wide variety of learner abilities. He originally identified seven core intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal. In 1999, he added naturalistic as the eighth intelligence. Basically, Gardner suggests that a student who masters math is not necessarily more intelligent than one who excels in words or colors, and that a traditionally uniform curriculum and syllabus severely limits our identification of the true talents within learners.

A fourth area of integration is the interrelation of one area of learning with another to break down the walls we build in our artificially segregated curriculum. A child will learn better if he/she connects what is learned within one particular situation or discipline to another. There are some obvious natural connections, while others can be created. For instance, one may be learning Geography with natural references to mathematics, biology, language etc. and seeing this could enhance learning appreciably. Skills and knowledge can be acquired far more easily when developed and integrated into more than one area of study.

Fifthly, integration must employ various modes of educational deliveries. Such modes may transcend the classroom for total learning to take place. We have erroneously confined the learning experience to classrooms and in doing so have focused solely on the teacher as the giver/conveyor and the student as the receiver/container. Learning is much more complex and may take root in a variety of environments. All kinds of formal and informal, campus and off-campus, on-line and off-line methods must be utilized to fully maximize an integrated learning process.

WHERE DO WE START?

Efforts are being made to transform curriculum and syllabuses to an integrated approach. In summarizing the various aspects of integration we have discussed, the following provide a definition of an integrated course:

An integrated course is one that is organized in such a way that it cuts across subject-matter lines, bringing together various aspects of the particular subject in an interaction with other areas of study in order to achieve the stated objectives and outcomes of the program. It views learning and teaching in a holistic way and reflects on issues in the real world making courses meaningful within their particular as well as wider contexts.⁷

Integrated courses will therefore be cross-curricular and the curriculum interrelated. Experts see outcomes become far more observable and therefore more accurately measured. We not only need to look at integrated courses, but an integrated curriculum as well. The integrated curriculum and the learning experiences that are planned accordingly, not only provide the learners with a unified view of all that he/she is learning, but also motivates and develop the learners' ability to apply this learning to newer studies, models and systems. Every-

thing learned becomes a tool for further learning and the integration into real life.

Another term used for the integrated curriculum is interdisciplinary curriculum. An interdisciplinary curriculum is defined as follows :

In the integrative curriculum, the planned learning experiences not only provide the learners with a unified view of commonly held knowledge (by learning the models, systems, and structures of the culture) but also motivate and develop learners' power to perceive new relationships and thus to create new models, systems, and structures.⁸

Educators can find this very stimulating as learning multiplies with students interacting with others and seeing the whole rather than merely their parts. Faculty members are forced to work alongside one another and thereby widen their horizons.

TRUE VALUE OF EDUCATION RESTORED

Integrated learning is bringing new life into the meaningless routines of many educationists. This must be expected, as learning is discovering its place in real life, rather than only seeing the value in the completion certificate at the end of the course. Students must be trained to see every bit of learning as relevant to their situation.

One task of the educationist today is to restore the true value of education beyond its usefulness for a lucrative career. The job oriented educational programs certainly have their place and are valuable within a developing economy. However, when learning is equated only to earning, we may be responsible for ill prepared students. Even some parents are willing to invest in the education of their brighter children, assuming they will recover it monetarily or gain prestige.

Writing on the “True Value of Education” Mahatma Gandhi said:

“The real difficulty is that people have no idea of what education truly is. We assess the value of education in the same manner as we assess the value of land or of shares in the stock-exchange market. We want to provide only such education as would enable the student to earn more. We hardly give any thought to the improvement of the character of the educated. The girls, we say, do not have to earn; so why should they be educated? As long as such ideas persist there is no hope of our ever knowing the true value of education.”⁹

Distorted views of the *raison d’être* for education are the primary cause for the type of impractical educational models we have today – where integration is not recognized as necessary. Crash courses, employment oriented diplomas, short term study projects, etc. are in abundance and readily available from reputed universities. Yet, they concentrate on just one dimension of real education, whereas true integration will prepare men and women who value education as preparing them for life itself and not just for a livelihood.

FOOT NOTES

1. John Dewey (1859-1952) was a psychologist, philosopher, social critic and political activist but made his mark as an educator. Dewey made seminal contributions to philosophy and psychology. He was a major inspiration for several allied movements that have shaped 20th century thought, including empiricism, humanism, naturalism and process philosophy

2. Thomas Macaulay, Minute on Indian Education, 2 February 1835

3. *ibid*

4. We deal with Rabindranath Tagore’s contribution to education in Chapter Four

5. There is an inspiring discussion on “synergy” in Stephen Covey’s popular book – *Seven Habits Of Highly Effective People* first published in 1989 and available widely as a paper back all over the world

6. Howard Gardner. “Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences” 1983. New York: Basic Books

7. Betty Jean Eklund Shoemaker 1989. “Integrative Education. A Curriculum for the Twenty-First Century.” “OSSC Bulletin” 33, 2(October 1989). P 5

8. Paul Dressel. “The meaning and significance of integration.” (1958)

9. M. K. Gandhi True Education, quoted on the website of the National Council of Teacher Education, New Delhi, India

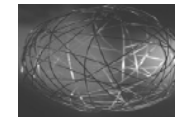
LET’S REFLECT!

1. What are the basic features of integrated learning? How are they different from the conventional education systems we are used to?
2. Examine the curriculum of a Bachelor level course of your institution. Are there any features integration? What changes would you recommend?
3. What changes are necessary in our understanding of education and learning to make our systems more relevant to the world today?

CHAPTER TWO

The Ultimate Vision for Education

Confucius, 551 – 479 B.C.



Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

Nelson Mandela

Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation.

John F. Kennedy

Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another.

G K Chesterton

Be the change that you want to see in the world.

Mohandas Gandhi

II

Education, in our capitalistic commercial world, is degenerating into a means to an end - which today is an individual affluent life. Competitions breed a spirit of self-centered one-upmanship with accomplishments having little to do with individual or community values that can bring about societal change.

If we believe in the promises of an integrated education, then what is taught in a classroom must translate into changed people and transformed societies. However, for this to occur, education must have a clear vision that extends far beyond the individual or even the institution and reaches the community.

Unfortunately, education has been looked at from a very myopic perspective. Let us ask very plainly – Why education? Is mathematics learned only to give a child an idea of the use of numbers? Does it only relate to counting money for individual gain? Is studying languages only useful to make a person a master of prose and poetry? Will this make the student a better communicator of character and values that will bring about change within his/her community? The answers to these valid questions normally do not go further than the individual or the classroom. Unfortunately, the concentration remains focused on passing examinations and finding the best jobs. There is no clear vision for what we want to accomplish beyond examinations, jobs or individual attainment.

VISION AND EDUCATION

Corporate groups and other organizations today invest time and money to define their vision. Normally the vision is seen as an inspiring short and succinct statement of what the organization intends to achieve in the future. Visions are broad, all-inclusive and dynamic statements describing aspirations for the future. Translated into educational institutions these are specific to the particular institution.

For instance the vision statement of The William Carey University in India, describes the institution as a place where “academics will integrate with the socio-economic and environmental context to bring about total transformation.”¹ This does not mean that every course or subject will speak about socio-economic development. The vision tends to provide the overall philosophical base (or the direction for this base) of a curriculum and individual courses, thus are intended to provide a general orientation and direction towards this vision.

Each institution must have its own vision. But in this chapter we look even further at the vision of education itself. What is the commonly shared vision for education and what must it do to the world? And to answer this we consider some of the teachings of Confucius, who lived from 551 to 479 BC.²

Confucius has been lauded by both Asian and non-Asian educators for his extraordinary impact on Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese thought. In recent years his teachings have become available all over the world. Not much is known for certain about the life of Confucius and many traditional stories about him are accepted only as myth. The most reliable source of information about him is the Analects or Lunyu, a collection of sayings by and about Confucius and his disciples. The Analects is divided into 20 books and scholars

claim that books 1 to 15 contain much of the authentic Confucian material.³

The name Confucius is a Latin form of Kung fu Tzu, meaning Master Kung, given to him by Jesuit missionaries who translated and interpreted his thoughts for their Western audiences. So great was their reverence for him that Jesuits saw Confucius as a Renaissance humanist, while some German thinkers recognized him as an Enlightenment sage. Confucius gave foundations for social, political and religious thought and left a legacy of education that aimed at total transformation starting from the individual to the family and onward to the whole country and world.

Confucius underlined ren (sometimes spelled jen) as the integration of human virtues. Ren has been translated as “benevolence,” “humaneness,” or simply “goodness.” For Confucius, ren is an ideal that every human should strive to achieve, but it is so exalted that he did not attribute it to anyone. Ren is the perfect combination of virtues such as loyalty, reciprocity, wisdom, courage, righteousness, filial piety, and faithfulness. These virtues for Confucius were the foundation for an ethically perfect society.⁴

EDUCATION FOR SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION

With such a lofty vision for education, we are beginning to capture a glimpse of Confucius’ ultimate aim of transformation that benefited not just the individual or a community, but impacted all of society. In keeping, Confucian teachings had a lofty concept of knowledge, showing it to bring strength to the personal life and then on to family relationships. When such relationships are strengthened, the state becomes more orderly and there is peace in the world.

Therefore the aim of educating individuals was for the good of all society. He believed the true quest for knowledge would transform everyone. With such an impressive concept of knowledge and splendid objectives for education Confucius obviously had high expectations: The transformation of society and the world.

Confucius was aiming to truly influence society and therefore, aimed at individual character, stressing that acquired knowledge must have a direct impact on the learner. And because the learner was part of a community, these impacts were bound to translate into societal change. Educational curriculum became a powerful tool for implementing the ethical and social expectations of Chinese society.

Most of our education systems do not have as far reaching and ambitious vision as Confucius. They are only short term objectives aimed to improve knowledge and skills of individuals to perform tasks for their own benefit. A better job or more income seem to be the primary motivators within traditional education and therefore, only an exercise for the head, but not the heart. It is only recently that values have become an important component in the whole educational process and equally valued among knowledge and skills. We are not talking only about medical education or technical education for building up the economic capacities of peoples and societies. All education can play a similar role if consciously pursued.

Applying this to our educational curriculum today could prove useful. We teach history and make our students memorize dates and facts that are often erroneous. Most students will not voluntarily delve deeper to understand the meaning of the events and the changes they brought about within society. George Santayana aptly said, "Those who cannot learn from

history are doomed to repeat it." If students can be encouraged to look at trends in history and apply them to the present, the aim of history becomes to learn both from the good and bad lessons of the past and apply them to the present for the improvement of our world.

Learning outcomes help build people towards long range visions. That is why some institutions will spell out long range outcomes. But most teachers do not look long range and only concerned for the classroom and their teaching. We do not hear of teachers wishing to produce better men and women for a transformed society. Once educators begin to ask the question of what kind of education will be needed to build strong people of discipline, commitment, service and excellence for their particular professions, two things will happen. First, teaching will become more focused on facilitating changes in their students. Secondly, they will choose the kind of content that will nurture such values. Then such learning in the classroom will no doubt have long lasting implications for the outside world.

The values given today are based on individual success, competition and materialistic gain. If we look first to deepen these values to impact their surrounding environments, the student will automatically strive for the kind of excellence that will help take him/her into higher and higher levels of accomplishment. Students will be concerned for the entire learning community rather than only individual accomplishments. All this will eventually translate into people committed to a changed world.

AIMING HIGHER

"Integrated education" is the ideal base for us to begin to aim higher in our educational programmes. This calls for insti-

tutional objectives and outcomes to be integrated into the broader picture of the situation they work within. It calls for individual courses or programmes to be integrated with the overall vision of the institution.

Institutional vision statements must begin to clearly state long range goals. They must spell out outcomes for transforming people and societies, rather than their short range ones relating to individual performances. Both are important and educationists must learn to blend all these elements together to help students look beyond immediate performances to ultimate vision for the benefit of people. An example of an ideal institutional vision statement, might be, "The ABC College aims to provide quality technical education for individual excellence and for the transformation of society."

Two universities (which remain unnamed) define their vision as follows:

College A "is dedicated to: offering experiences and curricula that lead to professional licensure in music education, preparing students for graduate and professional studies in music, developing performing opportunities that enrich both students and community, producing technologically experienced music professionals, and training students to become leaders and advocates for the music profession.

University B's Chemistry Department seeks "To provide students with a sound education in the fundamental concepts and modern practice of chemistry. To maintain sound degree programs that prepare students for advanced study in chemistry, careers in chemical industry, and provide a chemistry foundation."

College A wants to be committed to both students and community and this should be lauded. The word "enrich" is also a

valuable word giving something more than "equipping with skills, etc" and is a dimension that could be developed in measurable outcomes and objectives. You will also note their "offering experiences and curricula" which will be in keeping with an integrated environment for learning. On the other hand, University B is clearly concerned for giving a "chemistry foundation" for careers in chemical industry. While students are prepared for their professions, there is a wider dimension missing. Clarification could be added to the end of their statement by including, "provide a chemistry foundation that would prepare student for engagement to confront wider concerns of today's world."

Confucius was concerned for this long range vision of transformation. But let us not romanticize him to such an extent that we think his efforts brought about an ideal society. The connection between Confucius and the official Chinese educational system was strong and the contributions wide-ranging. As expected, educational system within Asia and Africa gradually degenerated into what we know today – a system of rote learning with an emphasis on head knowledge and fact memorization. Examinations were merely based on repeating what was memorized and real values in education receded into the background.

EDUCATION FOR ALL

As Confucius modeled, education must be for all. This democratic demand on education is the only way in which total transformation will be achieved. Traditional Indian education clearly demonstrated such a higher aim of building people with knowledge of our culture and history and instilling community values.

But modern Indian education started on an infamous note. Lord Thomas Macaulay, who at that time served in the House of Commons and a member of the Supreme Council of India, presented his case to the British Parliament to produce a class "...Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect." There was no desire to educate the masses, it was only to raise up "interpreters" between the colonial rulers and the millions they governed. We may not agree with the policies of Macaulay, but to his credit we must say that he had a clear cut statement of a vision for his education policy.⁵

Macaulay was no ordinary person. He was a well-known Victorian essayist, poet, and historian, while also a colonial administrator. He is remembered in literary history as the author of the History of England, but also remembered in postcolonial studies for this shocking attitude of cultural imperialism. Here is an excerpt from the "Minute on Indian Education" delivered in 1835:

"I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is, indeed, fully admitted by those members of the Committee who support the Oriental plan of education. In one point I fully agree with the gentlemen to whose general views I am opposed. I feel with them, that it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population."⁶

Rather than attempting to provide education for everybody, the British colonialists chose to educate a few and not to foster local cultures, but instead impose Western Civilization. Even if there was a local concern, it was to "refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge." It was the task of the Christian missionaries to later undo this damage and to provide education for all.

Alexander Duff, who served in India in the mid-1800s, made a significant impact by devising an educational mission which broadened out the availability of education to all. The success of his work including the altering of the policies of the government of India in matters of education, as well as securing education, along with evangelization, as part of the missionary endeavor by Christian churches in Britain. While the concern for education utilising Western systems was still present, there was a more genuine concern for the upliftment of people. A government minute was even adopted on March 7, 1835, mandating the British government in India with "the promotion of European science and literature among the natives of India."⁷

While Macaulay viewed education within Colonial India only for a few, Confucius wanted equal opportunities be given to all people. In keeping with his long range vision for society, he taught that all people possessed the potential to be changed by education and therefore taught students from all classes. The democratic nature of education offered upward mobility to anyone who could study and gain from it. Our vision for education must definitely involve the transformation of people to bring about a changed world. In the words of our Lord Jesus it must be – "Thy kingdom come on earth as in heaven."

EDUCATION AND DALITS IN INDIA

Education and its availability to all within India has been severely hindered through the caste system, which has continued for more than 3000 years. The Hindu social system is divided into four main hierarchical caste groups: brahmins, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras. Outside this fourfold classification, there is a category of untouchables named the Dalits, who occupy the lowest position in this increasingly attacked social system. The word "Dalit" comes from its Sanskrit root meaning "oppressed" and refers to people who are socially, religiously, economically and politically oppressed, deprived and exploited in India.⁸

Dalits number as many as 160 to 180 million and are viewed as being too low for even the caste system. Throughout India, they have been denied opportunities for education and generations of Dalits have been denied access to basic knowledge and skills. The only work assigned to them has been the menial and scavenging tasks which others refuse to undertake. They are relegated to the lowest jobs, and live in constant fear of being publicly humiliated, paraded naked, beaten, and raped by upper-caste Hindus.

Although the practice of "untouchability" was formally banned by the Constitution of India in 1950, the Dalit communities are still subjected to extreme forms of social and economic exclusion and discrimination. They are not only denied access to water and land but are also denied equal opportunities in education and work. Their attempts to assert their rights are often met with strong resistance from the higher castes in parts of India, resulting in various atrocities.

Now even the Dalits have realized the power of education and want their children to be in school, recognizing the numer-

ous opportunities for upward mobility for the educated. Many Dalits have climbed up the social ladder through education. BR Ambedkar, the main architect of the Constitution for the Indian Republic, spared no effort to sensitize the British government to the pathetic plight of the 'untouchables.'

Ambedkar himself was a Dalit and the Western education he received helped to fight these injustices and become a Dalit hero. As India now awakes to this reality, government and non-government agencies are realizing the power of education in lifting them out of their plight. Nearly ninety-five percent of all the illiterate Indians are Dalits, so functional literacy programs will first be required. These should provide sufficient literary skills for adults to be able to enhance the quality of their daily lives.

Yet literacy programs must also be designed for Dalits to build their confidence through lessons of their dignity and worth, their rights and responsibilities, nationhood, family responsibility, health and hygiene, environment, and culture. Adult education methods should be employed and practical programs must be developed to integrate the large masses of the oppressed into the mainstream.

Our vision to build a better world must first seek to integrate such people into a society where they once were degraded, and then to further raise them up to be those who will contribute in the shaping of the nation. A carefully planned strategy can address this acute problem and eventually benefit India's emerging economy with a larger work force. Carefully planned visions with specific outcomes and objectives will build these people and their country for total societal transformation.

UNDERSTANDING EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Once we establish our vision, there is need to be sensitive to the way we deliver our educational programmes. There are large sections of the developing world where people like the Dalits require a totally different kind of educational environment. They will be misfits and ill-prepared for our formal classrooms. Confucius' methods were known to be both informal and individually oriented. He did not use structured classes or stress examinations, but rather gave each student a program of study and provided time to interact with each of them.

As filled with knowledge as he was, Confucius is said to have been a good listener. He listened to students and attempted to evaluate each and encourage their strengths, while rectifying weaknesses. Our classrooms are mono-directional verbal-vehicles. Looking at the Dalits, we need to first listen carefully to their heart cries and respond appropriately, rather than impose preset program of education without impact. Our overemphasis on the classroom with a preset body of learning from a fixed curriculum, syllabus or lessons content is far from accomplishing our stated objectives.

We also need an army of teachers who are committed to long range visions of social transformation. As Christians we look further to being citizens of the heavenly kingdom.

Teachers should continually be reminded of the big picture need for change in the community so that their efforts will continually be in line with their vision. This does not imply that self improvement and personal accomplishments do not matter. True education must integrate values that will help build better communities alongside individual performances that will help make professionals of high quality and shape them for service within their society. This kind of integration is

urgently required in our understanding of education in Asia and Africa today.

FOOT NOTES

1. The William Carey University has recently been set up in Meghalaya, India and is associated with the ACTS groups of institutions

2. Confucius lit. "Master Kung," the Chinese thinker and social philosopher whose teachings and philosophy have influenced Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese thought and life

3. Confucius Analects were translated by James Legge (1893)

4. Most of this material is available on various websites dedicated to Confucianism. I have also referred to some major dictionaries such as Encyclopaedia Britannica and Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

5. Thomas Babington Macaulay, 1st Baron of Rothley (1800-1859), the English essayist, historian, and politician was a very popular English historian of the 19th century. He was an eloquent spokesman for the liberal English middle classes and delivered this infamous speech "Minute on Indian Education" delivered in 1835

6. *ibid*

7. Some Great Leaders in the World Movement By Robert E. Speer p 123. 1977, Ayer Publishing

8. Dalits are the "untouchables" of India. Although the practice of "untouchability" was formally banned by the Constitution of India in 1950, the Dalit communities are still subjected to social and economic exclusion and discrimination

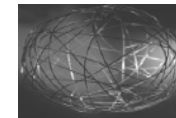
LET'S REFLECT!

1. Define vision for education?
2. State (or restate) the vision of your institution or organization.
3. What are ways your institution's outcomes and objectives could better reflect this vision?
4. How does Confucius influence your concept of education?

CHAPTER THREE

Education and Experience

John Dewey, 1859 – 1952



The trouble with using experience as a guide is that the final exam often comes first and then the lesson.

Author Unknown

We receive three educations, one from our parents, one from our schoolmasters, and one from the world. The third contradicts all that the first two teach us.

Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu

Education is a social process. Education is growth. Education is, not a preparation for life; education is life itself.

John Dewey

III

John Dewey was the champion of the philosophy of experiential education, which was also known as progressive education. This philosophy centered on the belief that experience was the key to all forms of education and that which is learned through experience is best learned.

Dewey is lauded as the greatest educational thinker of the twentieth century and his theory of experiential education continues to be studied not only for educational insights, but as it relates to psychology and philosophy as well. Dewey's views have also strongly influenced the design of approaches to outdoor education, adult training, experiential therapies and various other innovative learning environments.

In the 1920's and 1930's, John Dewey became known for condemning authoritarian, strict, pre-set knowledge approach of traditional education as too preoccupied with transferring knowledge and not concerned enough with understanding and influencing the students' actual experiences. Even our exploration into Integrated Learning was proposed by Dewey decades ago. He integrated "real life" into learning by suggesting practical links and activities. For instance, he would suggest that math could be learned by studying cooking proportions or by studying how long it would take to travel a particular distance by mule. Dewey would also suggest that history could be studied by experiencing how the people lived within a particular era, their geography and climate and what animals and plants were present.¹

Dewey's educational philosophy helped in developing various "experiential education" programs. Traditional Indian, Chinese and most African systems were strongly built on such an approach. Life itself became a classroom for learning. However, with the onset of Western influences, many of these countries began to migrate away from these practical learning experiences.

Liberal arts programs are notorious for being heavily classroom oriented with weighty theoretical approaches. Whether we study economics, sociology or anthropology, there seems to be very little real life engagement. Even theological education meant for preparing men and women for practical ministries, appears to be gauged by its academic rigors rather than engaged in real life contexts. Examinations of abstract theories and theologies are based on reproducing theoretical concepts rather than applying the concepts to actual life.

DEWEY'S RELIGION

While Dewey had some very powerful ideas for experiential learning, we must be reminded that his philosophy of education is not well accepted within Christian circles. Dewey, a one-time Christ-follower, was a noted antagonist to the Christian faith. Not surprisingly, he was influenced by Thomas Huxley the evolutionist, William James the psychologist, and various other critics of the Christian faith and practice. Dewey was a committed humanist and has strongly influenced American humanist approaches in secular educational institutions. He was also a Pragmatist, following the American philosophy that we can actively participate in predicting and controlling our future. Such belief undoubtedly contradicts our Biblical foundations.

Based on Dewey's pragmatism, we are not surprised by the Christian resistance to his educational approach. Dewey argued that revealed truth does not exist. He concluded that truth must be determined experimentally and that choice determines its nature. There were no absolutes. He asserted that morality is situational, that beliefs should be examined scientifically, and that change in belief is inevitable and desirable. Such teaching again conflicts with our Biblical view of revealed truth.

If all truths are situational as Dewey suggests, than truth must be individual and have no relationship to other contexts. This presents another strong argument against Dewey for Christian educators. However, we still must recognize the value in placing Dewey's principles alongside the context of Biblical truths in order to challenge and enhance our current educational practices.

LEARNING FROM DEWEY

Knowing Dewey's background and understanding the dangers in accepting the whole of his teachings, we can critically look at some of his principles while cautiously adapting them within our learning environments. Although he wrote purely from the child and school perspective, there are specific lessons that can be adapted into an integrated learning approach in order to maximize the real life learning experience.

We begin with a look at a paragraph in Dewey's famous declaration concerning education as an aid to understanding his view of the place of education within society.

"I believe that the individual who is to be educated is a social individual and that society is an organic union of individuals. If we eliminate the social factor from the child

we are left only with an abstraction; if we eliminate the individual factor from society, we are left only with an inert and lifeless mass. Education, therefore, must begin with a psychological insight into the child's capacities, interests, and habits. It must be controlled at every point by reference to these same considerations. These powers, interests, and habits must be continually interpreted—we must know what they mean. They must be translated into terms of their social equivalents—into terms of what they are capable of in the way of social service.”²

There is a strong relationship between the child and his social setting, and the independence of one to another would render learning meaningless. When the Latin American theologians drew our attention to contextualized theology which emphasized the praxis or real life context, many educators seemed uncomfortable. Apart from the shock of reformation, can we not recognize the necessity of context within education? Is there value for real life experience within learning? These questions cannot be simply answered with “it depends on...” If we believe we are preparing ministers for the real life context, then their training would be incomplete without experiential learning. One of the primary tenets of integrated learning is the fusion of our training with the real life environment.

So in an overwhelming sense, education must be integrated into society. We have seen this as the ultimate objective of Confucian education. There is an even more powerful integration when we look at Dewey's ARTICLE II, “What the School Is”, where he makes a powerful assertion, “I believe that education... is a process of living and not a preparation for future living.” As Gandhi said, “education is life”. Life is in the here and now and not only preparation for the future.

Committed to the belief that “the school is primarily a social institution,” Dewey goes on to state that “much of present

education fails because it neglects this fundamental principle of the school as a form of community life.”

“(We conceive of)... the school as a place where certain information is to be given, where certain lessons are to be learned, or where certain habits are to be formed. The value of these is conceived as lying largely in the remote future; the child must do these things for the sake of something else he is to do; they are mere preparation. As a result they do not become a part of the life experience of the child and so are not truly educative.”³

Dewey was also critical of too much emphasis being placed on the teacher oriented approach, believing that far too much of the stimulus and control proceeds from the teacher. This approach seemingly stems from dismissing the idea of the school as a form of social life. He asserted, “The teacher is not in the school to impose certain ideas or to form certain habits in the child, but rather as a member of the community to select the influences which shall affect the child and to assist him in properly responding to these influences.”⁴

Let us make a clarification to avoid categorizing Dewey's approach as an uncontrolled form of learning. Dewey was indeed critical of a completely free, student-driven educational system, but rather endorsed a learning model that was structured by the students to maximize their own learning experiences.

SUBJECT-MATTER OF EDUCATION

Dewey proposed the ideal subject matter in his ARTICLE III, “The Subject-Matter of Education”. In it, he elaborates on the meaning of experiential learning.

“I believe... that the true center of correlation on the school subjects is not science, nor literature, nor history, nor geography, but the child's own social activities.

I believe that education cannot be unified in the study of science, or so called nature study, because apart from human activity, nature itself is not a unity; nature in itself is a number of diverse objects in space and time, and to attempt to make it the center of work by itself, is to introduce a principle of radiation rather than one of concentration.”⁵

We note the strong base for integrating learning around actual life. This approach may be met with resistance among those training for ministries, as not all content may appear to directly correlate to experience. However, Dewey was speaking of children while our ministry training is for adults. We assume that adults have had a solid educational foundation – but might we be presumptuous?

Dewey’s primary call to action was to breathe life into dead subject matter. For instance, in regard to learning history, he wrote:

“I believe once more that history is of educative value in so far as it presents phases of social life and growth. It must be controlled by reference to social life. When taken simply as history it is thrown into the distant past and becomes dead and inert. Taken as the record of man’s social life and progress it becomes full of meaning. I believe, however, that it cannot be so taken excepting as the child is also introduced directly into social life.”⁶

Such teaching approaches offer an opportunity to address the challenge of transmitting cold and lifeless facts even in the name of theology, Biblical exegesis or even Church history. The need for Integrated Learning is again surfaced. Learning must be unified around practical living, rather than an emphasis on theoretical abstracts. The body of knowledge we share with students must be correlated or integrated to the learner’s real life experience to make the education a true “social experience”.

Taking this to its logical conclusion, Dewey saw an opportunity for “the so-called expressive or constructive activities as the center of correlation,” which even applied to cooking, sewing, manual training, etc. within the school.” While this process may seem suspect, a similar experience happened to me through the vision God provided for the ACTS Institute and my corresponding passion for integrated learning.

In God’s perfect timing, the vision of ACTS arrived when I was doing a purely academic and philosophical research program at London University. My whole direction shifted from wanting to develop an academic program for India, to making it as practical a program as possible. Today, students learn the Bible and theology while also putting their hands to work in carpentry, gardening, computers, etc. A “culture of work” is lacking in most of Africa and Asia, and the ACTS’ integrated approach helps in developing an orientation for work within the learning. In fact, through this model, my definition of ministry changed to focus on training people for serving God.

For Dewey, these expressive or constructive activities were not extra-curricular or even co-curricular activities. He wrote:

“I believe that they are not special studies which are to be introduced over and above a lot of others in the way of relaxation or relief, or as additional accomplishments. I believe rather that they represent, as types, fundamental forms of social activity; and that it is possible and desirable that the child’s introduction into the more formal subjects of the curriculum be through the medium of these activities.”⁷

Transposed within our ministry training contexts, an understanding of curriculum and related activities forces us to take a critical look at our heavy emphasis on books, papers and classroom-oriented academic learning. There are those who

base their standards on classroom learning alone, with no connection to the real world in which the student is called to serve. Jesus' interaction with his disciples provides an excellent model where practical exposure to real life experiences provided a context for truth to be applied.

This approach also calls for an overall change in our examination systems. Traditional models measure competency by the accurate reproduction of what is taught or lectured. While such classroom learning is important, we must encourage students to apply this learning and award higher marks to those who learn the relevance of such learning within their real life contexts.

While most would agree that Biblical teachings must have practical applications, we often fail to apply this into the learning environment. Sadly, there are those teaching the Bible in pure academic abstraction without providing the student an opportunity for application. Dewey's approach underlines the integration of life into learning, or more correctly, i.e. learning into life.

THE CLASSROOM AND THE TEACHER

The deeper I find myself in these discussions, the more I have accepted the classroom as a learning rather than a teaching environment. The subtle difference is important to note. The teacher teaches and the student learns, as Brazilian educator Paulo Freire critically summed up. The traditional role of the teacher is one who transmits knowledge, a conduit for facts and figures. While this approach creates a teaching environment, what is ideally needed is a learning environment.

Let us attempt to define the ideal teacher. A brief note on Dewey's ARTICLE V, "The School and Social Progress", will

help us see the lofty role he reserved for the teacher. Reaffirming that "education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform", Dewey follows with an elaboration of this truth.

"I believe... that the teacher is engaged, not simply in the training of individuals, but in the formation of the proper social life.

I believe that every teacher should realize the dignity of his calling; that he is a social servant set apart for the maintenance of proper social order and the securing of the right social growth.

I believe that in this way the teacher always is the prophet of the true God and the usherer in of the true kingdom of God."⁸

Let me remind the reader of Dewey's negative view of the Christian faith. The "true kingdom of God" for him, is no more than an ideal society where all lofty humanistic ends of learning will be realized. Despite this, we can objectively affirm the value in Dewey's viewpoint of the role of the teacher as one who is engaged in "formation" with a "dignity of his calling" as "the prophet." This calls for the teacher to become part of the classroom experience and to facilitate learning rather than merely transferring knowledge and skills to the student. Like Confucius, Dewey was concerned for a societal influence.

Some Christian educators have a problem with Dewey's belief that the teacher should simply serve as a facilitator and as an equal participant within the educational process. He argued that learning should occur in the process of experience; therefore, learning should be incidental to the ongoing natural activities of students rather than the result of teacher-oriented and structured activities. I have a problem with those who reject Dewey on these grounds. If we argue against the teacher being a facilitator or a catalyst within the classroom, then we may end up with the Indian "guru" model where the class-

room is no more than a place where the teacher delivers his/her pre-packaged information and the students merely assimilate this data, facts and concepts without any application or dispute. While it is true that there is knowledge we unquestioningly learn from Jesus our Master, it was also very common for Jesus to pose questions and offer parables to involve his learners in the educational process.

LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE

When we speak of integration in relationship to Dewey's educational models, we must make a connection between what is taught in the classroom and real life itself. If character building is the aim of the educational process then books and readings are severely limited in their learning value. If the ultimate objective of learning is life changing values that will transform societies, then the classroom is severely restrictive for total learning. Life changing values must be learned in the classroom of life itself.

And in order to ensure this the teacher must ensure that learning is placed as much as possible within real life itself. One must learn from every day experiences and this was one of Confucius' strengths. He emphasized a process that began with observation which led to study and reflection. "Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand" is what he is claimed to have said. Our educational system can be transformed even on the basis of this simple but profound remark.

Sadly, our classroom and its teaching methods are far from "looking", "showing", "observing" and "perceiving" in order to learn and assimilate. It is all to do with "listening", "hearing" and "reproducing" exactly as one hears. The teacher as-

serts himself saying "hear me" and the students have become accustomed to pleading with the teacher "tell me". The classroom is a unidirectional monologue and students hardly encouraged to participate in a learning process. Even if there is participation, it is at the level of the head with nothing to do with the heart or the hands.

Several educational practitioners in the 1980s cried out against the traditional classroom oriented approach. Outdoor education programs were gaining popularity, such as "Outward Bound" and "Project Adventure", which added practical-theoretical program dimensions in order to make such learning more beneficial. These multi-dimensional models generally emphasized the roles of the individual, the activities within the program, the instructor, the group and the environment. There were other forms as well, but all were in reaction against formal methods that imprisoned learners in theoretical systems. All of these were examples of Dewey's model of experience-based approaches calling for learning to happen outside classrooms.

Educators began to speak of learning as a cycle that begins with experience. When learners are an integral part of an experience it leads them to reflection, and this eventually leads to some form of meaningful action and eventually changed values. Any knowledge or skill that is acquired from direct participation in events or activities is learning that not only transforms the individual, but goes on to influence those around them. Such learning is technically called experiential learning - the process through which a learner acquires knowledge, skills and values from direct experiences.⁹

EXPERIENCE AND CONTINUITY

We must also clarify the misunderstanding that Dewey was purely advocating progressive education and unlimited freedom for students. The very learning he proposed required a structure and an order that could not simply be left to the whims of teachers and/or students. Dewey proposed that education be designed on the basis of a theory of experience. Defining such a theory would be useful in developing an Integrated Learning model. Whether we speak of ministry training in a theological institution or training Christian professionals as witnesses within their respective environment, all must be done in real life contexts. Dewey uses the word "life" to denote the whole range of experience - "individual and social... the whole range of customs, institutions, beliefs, victories and defeats, recreations and occupations". In defining this experience, Dewey wrote,

"We employ the word "experience" in the same pregnant sense. And to it, as well as to life in the bare physiological sense, the principle of continuity through renewal applies. With the renewal of physical existence goes, in the case of human beings, the recreation of beliefs, ideals, hopes, happiness, misery, and practices. The continuity of any experience, through renewing of the social group, is a literal fact. Education, in its broadest sense, is the means of this social continuity of life."⁹

We note the complete sense in which the term education is used. The very life of people and their community continues because of education. This continuity of experience is an important perspective as education gives continuity to the experience of life. Learning is not just the prerogative of the teacher or the experience of a classroom. Everything in life must be learning. This is the kind of learning that takes place in communities and is essential for the growth of each community within their contexts.

Therefore, community becomes the powerful foundation for integrated learning. In a campus situation, learning is within the campus community of learning but this must be integrated into the wider community of the student's own world or worlds. When learning is set within the context of the wider community within which we exist, education continues beyond the classroom or graduation. Dewey does not put a limit on education, but points to the gradual emergence of formal education without which it would not have been possible to transmit all the resources and achievements of a complex society.

People saw the need for something over and above, or at least more than what was to be learned from only the teaching and communication of the elders within communities. But, as expected, such instruction easily became remote from the learner – lifeless, abstract and academic. In other words, what was taught directly from within the context was lively and engaging but classrooms tended to quench this dynamism with dead facts and cold concepts. The material utilized in such learning environments is relatively technical and superficial, and not integrated into ordinary customs of thought and expression. He states:

"There is the standing danger that the material of formal instruction will be merely the subject matter of the schools, isolated from the subject matter of life-experience. The permanent social interests are likely to be lost from view. Those which have not been carried over into the structure of social life, but which remain largely matters of technical information expressed in symbols, are made conspicuous in schools. Thus we reach the ordinary notion of education: the notion which ignores its social necessity and its identity with all human association that affects conscious life..."¹⁰

I suspect that this has been the problem that has gone unnoticed in the evolution of our formal educational systems.

First, there is little or no integration between the classroom and real life. Secondly, our philosophy of education has not attempted a proper balance between the informal and the formal modes of education. Third, we have hyped our campus environments to such an extent that anything outside is irrelevant, even ignorable. Collectively, this leads to acquisition of knowledge merely for the sake of being identified as specialists in certain fields, possessors of certain “higher” degrees and part of a hallowed, upper echelon of elitists inaccessible to the common folk.

Dewey points out such dangers in regular educational environments, but we seem to discern such an evolution even within our Christian ministry training “societies.” New Testament scholars see very little need for association with their Old Testament counterparts and theologians see little or no connection with historians. There is certainly a separatist or caste-like mentality that has resulted in the belief that “theology” or the “knowledge of God” is something that has purity to it and learned by itself rather than within the impurity of real life contexts. We may not use such words but we certainly display similar attitudes.

Let me restate that I am not advocating Dewey’s proposals lock, stock and barrel, nor am I an ardent Deweyan. For one thing, his writings tend to be bookish and contradict the very liveliness he calls for in learning. But I see the urgent need for us to restore the kind of emphasis of learning in experience where education becomes central to all of life, rather than an approach that separates the theologians and the academics from the mainstream’s hurts, pains and groans.

We must begin to realize how limited our classroom or campus based programs have become and resist measuring

our institutions by the largeness of the buildings and its facilities, the number of teachers who teach, a library with stacks of books, or an elaborate curriculum with high academic inputs etc. Some of us even boast of adequate facilities for play and recreation. But have we measured the real world environment in which such learning takes place? The integration with real life context is an absolute essential and must become the new standard of measure for effective education.

FOOT NOTES

1. Dewey in “Experience & Education” argues that educators must first understand the nature of human experience. Dewey, J. “Experience and education.” Macmillan. (1938/1997).

2. “My Pedagogic Creed” John Dewey’s famous declaration concerning education First published in “The School Journal”, Volume LIV, Number 3 (January 16, 1897). I have quoted from his Five Articles available in a reprint of this work

3. *ibid.*

4. *ibid*

5. *ibid*

6. *ibid*

7. *ibid*

8. Dewey, John. 1944. Democracy and Education. New York: The Free Press. p 2. Dewey developed his thoughts in his book “Experience and Education”. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company

9. *ibid*

10. *ibid* p 8

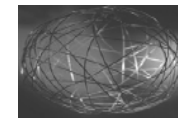
LET'S REFLECT!

1. What connection do you see between our experience and education? How can this be utilized for integrated learning?
2. Design an experiential learning project for a particular integrated learning topic or theme.
3. Dewey taught that expressive or constructive activities were not extra-curricular or even co-curricular activities? What kinds of activities can you introduce in your institution to enhance the whole educational experience?

CHAPTER FOUR

Education in the Natural Environment

Rabindranath Tagore, 1861 – 1941



I wish to wrest education from the outworn order of doddering old teaching hacks as well as from the new-fangled order of cheap, artificial teaching tricks, and entrust it to the eternal powers of nature herself, to the light which God has kindled and kept alive in the hearts of fathers and mothers, to the interests of parents who desire their children grow up in favor with God and with men.

Pestalozzi

Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.

Rachel Carson

From the very beginning of his education, the child should experience the joy of discovery.

Alfred North Whitehead

IV

Although not dedicated to education as his sole passion, Rabindranath Tagore stands out as an educationist of rare brilliance. Knighted by King George V and Asia's first Nobel Laureate, Tagore was born into a prominent family known for its multi-cultural socio-religious influence in 19th century Bengal, which certainly provided the foundation for his education approach. He had thirteen siblings who became mathematicians, journalists, novelists, musicians, artists. His cousins, who shared the same family mansion, were leaders in theatre, science and the new art movement.

Having learned so much from within the rich diversity of his own home, it is not surprising that Tagore found his first few days at regular school dull and dreary. He dropped out of school but still went on to become a nationally recognized educator and a world renowned poet. The only degrees he received were honorary (including one from Oxford University) and were bestowed upon him much later in life. We must note glimpses of John Dewey and other contemporary educationists within Tagore.

Tagore was well exposed to Western culture and responsible for the cultural renaissance throughout India. He was a tall figure in British India – a philosopher, playwright, novelist, artist, musician and composer with a creativity that extended into whatever task he undertook. He demonstrated a knowledge and keen interest in the sciences too. Tagore has the rare distinction of being responsible for the National Anthems for

two countries – India and Bangladesh. The famous English poet W B Yeats recognized his genius and was enthralled by his poetry. He later wrote the introduction to Gitanjali, (offerings or garland of song) a collection of his poems, when it was published in 1912 in a limited edition by the India Society in London. Through Tagore the West got an insight into East, and read with admiration amid their growing materialistic search.

Tagore's rich and diverse upbringing made him quite critical of the Western influence on the state of education, labeling it as competitive, not creative. He saw the British colonial educational model as one that "provided buildings and books, while burdening the mind." He stated that such education "...treated the mind like a library shelf, solidly made of wood, to be loaded with leather bound volumes of second hand information."¹

The varied social and cultural influences of his family intuitively shaped Rabindranath's educational philosophy, making him see the aesthetic development of the senses to be as important as the intellectual. Music, literature, art, dance and drama were given great prominence in the daily life of the school he founded in Bengal. The school was named Shantiniketan, meaning "abode of peace" and integration was the key foundation to its learning environment. Education was not limited to only the intellect and academic ability; rather, it was something that had to influence the whole body, mind and soul.

WELL ROUNDED EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM

Tagore did not write any dedicated educational exposition; however, his ideas are easily discerned through his experiments at Shantiniketan and through several of his writings. Primarily, he underlined a form of education that was deeply rooted in

one's immediate natural environment, where learning was natural and the child felt at home. The personality had to be totally developed and therefore pressed for creativity, freedom, and cultural awareness in curriculums.

"From our very childhood habits are formed and knowledge is imparted in such a manner that our life is weaned away from nature and our mind and the world are set in opposition from the beginning of our days. Thus the greatest of educations for which we came prepared is neglected, and we are made to lose our world to find a bagful of information instead. We rob the child of his earth to teach him geography, of language to teach him grammar. His hunger is for the Epic, but he is supplied with chronicles of facts and dates...Child-nature protests against such calamity with all its power of suffering, subdued at last into silence by punishment"²

Tagore recognized children as spiritual, social and individual beings and that their education should be set within the right environment. He proposed that instead of burdening the memory with knowledge, the student should have contact with living nature, "to meet with life where it is most supreme." He believed that children, with the freshness of their senses, had an intimate relationship with the natural world and he taught that they must never lose the vigorous, life-giving energy that it produced. Formal teaching was least important. Rather, the influences for mental and physical growth, on which his school Shantiniketan was later built, were far more significant.

Not just within nature and geography courses, but Tagore offered an insight into studying history as well. Rather than studying national cultures for the wars won and cultural dominance imposed, he advocated a teaching system that analyzed history and culture for the progress that had been made in breaking down social and religious barriers. Such an approach

emphasized the innovations that had been made in integrating individuals of diverse backgrounds into a larger framework, and in devising the economic policies which emphasized social justice and narrowed the gap between rich and poor. Art would be likewise studied for its role in furthering the aesthetic imagination and in expressing universal themes.

He knew that the imagination must be cultivated within education through free expression for dance, music, drama, poetry. A purely political or material progress would not harness the energy of his people. Tagore developed a form of schooling for the village children in India, based upon immediate contact with nature, life, beauty, and a background of culture. He did not believe that education should be a purely intellectual pursuit, but that it should also develop a student's aesthetic and creative nature.

OUR ENVIRONMENT AS THE CLASSROOM

Tagore shows strong affinity to some stalwarts of education who influenced significant movements. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) believed that learning through direct experience as well as physical activity was very important in the education of a child. He showed that education should be more sensory and rational and less literary and linguistic. Johann Henrick Pestalozzi (1746-1827) was another who emphasized the use of direct, firsthand experiences and real objects for learning. In addition to "reading, writing, and arithmetic," he taught practical skills such as farming, housekeeping, etc and the school yard was used for lessons in nature study and geography. His belief was that the learner would use these beginning experiences at a later time to formulate principles and generalizations of his own.

Tagore, like Pestalozzi and Rousseau, urged teachers to take their pupils out of the classroom for free and real learning. In his own theories on teaching children he warns, "Do not be preoccupied with method. Leave your instincts to guide you to life. Children differ from one another. One must learn to know them, to navigate among them as one navigates among reefs. To explore the geography of their minds, a mysterious instinct, sympathetic to life, is the best of all guides."³

Movements such as experiential education and outdoor education have emerged where students are encouraged to participate in activities most often conducted outdoors. Such education is normally well organized learning in which students participate in a variety of adventurous challenges such as hiking, climbing, canoeing, ropes courses, and group games. Outdoor education draws upon the philosophy of experiential education and is used today at various levels, including business management training.

We must face the growing concern over the relevance and practicality of our current educational systems. Our geography or biology classes are conducted indoors, with the primary teaching aids being maps, charts, etc. Why not use the outdoors, with innovative hands-on projects? Even more shocking are the mass produced course materials that children must study on global warming, ozone layer, deforestation, etc. Is not the world around us the best classroom for such learning?

Tagore sought this natural setting for learning. Shantiniketan was an open and green sanctuary for learning intentionally created for this kind of education. Children sat on hand-woven mats beneath the trees and were allowed to climb, run and explore between classes. Nature walks and excursions were a part of the curriculum and students were encouraged to fol-

low the life cycles of insects, birds and plants. Tagore ensured that class schedules were made flexible to allow for shifts in the weather or special attention to natural phenomena, and seasonal festivals were created for the children.

Rabindranath felt that a curriculum should revolve organically around nature with classes held in the open air under the trees to provide for a spontaneous appreciation of the plant and animal kingdoms. His poem, "A Poet's School," emphasized the importance of this interconnectedness with the surrounding world:⁴

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high,

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
by narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth of truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards
perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into
the dreary desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widen-
ing thought and action- into that heaven of freedom, my
Father,

Let my country awake.

"Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high" is the essence of Tagore's ideal learning environment. Shantiniketan and Visva Bharati University were created on these principles and promised its students freedom for learning. Tagore believed in preserving the ancient Indian culture enveloped in the peaceful (shanti) surroundings of the forests and wrote the following:

"We have come to this world to accept it, not merely to know it. We may become powerful by knowledge, but we attain fullness by sympathy. The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence. But we find that this education of sympathy is not only systematically ignored in schools, but it is severely repressed. From our very childhood habits are formed and knowledge is imparted in such a manner that our life is weaned away from nature and our mind and the world are set in opposition from the beginning of our days. Thus the greatest of educations for which we came prepared is neglected, and we are made to lose our world to find a bagful of information instead. We rob the child of his earth to teach him geography, of language to teach him grammar. His hunger is for the Epic, but he is supplied with chronicles of facts and dates...Child-nature protests against such calamity with all its power of suffering, subdued at last into silence by punishment." (Rabindranath Tagore, *Personality*, 1917: 116-17)

INTEGRATION OF CULTURES

Speaking of integrating education into our own contexts could easily lead us to a wrong conclusion in our fast globalizing world. One may be tempted to confine our learning to our own individual contexts and therefore deprive students of the vast array of knowledge that is available in other cultures. There is the tendency to become parochial in educational concerns with growing nationalist and fundamentalist pressures people face.

Tagore's openness to cultural diversity was a breath of fresh air when narrow ideas of nationalism were being peddled within India prior to Independence. While he consistently criticized the British administration, Tagore maintained that he was not wholly against Western people and culture. Mahatma Gandhi's criticism of the West and the British in particular is well

known; however, Tagore often spoke warmly of Western civilization.

Even India's right to independence did not deter Tagore from advocating what India could learn from the West. He was afraid that a rejection of the West in favor of an indigenous Indian tradition could also turn into hostility to other influences from abroad. He spoke of Christianity, which arrived in India during the fourth century; Judaism, which came through Jewish immigration shortly after the fall of Jerusalem; Zoroastrianism, which accompanied Parsi immigration later on (mainly in the eighth century); and most importantly, Islam, which had a presence in India since the tenth century.

It should also be noted that Rabindranath's vision of culture was not a static one, but one that advocated new cultural fusions. He fought for a world where multiple voices were encouraged to interact with one another and to reconcile differences with a commitment to peace and mutual interconnectedness. His own multifaceted personality and efforts to break down barriers of all sorts was a powerful model.

The integration of cultures was the essence of India and even Tagore's ideals were depicted in his poem that was chosen as the country's national anthem. One of the alumni of Shantiniketan, and a Nobel prize winner himself, economist Amartya Sen writes "... there was something remarkable about the ease with which class discussions could move from Indian traditional literature to contemporary as well as classical Western thought, and then to the culture of China or Japan or elsewhere. The school's celebration of variety was also in sharp contrast with the cultural conservatism and separatism that has tended to grip India from time to time." Note

Tagore's cultural diversity was probably due to his multicolored upbringing. Tagore's grandfather, Dwarkanath, was well known for his command of Arabic and Persian, and the family displayed a deep knowledge of Sanskrit and ancient Hindu texts, an understanding of Islamic traditions as well as Persian literature. Tagore was keen to see the influence of his Indian cultural background, as well as those of the rest of the world. Sen captured this sentiment in the following writing:

"Even in his powerful indictment of British rule in India in 1941, in a lecture which he gave on his last birthday, and which was later published as a pamphlet under the title *Crisis in Civilization*, he strains hard to maintain the distinction between opposing Western imperialism and rejecting Western civilization. While he saw India as having been "smothered under the dead weight of British administration" (adding "another great and ancient civilization for whose recent tragic history the British cannot disclaim responsibility is China"), Tagore recalls what India has gained from "discussions centered upon Shakespeare's drama and Byron's poetry and above all...the large-hearted liberalism of nineteenth-century English politics." The tragedy, as Tagore saw it, came from the fact that what "was truly best in their own civilization, the upholding of dignity of human relationships, has no place in the British administration of this country." "If in its place they have established, baton in hand, a reign of 'law and order,' or in other words a policeman's rule, such a mockery of civilization can claim no respect from us." Note 2. *A Tagore Reader*, ed. A Chakravorthy 1961 p 219

Just as the integration of cultures had a powerful impact on Tagore's life and philosophies, it must also play a role within education and serve to break down provincial boundaries that can restrict learning. If the world is our classroom, then it cannot be restricted to our narrow world. With the internet connectivity and web-based learning we have access to today, the privilege of learning from the global arena is unprecedented.

Education is becoming the ideal melting pot for Tagore's model for a global culture of learning to be put into practice.

INTEGRATING THE ARTS

One of the features of Tagore's educational philosophy is a strong emphasis on fine arts. Generally, educationists implicitly give the impression that knowledge and facts within the academic adventures of the mind have little to do with fine arts and its expressions. Recent studies have shown the need to upgrade the status of arts in the academic world, demonstrating their ability to enhance studies in technical areas. Other protagonists argue that art education should be championed for its own sake, not just because classes in painting, dance and music may serve to enhance pupils' math and reading skills.

The Theory of Multiple Intelligences (1983), proposed by Harvard professor Howard Gardner, argues that intelligence as it is traditionally defined, does not adequately take into consideration the wide range of abilities humans display. He argued against those who promote only the logical/mathematical or the linguistic areas of learning. A child who masters math is not necessarily more intelligent than a child who fumbles with numbers; however, they might excel in different forms of intelligence. Gardner originally identified seven core intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. In 1999 he added an eighth, the naturalistic intelligence. We may propose a super-naturalistic or spiritual intelligence that is clearly demonstrated by some gifted individuals.

The multiple intelligence theory suggests that, rather than relying on a uniform curriculum, schools should offer "indi-

vidual-centered education", with curricula tailored to the needs of each child. Tagore certainly was ahead of his times, as this is the same approach introduced at Shantiniketan. With his inclination towards music, dance and the fine arts, Tagore brought this rich dimension to education and communicated them as enduring values. Even his Visva-Bharati was described as, "the meeting-ground of cultures, a learning center where individuals work together in a common pursuit of truth and realize that artists in all parts of the world have created forms of beauty, scientists discovered secrets of the universe, philosophers solved the problems of existence, saints made the truth of the spiritual world organic in their own lives, not merely for some particular race to which they belonged, but for all mankind" (Tagore 1922:171-2).

Rabindranath Tagore invited artists and scholars from other parts of India and the world to live together at Shantiniketan to share their cultures within Visva-Bharati. The Constitution described Visva-Bharati to be an Indian, Eastern and Global cultural center whose goals were as follows:

1. To study the mind of Man in its realization of different aspects of truth from diverse points of view.
2. To bring into more intimate relation with one another through patient study and research, the different cultures of the East on the basis of their underlying unity.
3. To approach the West from the standpoint of such a unity of the life and thought of Asia.
4. To seek to realize in a common fellowship of study the meeting of East and West and thus ultimately to strengthen the fundamental conditions of world peace through the free communication of ideas between the two hemispheres.

5. And with such Ideals in view to provide at Santiniketan a center of culture where research into the study of the religion, literature, history, science and art of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Zoroastrian, Islamic, Sikh, Christian and other civilizations may be pursued along with the culture of the West, with that simplicity of externals which is necessary for true spiritual realization, in amity, good-fellowship and co-operation between the thinkers and scholars of both Eastern and Western countries, free from all antagonisms of race, nationality, creed or caste and in the name of the One Supreme Being... Note

Once again, let me remind the reader that I am in no way wholly endorsing every educational model we have discussed. However, Tagore's total view of education, his broad mindedness to culture, even his tolerance towards religions, all within the seething nationalistic tempers prior to India's independence, establish his remarkable magnanimity and worthiness of respect.

By and large, educationists agree that the arts are basic to learning, communication, self expression and demonstration of skills and are foundational within all cultures. They often encourage creativity and innovation within people otherwise unable to sequence their thoughts in a logical rational manner. Our modern day environment has provided much room for such skills and has extended boundless opportunities for young people to take up related professions. More importantly, those who thought they possessed only second-rate skills or intelligence, now have opportunities in the forefront. Arts education is attracting many young individuals who have been turned away by institutions solely promoting traditional academic skills or the information technology skills demanded within our computer-centered world.

As an artist myself, I would urge every institution, including theologically oriented ministry training, to encourage incorporating the arts. Allow students to express themselves, prepare courses that allow greater choice to include the fine arts, music, and handicrafts and thereby reinstate the place of art and artists within our society. God has made us for harmony, grace and beauty in movements, music and colors and it is a disregard to our Creator if we fail to develop such gifts. Our educational patterns must glorify our Creator God who has gifted us with imagination, ingenuity and creativity.

Without music and the fine arts, Tagore warned that a nation lacks its highest means of national self-expression and the people remain inarticulate. Tagore was one of the first to bring together different forms of traditional Indian dance. He helped revive folk dances, introduced dance forms from other parts of India, and also supported modern dance forms and music.

All levels of education must foster the integration of the whole human personality and the wide range of skills that the individual possesses in order for true learning to occur. Integration must make our institutions more holistic, well balanced and demonstrating of the full view of learning.

LASTING LEGACY

Tagore's legacy of freedom, creativity, and harmony among people and nature resonated throughout India in his lifetime and continues to be celebrated throughout today's world. Mahatma Gandhi turned to Tagore for ideas on liberating India. Although Gandhi and Tagore differed on the methods of pursuing the freedom struggle in India, both had an affinity for one another and kept a consciousness of the condition of the poor as a basis for their political philosophies. Tagore's idea of

bringing education to the homes and farms of Indian villagers was applied on a nationwide basis in Gandhi's Basic Education Program. Note

Tagore's combined philosophical, poetic, and practical approach to education were not only relevant in India, but reached the Western world as well. Tagore discussed his educational theorists with prominent Western educators such as Maria Montessori and John Dewey. In 1926, Professor Kilpatric, one of John Dewey's followers and co-workers visited Santiniketan and Srineketan, and went away with full admiration for Tagore's ideals and the way in which they were pursued.

Tagore's educational efforts have since inspired many other educators throughout the world. He sought to propagate education that recognized that harmony, growth and survival on the individual, national, and international level could be established through creative expression, contact with nature, cultural awareness, and a total education of the intellect and senses. Integrated learning is the environment within which such directions can prove to be experienced.

FOOT NOTES

1. Kathleen M. O'Connell explores Tagore's contribution in Rabindranath Tagore: The Poet as Educator, Calcutta: Visva-Bharati, 2002.
2. 219-Reader- from Personality
3. Expounded in "A Poet's School" Social Thinking 153
4. Tagore, Rabindranath, collected poems and plays of Rabindranath Tagore, New York, Macmillan Company, 1945.
- 5 Tagore, Rabindranath (1917) Personality. London: Macmillan & Co
- 6 Tagore and His India by Amartya Sen* 1998, an article available on the web
7. ibid
8. Tagore Rabindranath. (1922) Creative Unity. London: Macmillan & Co pp 171f

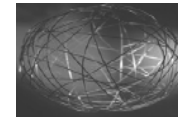
LET'S REFLECT!

1. What prompted Tagore to root education in the natural environment?
2. Examine the course description of a current offering at your institution and determine how experiences with nature can effectively be used for learning.
3. What lessons from Tagore are still valid for education today? Analyze them in light of modern day university education and distance mode of education.
4. How do Tagore's concepts transform our quest for integration in learning?

CHAPTER FIVE

Education as a Dynamic, Integrated System

Alfred North Whitehead, 1861 – 1947



Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them to become what they are capable of being.

Goethe

"It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge."

Albert Einstein

Beauty is in the ideal of perfect harmony which is in the universal being; truth the perfect comprehension of the universal mind. We individuals approach it through our own mistakes and blunders, through our accumulated experience, through our illumined consciousness - how, otherwise, can we know truth?

Tagore

V

Education is the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge. This is an art very difficult to impart, wrote Alfred North Whitehead. Whitehead, a renowned mathematician, logician, educator and philosopher, looked critically at Western education and what it had accomplished in the last century. His challenge is just as relevant to us today as we strive to make education most effective in its various settings.

Whitehead is best known for his “process philosophy” (even process theology). Despite all his philosophies written over a span of nearly thirty years, Whitehead never wrote a philosophy of education; however, his diverse works reveal an unwavering interest and disquiet over prevailing concepts of education. It is from here that we are able to carve out some foundational aspects that are quite applicable today.¹

Whitehead’s process philosophy posits a view of the world as a developing web of interconnections rather than disjointed parts or a static monolith. This dynamic view of the world is directly applicable to learning, particularly as we begin to explore integrated forms of education. For Whitehead, the principal enemy in the classroom was inert ideas – static, irrelevant notions that move neither the hearts nor minds of students. Whitehead described such ideas as “lead balloons”, which had no ability to circulate within the classroom environment. His process philosophy cried out for conditions in which true learning takes place.

Whitehead's thoughts on education emphasize process and engagement within a changing world. Our technologically advancing world is characterized by change; therefore, any static understanding of the educational system will constantly face roadblocks. Likewise, a dynamic, integrated system will find itself adjusting to these changes and interpreting unchanging truths in the instability of our times. Whitehead's process philosophy allows us to view the world through its interconnections and to proceed to integrated learning to equip students with dynamic thinking that will adapt within their lifelong experience.

ORGANISM AND HOLISM

We begin to perceive the connection between Whitehead's teachings and integrated learning by noting the interconnection between everything that happens in educational contexts. Let us start with his understanding of holism, or the relationship of parts to the whole. Based on his process philosophy, Whitehead frequently underlines relatedness, connectedness and holism. Even his process philosophy is the theory and practice of educating human beings and Whitehead provides a framework, or conceptual matrix, that outlines the interconnection of all living entities offering the very basis for integration.

"The Seamless Coat of Learning" is the subtitle of the book by a recent Whiteheadian scholar, and this is appropriately highlights Whitehead's view of the essential unity in all learning.² Learning is not segmented or modular, but is seamless. As we have been repeating in our discussions, modern education has been disintegrated to the extent that students do not see connections to real life, nor are encouraged to do so. Disciplines

such as language, mathematics, science, and religion are all taught separately with no interaction between the concepts or the teaching faculty. An integrated learning model requires interconnections. We should not use "propositions in isolation", Whitehead cautioned us.

"Education is the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge." This simple sentence from Whitehead's introductory essay in his "Aims of Education"³ epitomizes his central theme that education cannot be dissected from practice. His stress on synthesis of knowledge and application contrasts sharply with educational theories which exclusively demand mental exercises. His general philosophical position, which he called "the philosophy of organism," insists upon the ultimate reality of things in relation, changing in time, and arranged in terms of systems of varying complexity, especially among living organisms and minds. Whitehead rejected the theory of mind that maintains it is a kind of tool needing honing and sharpening or merely a repository for "inert" ideas, stored up in neatly categorized bundles. It is an organic element of an indissoluble mind/body unit, in continuous relationship with the living social and natural environment. Whitehead's philosophy of organism, often used synonymously with "process philosophy," stands in continuity with his educational thought, both as a general theoretical backdrop and as the primary application for his fundamental themes.

If learning is truly "seamless," then we should challenge educators to view curriculum as a whole and not as separate parts. As educators engage in reviewing and revising their curriculum, they continually find a disconnect, even incomplete and truncated material. For one thing, sciences are seen in one "box" while social studies or theologies are seen in another.

Further, chemistry is taught with no reference to biology, or even more glaring, physics and mathematics remain disconnected. Whitehead was particularly concerned about mathematics. Once interdisciplinary connections are made, learners begin to embark on an adventure of learning that will enable them to creatively explore all kinds of interrelationships, breaking boundaries and building bridges that can revolutionize their experiential learning process. Whitehead states that the learning process must be set within life itself and reiterates that concept in his following quote:

“The solution of which I am urging, is to eradicate the fatal disconnection of subjects which kills the vitality of our modern curriculum. There is only one subject-matter for education, and that is Life in all its manifestations. Instead of this single unity, we offer children — Algebra, from which nothing follows; Geometry, from which nothing follows; Science, from which nothing follows; History, from which nothing follows; a Couple of Languages, never mastered; and lastly, most dreary of all, Literature, represented by plays of Shakespeare, with philological notes and short analyses of plot and character to be in substance committed to memory. Can such a list be said to represent Life, as it is known in the midst of the living of it? The best that can be said of it is, that it is a rapid table of contents which a deity might run over in his mind while he was thinking of creating a world, and has not yet determined how to put it together.”⁴

Whitehead’s process philosophy draws from the interaction of learners within a variety of environments, events and relationships to vitalize his philosophy of education. Whitehead wrote about a wide range of subjects, which provided a wide enough base to address concerns for a germane process of educating human beings. Faculty members should be encouraged to read widely and constantly be challenged to apply their expertise to these readings. Inter-faculty meetings

should bring a variety of subject matter together to explore connections that can bring new energies into their teaching.

THE RHYTHM OF EDUCATION

Whitehead’s ideas about creativity, process, rhythm, wisdom, and knowledge are all extremely challenging to the integrated educator. Particularly fascinating is what he refers to as the rhythm of education. Romance, precision and generalization are key phrases within the rhythm of education, which appeared in 1922, when Whitehead articulated his educational views in a pamphlet, “The Rhythm of Education.”⁵

This rhythm is a sequence of three stages to be included within learning and teaching. Whitehead defined the three stages as Romance, Precision, and Mastery (or, sometimes, Generalization or Satisfaction). The first stage provides the interest and energy needed to carry through the second — if the precision of the second stage is not disconnected violently from the initial interest. It is here that Whitehead takes sides with the Platonic thought that “students should be taught in play”, which contradicts the Aristotelian observation that “all learning is a painful process,” and the even later Kantian notion that the main reason for sending children to elementary school is to teach them to sit still!

The final stage of mastery must include an awareness on the student’s part that something has been accomplished – such as the mastery of negative numbers or the route of the march of the Greek mercenaries with Cyrus toward the battle of Cunaxa, he stated. Interestingly enough, by 1929, Whitehead had concluded that three similar stages constitute the life cycle of the organic “actual occasions” which are his elemental units of reality. There is for each occasion a momentary phase of

encounter, a displacement, a moment of selective adaptation, and then a final completion that marks a passage into “objective immortality” of the completed event as a datum for the future. While he never remarked on the relationship of these two triads, it seems clear that the stages of learning are in fact grounded in the more elementary three-phase structure of reality. Here again we see Whitehead’s thoughts on education to be much more than casual conjecture, but part of a philosophy that shows why practice, if it is to be realistic, must take place in a certain way.

Let us look a bit more closely at these stages. Romance is the first moment in the educational experience. All rich educational experiences begin with an immediate emotional involvement on the part of the learner. The primary acquisition of knowledge involves freshness, enthusiasm, and enjoyment of learning. The natural ferment of the living mind leads it to fix on those objects that strike it pre-reflectively as important for the fulfilling of some felt need on the part of the learner. All early learning experiences are of this kind and a curriculum ought to include appeals to the spirit of inquiry with which all children are natively endowed.

The second stage of precision concerns itself with exactness of formulation rather than merely recognizing the relations involved in the romantic phase. Precision is discipline in the various languages and grammars of discrete subject matters, particularly science and technical subjects, including logic and spoken languages. It is the scholastic phase with which most students and teachers are most familiar within traditional school curricula.

If we truly capture Whitehead’s reference to “rhythm” there is a free flowing beat from romance to precision. In isolation

from the romantic responses of education, precision is not part of the music. It can be meaningless, cold and ineffective in the personal development of any learner, particularly a child. An educational system excessively dominated by concerns of precision reverses the myth of Genesis. Whitehead reminds us, “In the Garden of Eden, Adam saw the animals before he named them; in the traditional system, children name the animals before they see them”⁶

Generalization and mastery, the last rhythmic element of the learning process, is the application of romance and precision into practical ideas and classifications. It is the moment of educational completeness and fruition, in which general ideas or the philosophical outlook are integrated with the feelings and thoughts of the earlier stages and then prepare the way for fresh experiences, signaling a new beginning to the educational process.

It is important to realize that these three rhythmic moments of the educational process characterize all stages of development, although each is typically associated with one period of growth. So, romance, precision, and generalization characterize the rich educational experience of a young child, the adolescent, and the adult. However, the romantic period is more closely associated with infancy and young childhood, the stage of precision with adolescence, and generalization with young and mature adulthood. Education is not uniquely oriented to some future moment, but holds the present in an attitude of religious awe. Each moment in a person’s education ought to include all three rhythmical elements. Similarly, the subjects contained in a comprehensive curriculum need to comprise all three stages, at whatever point they are introduced to the student. Thus the young child can be introduced to language ac-

quisition by a deft combination of appeal to the child's emotional involvement, its need for exactitude in detail, and the philosophical consideration of broad generalizations.

CREATIVITY AND THE REAL WORLD

Education has become purely an exercise for the intellectual faculties and therefore universities tend to be purely academic convergences where intellects interact. Standards appear to focus on academic performances exclusively. Whitehead was critical of such endeavors:

"The justification for a university is that it preserves the connection between knowledge and the zest for life, by uniting the young and the old in the imaginative consideration of learning. The university imparts information, but it imparts it imaginatively. At least, this is the function which it should perform for society. A university which fails in this respect has no reason for existence. This atmosphere of excitement, arising from imaginative consideration, transforms knowledge. A fact is no longer a bare fact: it is invested with all its possibilities. It is no longer a burden on the memory: it is energizing as the poet of our dreams, and as the architect of our purposes."⁷

All such connections arise naturally from Whitehead's concepts of organism, rhythm and creativity. It must be pointed out that in Alfred North Whitehead's metaphysical system God is not the Creator-God responsible for our creativity. Whitehead instead argued that each actual entity is self-creating and wrote, "There are not two actual entities, the creativity and the creature. There is only one entity which is the self-creating creature."⁸

Rather than dismissing Whitehead because of his lack of belief in our Creator-God, we must adapt his ideas to our own

Biblical understanding. The concept of the image of God integrates the aspects of identity and creativity into every human being. It is this creativity that empowers us to be creating-creatures within God's dynamic world to shape and reshape the people and events around us.

A common interpretation of Whitehead's is that creativity refers to the fact that all reality and every human being is a free, creative act of unification, determining its own being and its own becoming. There is certainly a process of evolution within certain aspects of life, even with the recognition of our creator God. Take education for instance. While we offer it to everyone, not all will come through having discovered their fullest potential. The old adage stands true – "You can take a horse to the water, but you cannot get him to drink."

Whitehead weaves a theme of aesthetic appreciation into his writings which is one of the most important practical contributions to education. Such an appreciation gives experience its full impact and brings with it a sense of reality which neither abstract classification nor practical manipulation will convey. The impact of this sense of reality adds "energy to our experience" and makes the difference between actively engaged learning and detached, passive encounters.

We could compare this aesthetic appreciation with the skill of an artist, as education must include an element of creativity. The teacher himself/herself must be a creative artist designing the course and the lecture with imagination. The students should not be treated like containers or repositories to be "filled" in the classroom and "emptied" in an examination. In the age of "on-line" learning the teacher cannot simply be replaced by a computer; optimum learning will only take place when two or more human beings interact within the realms of their God-

given creative endowment. The teacher must release the creativity of their students, who will then allow their own individuality to launch a learning process that will be a lifelong engagement with all that is in the world.

Most of our successful schools and universities are located within the mega-metropolises with its increasingly artificial surroundings. There is a pressing need for bringing out the aesthetic appreciation of the learner to see a much bigger world than the one in which he lives. Whitehead said, "wisdom is...the handling of knowledge, its selection for the determination of relevant issues, its employment to add value to our immediate experience. This mastery of knowledge, which is wisdom, is the most intimate freedom obtainable."⁹ Life is much more than the individual and our educators must take on the task of transforming knowledge into wisdom. There are people, communities, and a well connected world of nature around us where's God's creativity, harmony and beauty abound for those with the eyes, or minds, to see.

Creativity is an urgent need in education. It is this natural ability or even an acquired skill that will help the teacher to make education a living experience. Connections are made with life around the learner, colors are blended, sounds harmonized and integration becomes an inevitable reality. It is really an exercise in discovering webs and links rather than creating them. Learning is lifted away from static exercises to dynamic movements in harmony with God's world.

FOOT NOTES

1. Alfred North Whitehead was an English-born mathematician who became a philosopher. Apart from mathematics he wrote on the philosophy of science, physics, metaphysics, and education. With Bertrand Russell, he co-authored the epochal *Principia Mathematica*.
2. Malcolm D. Evans. *Whitehead and Philosophy of Education: The Seamless Coat of Learning*. Value Inquiry Book.
3. Whitehead, A. N. (1929). *The Aims of Education and other essays*. New York: Free Press 1929. p4
4. Whitehead. *The Aims of Education*. Most of my quotes are from this essay.
5. In 1922, Whitehead generalized his educational ideas in a pamphlet, "The Rhythm of Education." Franz G. Riffert expounds these thoughts in "Alfred North Whitehead on Learning and Education: Theory and Application"
6. Whitehead, Alfred North. 1929. *The Aims of Education and Other Essays*. New York: Macmillan p 285
7. *ibid*
8. *From Religion in the Making, A Series of Four Lectures* delivered during February 1926, delivered at the King's Chapel, Boston, USA
9. *Aims of Education*

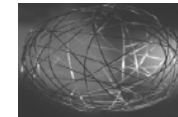
LET'S REFLECT!

1. How does Whitehead's process philosophy of influence his view of education interconnectedness?
2. How do the concepts of "romance, precision, and generalization" reflect in a child's learning process?
3. Develop some integrated courses where you can demonstrate some of Whitehead's concerns?

CHAPTER SIX

Education for Self-reliance

Julius Nyerere and Mahatma Gandhi



The principal goal of education is to create men who are capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done.

Jean Piaget

Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of generations into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes 'the practice of freedom', the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.

Paulo Freire

None are so hopelessly enslaved as those who falsely believe they are free.

Goethe

VI

The end of colonial rule in Africa brought a deep sense of confidence to those concerned that education could bring about socio-economic and political change. As African countries began freeing themselves of their colonial rulers they looked ahead with excitement. When Zambia's first president Kenneth Kaunda was asked by a European magazine what he remembered of his dreams, he replied:

“Education, education, education. Before that, people had almost no opportunities to learn something. We had all of 100 university graduates and 300 doctors in the country. Three hundred doctors for several million people! Can you imagine that? We wanted to change all of that. Many were sent abroad to study, both to Eastern European countries and to the West... We must find ways to make life here more attractive. We can't afford to be losing our best people to Europe or the United States”¹

The ruins of colonial rule were daunting, and in most countries illiteracy was high with only a few people having reached higher educational levels. In a freer atmosphere, Africans were able to shape their destiny — education now meant better jobs, a higher standard of living and the start of a new society.

Kuanda's dreams of “education, education, education” must be repeated. But what kind of education? Julius Nyerere (1922-1999), the legendary former president of Tanzania, proposed the answer. Nyerere was a person who was known nationally and internationally as *Mwalimu* (teacher in Kiswahili) and earned this endearing title not only because he worked as a high school teacher in the 1950s, but also because he was a long-term ad-

vocate of the importance of literacy and education in promoting development, self-reliance, solidarity, and social justice.

Nyerere was a strong advocate of education for self-reliance with significant parallels to India's Mahatma Gandhi. Like Gandhi, Nyerere recognized a pressing need to correct the ills of an educational system left behind by the colonial government. Colonial education, he wrote "...was not designed to prepare young people for the service of their own country; instead it was motivated by a desire to inculcate the values of the colonial society and to train individuals for the service of the colonial state." What was needed now was the kind of education that would restore dignity and self-reliance.²

EDUCATION FOR SELF-RELIANCE

What did Africans and Asians mean when they spoke of self-reliance, particularly after having recently been freed from colonial powers? Vinobha Bhave, a Gandhian follower and Indian freedom fighter, wrote clearly on this topic:

"Self-reliance means freedom from dependence on others, or on any external support. A man who has true learning is truly free and independent. The first and least part of this self-sufficiency is that the body must be educated and made skilled in a craft. A second, and a very important, part of it is the ability to acquire new knowledge for oneself. There is a third essential element in freedom, and this also is a part of education. Freedom implies not only independence of other people but also independence of one's own moods and impulses. The man who is a slave to his senses and cannot keep his impulses under control is neither free nor self-sufficient. Temperance, vows and service therefore have their place in education, for it is by such means that this third aspect of freedom can be learned.

Self-sufficiency, then, has three meanings. The first is that one should not depend upon others for one's daily bread. The second is that one should have developed the power to acquire knowledge for oneself. The third is that a man should be able to rule himself, to control his senses and his thoughts. Slavery of the body is wrong. The body falls into slavery for the sake of the belly; therefore a free man must know how to earn his living through handicraft. Slavery of the mind is wrong. If a man cannot think for himself and teach an independent judgment, his mind is enslaved; a free man must have acquired the power of independent thought. Slavery of the emotions and the senses is also wrong, and it is an essential part of education to overcome their tyranny"³

Obviously, the colonial educators had an agenda of their own. It came through clearly in Thomas Macaulay's controversial Minute of February 1835, which recommended that English be promoted as both a *lingua franca* and the medium of education in India. This action in itself cannot be criticized as Indians today are taking advantage of the modern economy, thus liberating themselves from the shackles of a traditional and hierarchical society. But his words arrogantly claim that "...a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia." Not only did this display Macaulay's arrogance, but also exposed his ignorance. Macaulay himself did not read a single work in any Arab or Indian language. However, the fact remains that British colonialists aimed to train men and women to serve their own purposes, while cautioning that "...admission of natives to high office must be effected by slow degrees."⁴

The African experience is no different. In a policy booklet published in March 1967 entitled "Education for Self-Reliance," Nyerere wrote unsympathetically, "The colonialists modeled their education on the British system with an emphasis on subservient attitudes and on white-collar skills. Even more, it em-

phasized and encouraged the individualistic instincts of mankind, instead of his co-operative instincts. There were attitudes of human inequality, and replacing traditional knowledge by the knowledge from a different society.”⁵

Nyerere, like Gandhi, pointed out how this form of education aided in the formation of unhealthy class structures:

“...the education now provided is designed for the few who are intellectually stronger than their fellows; it induces among those who succeed a feeling of superiority, and leaves the majority of the others hankering after something they will never obtain. It induces a feeling of inferiority among the majority, and can thus not produce either the egalitarian society we should build, nor the attitudes of mind which are conducive to an egalitarian society. On the contrary, it induces the growth of a class structure in our country.”⁶

Obviously, something new was needed. Nyerere advocated the kind of education that would rebuild the ruins. This education was to be oriented towards rural life where teachers and students engaged together in productive activities. Nyerere wanted work to become an integral part of the school curriculum and provide a meaningful learning experience through the integration of theory and practice. Away from the heavy academic intellectual stress, he advocated for an education that was practical and skills oriented.

Nyerere provides a powerful reminder for those engaged in education in the developing world. If development is our goal, then the local context and its needs must be clearly integrated into our educational programs. Why replicate a Harvard MBA or an academically rigorous Oxford degree for someone wanting to serve in the villages and slums of Africa or Asia? Why train a person in Western philosophies and theologies to come back and train people who will be serving in their own

national cultures? Nyerere discerned the need for practical skills to help build the kind of Tanzania he envisioned.

WHAT KIND OF SOCIETY?

Julius Nyerere was clearly not interested in education for education sake. All education had to directly contribute to building a better society, and therefore he asked the question, “What kind of society are we trying to build?” To break the class division in society, Nyerere sought to create a socialist society based on three principles: equality and respect for human dignity; sharing of the resources which are produced by the people; and work by everyone and exploitation by none.

“It is obvious, however, that if we are to make progress towards these goals, we in Tanzania must accept the realities of our present position, internally and externally, and then work to change these realities into something more in accord with our desires. And the truth is that our United Republic has at present a poor, undeveloped, and agricultural economy. We have very little capital to invest, in big factories or modern machines; we are short of people with skill and experience. What we do have is land in abundance and people who are willing to work hard for their own improvement. It is the use of these latter resources which will decide whether we reach our total goals or not. If we use these resources in a spirit of self-reliance as the basis for development, then we shall make progress slowly but surely. And it will then be real progress, affecting the lives of the masses, not just having spectacular show-pieces in the towns while the rest of the people of Tanzania live in their present poverty”⁷

Nyerere reflects some very powerful Gandhian elements. Mohandas Gandhi proposed what he called *swaraj* and *swadeshi*.

Swaraj could translate as independence or self rule and *Swadeshi* can be appropriately translated as self-sufficiency or self-reliance. These two terms taken together represent the type of society that Gandhi was looking for in his post-colonial India. Gandhi was not just content with freedom from the British; he was looking at the forms of education that could restore Indians to a self-reliant society within their own cultural moorings. He too, like Nyerere, wanted the value system and life style of the British Raj to be replaced by a simpler, more spiritual Indian communal life. This new type of society which would reflect the old values of pre-colonial days was to be based in the village. Gandhi stated:

“...independence must begin at the bottom. Thus every village will be a republic...having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs. Thus, ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit. This does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbors or from the world. In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever-widening, never-ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom.”⁸

Similar to Gandhi’s vision, Nyerere’s desire for education was for it to work for the common good, foster co-operation and promote equality. This aspiration was laid out in his booklet, “Education for Self-Reliance,” which stated:

1. Education should be oriented to rural life.
2. Teachers and students should engage together in productive activities and students should participate in the planning and decision-making process of organizing these activities.
3. Productive work should become an integral part of the school curriculum and provide meaningful learning experience through the integration of theory and practice.

4. The importance of examinations should be downgraded.
5. Children should begin school at age 7 so that they would be old enough and sufficiently mature to engage in self-reliant and productive work when they leave school.
6. Primary education should be complete in itself rather than merely serving as a means to higher education.
7. Students should become self-confident and co-operative, and develop critical and inquiring minds.⁹

Nyerere, like Gandhi, in keeping with these goals stressed a predominantly socialist rural economy. He stated clearly, “...it is in the rural areas that people live and work, so it is in the rural areas that life must be improved.” He advocated a deliberate policy of using resources — our manpower and our land — to the best advantage, saying, “This means people working hard, intelligently, and together; in other words, working in co-operation.” The principles of socialism and equality in work suited his economic ideals. Nyerere’s principles resonate with Gandhi’s vision of education in the following passage:

“This is what our educational system has to encourage. It has to foster the social goals of living together, and working together, for the common good. It has to prepare our young people to play a dynamic and constructive part in the development of a society in which all members share fairly in the good or bad fortune of the group, and in which progress is measured in terms of human well-being, not prestige buildings, cars, or other such things, whether privately or publicly owned. Our education must therefore inculcate a sense of commitment to the total community, and help the pupils to accept the values appropriate to our kind of future, not those appropriate to our colonial past.”¹⁰

In very Gandhian language, Nyerere stressed that the educational system of “...Tanzania must emphasize co-operative endeavor, not individual advancement; it must stress concepts

of equality and the responsibility to give service which goes with any special ability, whether it be in carpentry, in animal husbandry, or in academic pursuits." In other words, it was not just social values that the educational system has a task to inculcate; it must prepare young people for work in a rural society — in agriculture and in village development. He clarified that he was not calling for education just "...to produce passive agricultural workers," but also "...to prepare people for their responsibilities as free workers and citizens in a free and democratic society, albeit a largely rural society."

Nyerere's passion for self-reliance was persuasive. It comes through clearly as he proposed changes in the school system — not only changes in the organization and the curriculum in schools, but also an "integrated change" so that students become a real part of "our society and our economy." He wrote:

"Schools must, in fact, become communities — and communities which practice the precept of self-reliance. The teachers, workers, and pupils together must be the members of a social unit in the same way as parents, relatives, and children are the family social unit. There must be the same kind, of relationship between pupils and teachers within the school community as there is between children and parents in the village. And the former community must realize, just as the latter do, that their life and well-being depend upon the production of wealth — by farming or other activities. This means that all schools, but especially secondary schools and other forms of higher education, must contribute to their own upkeep; they must be economic communities as well as social and educational communities. Each school should have, as an integral part of it, a farm or workshop which provides the food eaten by the community, and makes some contribution to the total national income.

This is not a suggestion that a school farm or workshop should be attached to every school for training purposes. It is a suggestion that every school should also be a farm;

that the school community should consist of people who are both teachers and farmers, and pupils and farmers. Obviously if there is a school farm, the pupils working on it should be learning the techniques and tasks of farming. But the farm would be an integral part of the school—and the welfare of the pupils would depend on its output, just as the welfare of a farmer depends on the output of his land."¹¹

VOCATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION

Many countries in Africa and some in Asia, including vast sections in India need the kind of education Julius Nyerere wanted for Tanzania. We have looked at some of these vocational skills as second rate education and even now consider academic activities as the more superior. This elitist attitude must be dispelled and curriculum changed for rural settings at least. Skills that are needed for maintaining agricultural economies in the massive Indian rural population and in many African countries will make such people far more self reliant. Integrated education is urgently required and teachers should be empowered to creatively design courses for such schools.

Gandhi proposed the introduction of productive handicrafts into the school system hoping for schools to be self-supporting. He offered two reasons for this. Firstly, a poor society such as India simply could not afford to provide education for all children unless the schools could generate resources from within. Secondly, the financially independent school would also be politically independent. Gandhi wanted to avoid the attitude of dependence which still continues in India and Africa today. In keeping with this spirit, Gandhi wrote:

"By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man — body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and woman can be edu-

cated. Literacy in itself is no education. I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. Thus every school can be made self-supporting, the condition being that the State takes over the manufacturing of these schools.¹²

Even well integrated practical and theoretical courses exploiting the natural context will do wonders in transforming rural people and preparing them to integrate into the fast modernizing world. No fast track methods are advised. Education must be built on their environments and foundations first, and then moved forward to be in line with the rest of the world.

We noted Nyerere's proposal for rural schools to work alongside farms. This will help everyone work and thereby contribute to their own upkeep. Nyerere had a very viable proposition for schools to become "economic communities as well as social and educational communities." Likewise, modern Christian institutions must break from their dependency syndrome and manage their resources wisely. Grants and donations being received at present could be utilized for long term economic stability to build greater stewardship values in our whole community.

ACTS INSTITUTE IN INDIA

I had not read any of Nyerere's thoughts, nor did I know much more about Gandhi than his exploits as a freedom fighter. Yet, there was a deep desire for self-support and self-reliance as I began my preparation for my service as a disciple of Jesus Christ. And it all started with the vision of ACTS Institute, which came to me while I was doing my doctoral work at London University.

I was reading the book of Acts and was gripped by the courageous witness of those early Christians. The same men who had been floundering fearfully had been transformed into bold and daring disciples demonstrating something different. What was the difference? The answer came to me as I read the account of Peter and John in front of the temple with the lame man. Peter's response to the beggar pleading for alms was penetrating, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give to you. In the name of Jesus rise up and walk."

The words totally transformed my thinking. I was certainly committed to education, but was only thinking of education in the traditional sense – perhaps even in the colonial sense. Suddenly God gave me a new "*Rise up and walk*" dimension to education. The church in India needed this message. My country, although independent, needed to break out of its dependence and walk. Self support was the key, and education provided this potent recipe for self reliance.

My passion for integration started with the vision of the ACTS Institute. The program was to be the "integration of work, worship and witness." The schedule was very basic. It included Bible and various academic studies in the morning and workshops in the afternoon with the intent to build people to be self-supportive and become powerful witnesses.

In the midst of this excitement, my wife and I with our two small children returned to India in October 1978. Little did I know that many of my friends and colleagues were unprepared for this model of ministry training. "Why work?", some irritatingly asked. "Why self-support, when our friends from Europe and the U.S.A. can support us?" others questioned. Even more discouraging, was having to deal with students and their unabashed unwillingness to work hard. "We came to

study the Bible. We want to pray!" I heard them saying. Somehow work and workshops seemed to be contradictory to their concept of spirituality.

This was the underlying false assumption to be corrected. It dealt directly with our incomplete view of the Gospel and of ministry. For most of the Christian community, the Gospel is something spiritual and ministry had only to do what was considered "spiritual." The more I grappled with this God-given vision, the more I saw the vastness of the Gospel and its all embracing energy. And as this was increasingly captured, I began to recognize how much more than "preaching" or "spiritual salvation" the Gospel encapsulated.

Ministry is largely seen as the prerogative of the preacher or the church based worker. Suddenly the ACTS vision widened my horizons to include all of what our Creator God would have us do. Christian craftsmen, technicians, environmentalists, sociologists, doctors, etc. have all been called to ministry or service. I constantly reminded my colleagues, "The task of education is to discover gifts and develop them."

ACTS is an amazing story of God's work. Today our staff and associates are involved in industry, in hospitals, in environmental projects, in education and whatever areas are open for genuine service. Self support is the key and ACTS itself is fast heading for financial self reliance, but without losing our sense of dependence on God and interdependence on God's people all over the world.

DALIT EDUCATION IN INDIA

The lessons learned in this discussion should be applied in response to the recently exposed Dalit phenomenon and the atrocities committed to the millions who are considered

outcastes. Deprived of dignity and exploited ruthlessly by the upper castes, large sections of India's billion plus population stand in dire need. What is needed can be found in the words of Nyerere, "Education, education, education." This fact became evident when concerned Christian groups chose to intervene. "Give us education; give us hospitals," the leaders cried out.

But a cautious and carefully integrated approach should be employed as follows:

1. Functional literacy programs are needed.
2. Adult education programs must integrate the kind of facts, knowledge and skills that are in line with their traditional wisdom.
3. All levels of education must integrate some major concerns that will help them lift themselves out of desperation — dignity and identity must be restored.
4. Opportunities to earn a decent living through appropriate employment programs must be created.
5. More importantly, they must escape the dependency trap that can so easily ensnare in the form of foreign monetary assistance.

Lessons in self-reliance and self-support are crucial in the educational content provided for these people. But this should be a concern at all levels of education. Gandhi and Nyerere remind us so forcefully of skills-oriented education beginning in the primary levels. Ideas from Confucius, Tagore, Dewey and Freire also emphasize the need for appropriate educational models for total development. Integrated education must lead to self reliance in the best sense of the word.

FOOT NOTES

1. SPIEGEL ONLINE 2007. Reproduction of the publication SPIEGELnet GmbH April 20, 2007.
2. Policy booklet published in March 1967 "Education for Self-Reliance". Julius Nyerere
3. Vinoba Bhave, Thoughts on Education. Rajghat, Varanasi: Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan, 1996 fourth edition. Chapter 5
4. Minute of February 1835. We have dealt with this earlier in Chapter 1 and 2
5. Nyerere op cit
6. ibid
7. Nyerere, J. (1968) Freedom and Socialism. A Selection from Writings & Speeches, 1965-1967, Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press. This book includes The Arusha Declaration; Education for self-reliance; The varied paths to socialism; The purpose is man; and socialism and development. Nyerere, J. (1974) Freedom & Development, Uhuru Na Maendeleo, Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press. Includes essays on adult education; freedom and development; relevance; and ten years after independence
8. The mind of Mahatma Gandhi Compiled & Edited by R. K. Prabhu & U. R. Rao, First Published, March 1945. Gandhi develops the idea of the Indian Panchayat Raj. The Panchayat is an Indian political system which groups five ("*panch*") villages around a central one. The term 'panchayat raj' originated during the British administration. 'Raj' literally means governance or government. Panchayati Raj, a decentralized form of Government where each village is responsible for its own affairs, as the foundation of India's political system
9. Kassam, Y. (1995) 'Julius Nyerere' in Z. Morsy (ed.) Thinkers on Education, Paris: UNESCO Publishing. p 253
10. ibid p 274
11. Policy booklet published in March 1967 "Education for Self-Reliance". Nyerere
12. Harijan, 31 July 1937 (p. 450)

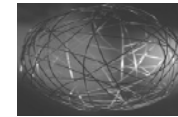
LET'S REFLECT!

1. State the concept of 'education for self reliance' as promoted by Julius Nyerere and compare that with the ideas promoted by Gandhi. How can these concepts be integrated into our educational programs?
2. Analyze the importance of education towards self reliance and describe how it can be practically implemented in your context.
3. Work on a curriculum of a programme at the graduate level which incorporates principles of self reliance and demonstrate the role it plays in integrated learning.
4. How does the concept of education for self reliance change our perception on basic education, higher education and theological education?

CHAPTER SEVEN

Authentic Education for the Oppressed

Paulo Freire, 1921 – 1997



We must not believe the many, who say that only free people ought to be educated, but we should rather believe the philosophers who say that only the educated are free.

Epictetus

If you continue in my word, then you are truly my disciples; you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.

Jesus Christ

It has always been a mystery to me how men can feel themselves honored by the humiliation of their fellow beings.

Mohandas Gandhi

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

Nelson Mandela

VII

The Brazilian educator Paulo Freire did not claim to be Confucius or Dewey, but is certainly counted as one of the most the influential educational thinkers in recent decades. Freire provided one of the most revolutionary approaches to adult educational in oppressed contexts, but the principles he deals with apply to education in all environments.

His book “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” is widely referenced among educators, not just in Latin America, but also in Africa and Asia. (Note) His radical pedagogical thinking influenced educational and social movements throughout the world in a wide range of academic disciplines including sociology, anthropology, applied linguistics, pedagogy, theology and cultural studies.

Freire set theory within praxis. In a Marxist sense of the word, *praxis* is a term referring to the application of theory through practice in order to bring about social change. Praxis is a concept first ascribed to Aristotle which describes an ongoing commitment to knowledge creation out of experience. For the Ancient Greeks the word referred to activity engaged in by free men, and for Freire it is a synthesis of theory and practice that brings about liberation through education.

Following a brief career as a lawyer and then as a secondary school teacher (from 1941-1947), Freire became active in adult education and literacy programs. He gained international recognition for his experiments in literacy training in Brazil.

Forced into political exile that lasted fifteen years, Freire became a visiting scholar at Harvard University and then moved to Geneva, Switzerland where he served as special educational adviser to the World Council of Churches. He returned to Brazil in 1980 after an absence of sixteen years and resumed some of his work amongst the poor.

Freire's underlying beliefs are strongly stated in "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" where he exposes the faults of capitalist education and lays the foundation for a revolutionary foundation for education. He proposes the concept of "conscientization" as the heart of "liberatory education" to break through prevailing myths and doctrines and "reach new levels of awareness and freedom." Conscientization was not just raising the conscience, but a liberating empowerment that came through education. Based on his own experience helping Brazilian adults to read and write, Freire pointedly reminds educationists to situate educational activity in the lived experience of participants, which is what he saw in his context as practicing the pedagogy of the oppressed. Note

Like Confucius who was concerned for training men and women for a good society, Freire believed that the consequences of the right kind of education were far reaching; education could be used powerfully for transforming society and setting people free. We may not face the oppression that Freire worked within, but we can speak of oppression of different kinds. We face the Dalit situation in India — one of many examples of oppression in traditionally rigid systems dictated by those who are blind to what is happening in the real world. There is a need for an educational reformation that considers various contexts and offers the kind of education that will shape people's destinies.

We read earlier that Gandhi and Nyerere strongly exposed the "oppression" of colonial forms of education which had agendas serving particular ends. There were challenges to face when nations were freed and took over education. Sadly, some blindly repeated the same formats and simply replaced British history with local histories, or added local languages alongside English. Institutions prided themselves in being able to do what the colonial educators did and do it even better; yet, all it produced was elitism. Gandhi fought against this, but India did not carefully heed to his voice.

As Christian higher education continues to make an impact throughout the world, it must face the challenge of local contexts and address their peculiar needs rather than merely get caught up in delivering irrelevant academic programmes. Theological educators must take careful note. While we talk about training men and women for ministry, we hardly train them as those who know their contexts; thereby bringing the liberating influence of Christ to people crying out for compassionate action through Christians.

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Paulo Freire proposed a "Critical Pedagogy" — a pedagogy that is particularly concerned with changing the traditional student/teacher relationship. Traditional classrooms are those where the teacher is the active agent, the one who knows, and the students are the passive recipients of the teacher's knowledge. This is what he calls the "banking concept of education," which we will read more about below. The classroom is envisioned as a liberating experience where new knowledge grounded in the experiences of students and teachers alike is produced through meaningful dialogue. Note

For Freire, critical pedagogy had a political component in facilitating critical thinking that would engage in the political struggle and transform oppressive social conditions. Therefore, critical pedagogy led to liberatory education; education which enables learners to come towards “conscientization.” “Education must give students the tools to be creators of their own reality. In education that orients one to the world, subjectivity and objectivity are united and students acquire a critical perception of reality” (Freire, 1971, p.6).

BANKING EDUCATION

Ask most educators what they know of Freire and they would immediately utter two words – banking education. What did he mean by this? Banking education is the picture of our present educational system, where students are the depositories and the teachers are the depositors. This is a very uncomfortably familiar picture to many of us. Most of our teachers would come armed with stacks of well prepared notes to transfer to students. Sadly, this is the state of most educational systems within Asia and Africa. Facts are presented in static forms and all the student has to do is reproduce them. Facts and figures are transferred from the teacher to the student, and these facts are transferred back to the teacher in the examination papers. Students are graded according to the quantity of this knowledge transferred back to the paper rather than the critical application of knowledge to individual contexts. Yet, because education is much more than the accumulation of acts, this description of education is problematic.

A condescending attitude accompanies banking education where we as teachers think we have the knowledge to be bestowed upon the student as a “gift.” Freire viewed this ap-

proach to education as a means of “domination by the capitalist class.” He wanted education to make people think of their situation and seek emancipation from their slavery:

“In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry. The teacher presents himself to his students as their necessary opposite; by considering their ignorance absolute, he justifies his own existence. The students, alienated like the slave... accept their ignorance as justifying the teachers existence — but unlike the slave, they never discover that they educate the teacher.” Note

And what about the teacher? Freire gives us some graphic but penetrating insights of the teacher as a narrator. The classroom involves a narrating subject (the teacher) and patient, listening objects (the students). The contents, whether values or empirical dimensions of reality, are narrated as static, compartmentalized and predictable. Such contents are totally detached from reality.

Students are reduced to the status of passive objects to be imposed upon by the teacher. In this traditional form of education, it is the job of the teacher to deposit something in the minds of the students; minds that are considered to be empty or ignorant. This is what Freire called banking education. The goal of banking education, in the contexts of oppression is to immobilize the people within existing frameworks of power by conditioning them to accept the sole authority of the oppressor.

Freire paints his pictures graphically and here is an oft quoted description of the teacher and the taught:

- (a) the teacher teaches and the students are taught;
- (b) the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
- (c) the teacher thinks and the students are thought about;
- (d) the teacher talks and the students listen — meekly;
- (e) the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
- (f) the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;
- (g) the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;
- (h) the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt;
- (i) the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;
- (j) the teacher is the subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects. Note

Note the criticism that the banking concept of education treats people as adaptable, manageable and even exploitable things. This form of education proved ideal for indoctrination programs where children are programmed to think in a particular way. Religious as well as totalitarian systems of education in one way or the other tend to adapt this paradigm of learning to their own advantage. Colonial education with its own agendas displayed similar models. Education must prepare people to think freely, whether a child or an adult.

Integrated learning encourages the teacher as well as the student to be part of the learning process. Rather than a one-way top down narration, learning is a two way interaction.

The teacher facilitates the learning process, the student begins to think, developing creativity and discernment to accept the best choice from numerous options.

Let us not reject this principle on grounds that Freire was making people become conscious of bondages and free themselves from oppressive regimes. When learning is conducted in this setting the students develop a confidence in learning newer things, as well as able to take decisions that will prove advantageous in all of life whether in the home, at work or in the world. Through his insightful commentary, Freire exposed the restrictions of the majority of educational systems around the world.

AUTHENTIC” APPROACH TO EDUCATION: CONSCIENTIZATION

Freire attacked the dehumanization of both the students and the teachers in his context. Instead, he advocated for this kind of emancipatory approach to education. According to Freire, the “authentic” approach to education must allow people to be aware of their incompleteness and freely strive towards becoming more human. Note

This attempt to use education as a means of consciously shaping the person and the society is what he calls conscientization — a process which will develop critical consciousness in the learner. Conscientization, a term first introduced by Freire, has been widely used in Latin America to describe the process of adult education organized mostly by those popularizing Marxist categories and to help the poor discover that they are “humans.”

The process of conscientization is, for Freire, the heart of liberatory education. It is not merely “consciousness raising”

through the transmission of pre-selected knowledge. It is much more, particularly among the oppressed in the context of Freire's work. Conscientization in those situations is the breaking out of prevailing oppression of all kinds and reaching new levels of awareness. Learners become active in deciding what is important for them to learn. Literacy and liberation go together as the community is taught, even to discuss political issues, as they engage in the process liberation.

THE NEED FOR DIALOGUE

If we have sufficiently grappled with the criticisms above, then we will not be surprised where Paulo Freire leads us. This is dialogue, which Freire believed to be part of human nature. Through dialogue, or interaction with others, we discover a social process. So strong was his commitment to dialogue that he considered the moment of dialogue to be the moment of transformation. Freire saw the dialogue of the elite as vertical, whereas true dialogue is the horizontal relationship based on love, respect and tolerance which encourages liberated learning in all situations. Note

Dialogue, for Freire, implies a reciprocal trust and communication between the educator, who also learns, and the student, who also teaches. Thus, education becomes a two-way interactive dialogue rather than the unilateral authoritarian communication of teaching methods in oppressed societies.

Once again, we from the freer world must not reject Freire's admonition. Teachers or "gurus" have gotten used to a one-way system of education. Silent listening or non-questioning in the classroom is equated with respect for the teacher. "Wait until I finish," is another response even by those willing to entertain questions from the students. Behind the dialogical

method is the intention to break from these vertical or one-way (i.e., top-down) patterns characteristic of banking education, where students are handed down material from the teacher and expected to accept it without questioning. This is not just a fact from Freire's oppressive society, but familiar to many of our contexts.

Dialogue of this kind will help us understand the world in which we teach and the world in which we learn. However, dialogue is not just about deepening our understanding of the world. For Freire, it is part of making a difference in the world. His revolutionary pedagogy obviously demonstrates a burden for the poor and oppressed people, as well as a respect for their "common sense." This should be even more of a message for us Christian educators concerned to make a difference.

There is a startling truth that emerges here. The content of this kind of education cannot be determined in advance through the expertise of the educator; but instead, must arise from the lived experiences or reality of the students. The teacher is the facilitator who encourages such learning rather than the one with the authority who demands that the learner learns what he teaches.

There are some who may think the teacher may lose his or her place of authority if too much of this two-way open-system style is practiced. To allay fears, we must note that Freire was not advocating that the educator recedes into the background as a mere inactive facilitator. He conceived of the teacher "enacting authentic authority, rather than being authoritarian." There is enough of the authoritarian "teacher knows best" attitude all over the world and we can easily capture the picture of the teacher in totalitarian systems. The teacher, for Freire, is not neutral, but intervenes with authentic authority in the edu-

cational situation in order to help the student overcome elements that paralyze learning, and in doing so enable them to think critically.

Importantly, while the experience of the learner is central, Freire was not legitimizing or validating the experiences of the oppressed. All experiences, including those of the teacher, must be interrogated in order to lay bare their ideological assumptions and presuppositions. Freire used a Christianized Marxist humanist perspective for evaluating experiences. He urged both students and teachers to break the barriers of their race, class, and gender to engage in a dialogue with those whose experiences are different from their own. We are aware of the social, political, religious, caste, etc. baggage that one brings into the classroom. It is in this context that Freire's emphasis on dialogue becomes applicable.

ADULT EDUCATION

One of the pressing needs facing Christian educators in the developing world is the education of adults. Adult education in most places has grown without any clear philosophy. Pedagogical practices of teaching children are merely transposed into adult contexts, with little or no value.

For example, literacy programs start with A-B-C or their equivalents in the vernacular languages. Instead, such programs should begin by grounding learning in the day-to-day experiences of the people. Adult educators must consider complex issues of human thinking, the basis of learning, and the meaning of freedom for learning.

Freire reminds us of the urgent need to become aware of our contexts. He argued that any curriculum which ignores racism, sexism, the exploitation of workers, and other forms of

“oppression” will inhibit learning and hinder creative and liberating social action for change. Adults carry plenty of baggage when they come to our classrooms. We must help them unpack and unfetter themselves from their bondages. Also, they come with a body of knowledge already accumulated and acquired. We must help them build new knowledge within the learning experiences we create for them.

Another important factor is that adults frequently want to learn in order to handle some specific task. The new knowledge must help them further their dreams and aspirations. Housewives come to classes to learn some practical skills like cooking, sewing or even computer skills. Others, men or women, aspire to advance in their professions and want additional knowledge and skills that will take them further. These are tremendous opportunities to integrate the kind of education that Freire advocates and give these knowledge seekers both liberation and education. When effectively conducted and appropriately integrated, education becomes a powerful tool of engagement for the Christian educator seeking to bring holistic transformation to the needy.

Freire's liberatory education is not just for the “oppressed” contexts. It provides a working model to develop learning experiences within broader social, economic, political or cultural milieus. Christian social action and programs for compassion and justice can adapt some of these learning tools.

INTEGRATED THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Integrated learning must begin where the students are and draw them to where we want them to go. In keeping with Freire, the kind of integrated learning I am advocating is that which builds on the student's knowledge of his world. It's

where truth is taught to be relevant and understandable within a foundation of knowledge already present, rather than coming to them with new, or perhaps disconnected ideas. The Word comes alive in such situations.

It is accepted that the content of most of what is taught in theology is “revealed knowledge” and has to be passed on and accepted by students. But the “Word must become flesh” and this means that all our teaching too must become relevant in varied contexts. How will we know varied contexts unless we listen and allow this two-way interaction?

The necessity of dialogue is as Biblical as we want to make it. God spoke. God dialogued. God allowed Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, Jonah and many others to dialogue with him. Liberation theologians use the paradigm of God liberating Israel from the shackles of oppression. God engaged in a two-way dialogue with Moses. Jesus dialogued with people he met; He asked questions and expected answers. He encouraged people to ask him questions and he dialogued with them to arrive at conclusions in keeping with what Jesus had in mind. What better model of two-way dialogical teaching could we as Christian educators demand?

FOOT NOTES

1. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire, P. (1971). Pedagogy of the oppressed. New York: Seabury Press.
2. Paulo Freire, *Cultural Action for Freedom*, Cambridge: Harvard Educational Review 1974, p. 1.
3. op cit Freire p.6.
4. ibid Chap 2
5. ibid
6. ibid Chap 3
7. ibid

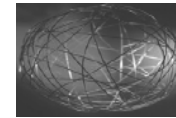
LET'S REFLECT

1. How do we acknowledge and utilize the prior knowledge of learners to build on it through newer integrated learning experiences?
2. What are the advantages to learning through interactive dialogue rather than the lecture method?
3. Create a contextually relevant curriculum for a degree level programme taking into account the social, political, economic and cultural issues in your context.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Life as the Classroom

Life Long Education



The person who has lived the most is not the one with the most years but the one with the richest experiences.

Jean Jacques Rosseau

I still live, I still think: I still have to live, for I still have to think. Sum, ergo cogito: cogito, ergo sum

Friedrich Nietzsche

Science is organized knowledge. Wisdom is organized life.

Immanuel Kant

VIII

Integrated learning is infectious and once caught, can be transmitted into a lifelong learning experience. When life in itself becomes a series of learning experiences, one's role as a student never ceases. To live is to learn and to learn is to live better. Such is the result when educational institutions provide tools for acquiring knowledge and enable students to embark on a lifelong journey of learning.

Learning and working are integral parts of life and therefore continue from birth until death. Lifelong learning does not have a beginning or an end and should not be pressed into self-contained compartments. It is integrated into life itself. The UNESCO report entitled "Learning: The Treasure Within" gave great emphasis to life-long learning and popularized the following four pillars on which this concept rests:

Learning to know, by combining a sufficiently broad general knowledge with the opportunity to work in depth on a small number of subjects. To a certain extent this also means: Learning how to learn in order to benefit from the opportunities that life-long learning offers.

Learning to do in order to acquire not only an occupational skill but also, more broadly, the competence to deal with many situations and work in teams. It also means learning to do in the context of young peoples' various social and work experiences which may be informal, as a result of the local or national context.

For **learning to live** together it essential to develop an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence—carrying out joint projects and learning

to manage conflicts. To this end, then, fundamental values such as pluralism, mutual understanding and peace have to be respected.

And, finally, **learning for life** means being able to develop better your individual personality and, with more autonomy, being able to act with a better sense of judgment and increasing sense of responsibility. For this to be achieved, it's essential that education does not neglect any of the potential within individuals: memory, reasoning, aesthetic sense, physical capacities and communication skills.¹

There is an urgent need for lifelong learning to be propagated across the globe. East or west, rich or poor, underdeveloped, developing or developed countries all need to consider the concept of continuing education. Such education should provide learning opportunities for all ages and within varied contexts (i.e. work, home, leisure). This concept breaks away from the traditional notion that education is what one receives the first 12 or 20 years of life through the formal institutions of school, college and university.

In the Declaration of Dar es Salaam, Julius Nyerere issued a thunderous call for adult education to be directed at helping people to help themselves and to approach it as a way of life, "integrated with life and inseparable from it". For Nyerere, adult education has the following two functions, "to inspire both a desire for change and an understanding that change is possible, and to help people to make their own decisions and to implement those decisions for themselves."²

Whether in poverty stricken conditions or in the more affluent, highly-professional arena, the concept of lifelong learning is playing a crucial role in preparing, training and updating the skills of adults to face their changing professional landscape. The European Union adopted a Communication in Oc-

tober 2006 entitled "It's never too late to learn", calling on Member States to promote adult learning in Europe. "The pressures of demographic change, globalization and the emergence of newly industrialized and highly competitive countries mean that adult learning must be placed firmly on the political agenda."³ An Action Plan on Adult Learning in 2007 was formulated to support European adult education with high quality information, guidance and assessment systems, excellent learning content and delivery mechanisms.

Integration becomes an equally key factor in maximizing the impact of these continuing learning experiences. Such an integrated learning atmosphere provides an opportunity for all to learn within their own capacities and individual contexts – addressing the need for democratized education and equal opportunities for all people. Attempts are being made all over the world to promote legislative, educational, social, and financial measures that would enable the most disadvantaged groups of society to have access to educational opportunities. Almost all are in need of some appropriate form of lifelong education.

Lifelong learning within an integrated learning atmosphere is most effective in meeting this global need. Lifelong education cannot be restricted to one single educational format and an integrated model works to adapt relevant methods and materials, while minimizing any forces that would destroy learning. Such a model should embrace all kinds of pedagogical and andragogical methods through classroom or distance learning or e-learning, basic correspondence courses, as well as other informal learning programs.

Such programs are not restricted to the short term or undergraduate student, but are also successfully being employed

for postgraduate studies and those wanting to improve qualifications or update a skill. Corporate houses have begun to employ lifelong learning programs to equip their employees to cope with the rapidly changing global knowledge based environment. The goal for each is a maximized learning experience. Therefore, a number of individual and environmental factors should be brought together for an effectively integrated program.

ANDRAGOGY

In speaking of adult learning, we are advised not to focus solely on pedagogy, but also to consider andragogy. Pedagogy is the science of teaching, generally referring to teacher-focused education directed to the child. The root word comes from the Ancient Greek meaning of child and hence, pedagogy literally means “to lead the child”. Adult education became the victim of teacher-centered models as enthusiasts plunged into various areas of need, without a well defined or relevant philosophy. Lessons from Dewey, Freire and others were influential; however, an adapted methodology was needed to modify education for these more complex situations.

Andragogy entered the learning arena as a way to engage adult learners within their learning experience. The term was originally used by a German educator, Alexander Kapp in 1833, but popularized by the American educator, Malcolm Knowles as “the theory of adult education”. Knowles maintained that andragogy (adult-leading) should be preferred over the more commonly used pedagogy (child-leading), as adults require a different approach to education.⁴

In an attempt to formulate a comprehensive adult learning theory, Malcolm Knowles, in 1973, published the book “The

Adult Learner: A Neglected Species.” Knowles’ theory offers four simple postulates:

1. Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction (Self-concept and Motivation to learn).
2. Experience (including mistakes) provides the basis for learning activities (Experience).
3. Adults are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance to their job or personal life (Readiness to learn).
4. Adult learning is problem-centered rather than content-oriented (Orientation to learning).

Andragogy has taken on a broader meaning today and now refers to *learner*-focused education (rather than *teacher*-focused) for people of all ages. The andragogical model is beneficial in showing learners how to direct themselves in the learning process -integrating the body of knowledge and information to the learners’ experiences.

It is important to consider andragogy not as a replacement to pedagogy, but rather look cautiously at the unique features. Learning can be both student and teacher focused and andragogy is not limited to adult learning. Knowles himself suggested: “...andragogy is simply another model of assumptions about adult learners to be used alongside the pedagogical model of assumptions, thereby providing two alternative models for testing out the assumptions as to their ‘fit’ with particular situations.” Furthermore, the models are probably most useful when seen not as dichotomous but rather as two ends of a spectrum , with a realistic assumption (about learners) in a given situation falling in between the two ends”⁵

DISTANCE EDUCATION

One influential medium employed for lifelong learning is “distance education” which today has evolved into a highly effective mode for conducting adult learning program. Unfortunately, some educators look down on such models equating them with the older “correspondence” courses. They advocate purely campus-based program and view distance education as a detriment to the value of learning. However, these concerns are often rooted in a lack of knowledge of the progress being made within distance education environments.

One of the advantages of today’s distance education model is that learning is organized around observable and measurable outcomes or learning objectives. There are very clear expectations for particular professional requirements in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes and the programs are designed to assist the learner in achieving the established outcomes. In fact, distance learning programs are designed to produce the same learning outcomes as their corresponding campus-based programs.

Another advantage, particularly for those engaged in ministry training programs, is that training is conducted for mature learners already engaged in the real world, avoiding the limitations of a traditional classroom setting. Even through my own vision of ACTS, God propelled me into a training model set within “real life” context. Although our programs are mostly conducted on campus, the work setting and outreach programs offer a practical dimension to their purely academic exercises.

Andragogical models seek to do just that - to instruct and train people within their own environment rather than drawing them away for long periods into unfamiliar academic sur-

roundings. Most adult learners cannot afford to be away from their work or service contexts for too long, and distance learning models can more expediently provide that necessary enrichment. However, this does not mean that we deny distance learners the opportunity to engage in campus style experiences for short periods of time.

Many distance education providers are well recognized for quality program deliveries and learner support, while also meeting the need for continuing education to equip the varied work force. As a whole, distance learning can be viewed as a refreshing alternative to the passive, mono-directional style of the traditional classroom, now replaced by the active, self-motivated style of distance learning.

Distance learners take on a greater responsibility for their own learning. Most adult learners have chosen their own courses of study with particular ends in mind. Programs are therefore designed for the adult learner, allowing the student to establish their own learning requirements. Courses are carefully produced with self-instructional materials and built-in assessment tools to enable self-directed learning. While we speak of self-directed learning, the learner is not left alone. Most distance education institutions provide the necessary support systems to offer a well rounded learning experience (i.e. online assistance, web conferencing/webinars, etc).

There are claims of quality and consistency from these same providers, as well as assurances that the same academic standards and requirements are applied to programs offered through distance learning programs as those on campus. But despite these boasts, one cannot conclude that distance education is always the best way of learning. What we must agree upon however, is that by catering more to the needs of adult learn-

ing and incorporating an andragogical style and inputs when necessary, we will ultimately produce a more motivated learner and more achievable learning outcomes.

Christian ministry institutions must not overlook the importance of distance education as well as their own campus based programs. Many of the students entering such institutions are adults but we often teach them as children. We follow pedagogical teacher-oriented methods, resulting in graduates who are ill-prepared for practical ministry. Instead, a good blend of training strategies need to combine campus and off-campus learning experiences, using traditional lecture methods as well as self-instructional learning materials. Even more importantly, we need to emphasize self assessment as much as institutional assessment tools. These will prepare our learners far more effectively for their life-long learning pursuits.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have been widely used and are greatly responsible for the rapid growth in various forms of computer mediated distance education, bringing opportunities for lifelong learning into many different countries. ICT is a term that includes any communication device or application - radio, television, telephones, computers, satellite systems etc. Today sophisticated learning tools are available over the internet, making learning more accessible to students around the world.

Although the internet or the World Wide Web is being increasingly employed today, ICT in more basic forms has been in use for several decades. Adult education has been accustomed to cassettes, video-cassettes, CD ROMS, DVDs and various other basic forms of audio-visual media. There has been

an exceptionally speedy evolution from an off-line, one-way communication of students responding to the available material, to the highly sophisticated on-line, two-way interactivity. Even basic use of e-mail and video-conferencing has revolutionized the potential of distance learning by minimizing the distance between the teacher and the learner. Today, with far more sophisticated ICT systems and effortless connectivity, the experience of a shared classroom is made possible through online connectivity.

We currently have unlimited opportunities to tap this potential with access to resources via the Internet and improved delivery mechanisms. There is worldwide access to resources, and even select universities and institutions have made their course material public. Geographic, as well as time boundaries, have been overcome and true democratization of education has occurred. "Universities without walls" and "virtual classrooms" are being now advertised.

However, we must not get carried away by all these advances and the reported success stories. The real impact of ICT and web-based programs is not as successful as being hyped by certain institutions. There are problems with connectivity, as well as cultural contexts that must be considered. There is the tendency to believe that a high quality presentation and efficient delivery will assure quality learning. This is far from the truth. Moreover, it is hard to capture everything that a classroom and a laboratory can offer for certain academic disciplines. As optimistic as we may be, one must proceed with caution in employing ICT media into universal educational deliveries.

On the other hand, we must avoid the tendency to place web-based learning in opposition to campus based education.

It is not an either/or challenge we face but an opportunity to skillfully employ both tools for effective education. Writing primarily for the developing world, I am convinced that ICT has gradually secured its position in our increasingly knowledge-based global context. There are numerous possibilities to enhance learning experiences even in technology-restricted countries and these new resources could be appropriately explored.

Strictly computer based, online or even offline program deliveries are to be discouraged and judicious use of all delivery methods is advised. If carefully utilized, we are able to overcome barriers and boost the learning process through computer mediated learning. CDs, VCDs, off-line discussion forums or on-line virtual classrooms can all be utilized as either primary or supplementary support depending on resource availability. Faculty members must creatively consider supporting their teaching schedules with all available ICT tools.

Ensuring lifelong learning opportunities is becoming critical as individuals need to continually update their skills in our knowledge based, global society. ICT is an inevitable part of globalization, allowing educational institutions to partner with those in less privileged contexts to thrust them into our newer, more global world of learning.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Since the 1960s, the concept of non-formal education has been a significant part of educational discussions, specifically as it relates to developing contexts. Attention has been drawn to the importance and potential of the kind of education, learning and training that takes place outside recognized educational institutions. Alongside UNESCO's move toward lifelong

education, the concepts of non-formal education and informal education as legitimate methods of educational engagement, particularly in teaching adults, began to emerge. Formal education was being considered far too hierarchically structured for education in certain sectors and while it may have been suitable for primary school through to university, alternatives were urgently needed.

The idea of non-formal education grew when educators were concerned about inappropriate curricula for emerging contexts and their needs. Formal education with its structured system was acceptable for regular schools and universities. In contrast, non-formal education which takes place outside of these formal institutions was more flexible. Most times non-formal education is used to refer to adult literacy and continuing education programs through innovative community based organizations.⁶

But what is non-formal education? The term non-formal would imply that it is not compulsory as governments often make regular schooling, and does not lead to a formal or even recognized certification. But even more, such education does not require institutionalized settings, elaborate buildings and sophisticated technologies. All it requires is the commitment and creativity of the teacher.

Take sub-Saharan Africa for example. High illiteracy rates, lack of skills among the adult population and an overburdened formal educational system provided a perfect opportunity for non-formal education. In some parts of this region, illiteracy rates were as high as eighty percent and enrollment in formal schools as low as twenty-one percent.

The sub-Saharan government advocated the use of non-formal education, as formal education was neither appropriate nor relevant to the needs of the learner population.

The 1970s are often viewed as the “decade of non-formal education”. It was in 1970 that Julius Nyerere launched a nationwide campaign to impart functional literacy in a campaign called “The Choice Is Yours”, where learners participated in decision-making and development. In 1973, another campaign was launched known as “Man Is Health”, spreading the importance of good health habits and hygiene. 1974 brought another campaign known as “Agriculture for Life”. Each of these movements emphasized reading, writing, and counting, and a message was sent that knowledge could immediately improve lives. The object was not merely to teach literacy, but to help adults find solutions to other problems such as hunger, ignorance, disease, and environmental issues.⁷

However, the eighties and nineties saw a decline in non-formal education as a means of addressing development needs. In Africa during the 1980s, heavier emphasis was laid on formal schooling. Even the World Bank had changed its focus. As most non-formal education initiatives were government sponsored and with the lack of concern by some decision makers and bureaucrats, there was a retreating back to formal schooling approaches.

But it would be incorrect to say that there has been a steady decline in the use of non-formal education. As we witnessed in the seventies, governments were involved in these initiatives and reports broadcasted far and wide, often inflating statistics to justify the use of available grants. Yet as funding and governmental backing decreased, NGOs have successfully taken up the task and are seeing phenomenal results. With the NGO

focus and commitment, along with channeled government funds, non-formal educational activity seems to be thriving.

Non-formal education still remains a crucial component of the development process. Formal education does not easily cope with the surrounding socio-economic changes and is normally bound by boards and preset syllabuses. In addition, the formal pedagogical communication tools brought by teachers are often impractical within the given context, while non-formal educators can readily adapt. The development process must not divorce itself from non-formal learning tools at the primary stages of education (for all ages), after which formal learning systems may gradually be introduced.

INTEGRATE AND EDUCATE

Education is for all and we live in a time when everyone has access to education in some form or the other. With communication systems advancing in leaps and bounds and barriers broken down there is no excuse for anyone to be out of reach. The non-formal and informal modes have the potential to build an incredible number of adult life long learners and this must be exploited.

Educators must integrate various modes of deliveries and design the kind of materials that will suit the varied “student” body of lifelong learners. If integrated learning attitudes are inculcated right from school and college, students are well prepared to assimilate advances in their fields of study even without going to any formal program to do so. This does not mean we discourage them from taking up formal study.

But the key is to prepare students to move in and out of formal or non-formal modes and to exploit all the available facilities for increased learning. The integrated environment

must bring together all forms of learning modes to help bring education to the variety of people in need in Asia and Africa.

FOOT NOTES

1. Learning: The Treasure Within. UNESCO report for Education for the 21st Century, published by the German UNESCO Commission. Neuwied; Kriftel; Berlin: Luchterhand, 1997.

2. (Nyerere, J. (1968) Freedom and Socialism. A Selection from Writings & Speeches, 1965-1967, Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press. This book includes The Arusha Declaration; Education for self-reliance; The varied paths to socialism; The purpose is man; and socialism and development. P 29, 30

3. In October 2006 the European Commission published the Communication on Adult Learning entitled "It's never too late to learn!"

4. Knowles, M. (1984). The Adult learner: A neglected species. Houston: Gulf Publishing.

5. Malcolm Knowles (1998). The adult learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development. Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing. Malcolm Knowles (1998). p 84

6. A very convincing case for non-formal education comes from Coombs, P. H. with Prosser, C. and Ahmed, M. (1973) "New Paths to Learning for Rural Children and Youth, New York, USA.")

7. Nyerere, J. K. (1973) Freedom and development: A selection from writings and speeches 1965-1973. Dar Es Salaam: Oxford University press.

LET'S REFLECT!

1. Reflect on UNESCO's four pillars of learning in the context of training people for service in the world.
2. What are the features of distance education system that will enhance integrated learning? How can the apparent disadvantages of an off-campus education be turned around to make distance education a viable option?
3. What steps could be taken to use of Information and Communication Technologies in both on-campus and off-campus education of our institutions? Are they necessary, viable and cost-effective in your context?

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusion

We have gleaned insights from Confucius, Dewey, Whitehead, Tagore, Freire, Nyerere, and Gandhi and attempted to discover the scope of integrated learning. The question now arises – How are they relevant and where do we go from here?

Confucius gave us the impetus to look as visionaries beyond our present predicament: the aim of education was for the good of all society. With such an impressive and far-reaching goal for education Confucius obviously had high expectations... and this was the transformation of society and the world. For Integrated learning this compels us to set our sights far ahead.

Goals and objectives have been used variedly in the instructional context, but when we speak of *vision* we look beyond. As Christian educators we certainly want to educate and train better individuals and most of us would not have a prob-

lem with education for a better world. In fact, we have a vision of God that takes our sight even further when we fervently pray "*Thy Kingdom come!*" But the greater issue is to complete the sentence in the Lord's Prayer - "*... in earth as it is in heaven.*" Integrated learning must show us how to set education within the context of our world so we prepare people for ministries within their worlds.

Dewey and Tagore gave some pointed lessons to assist us in making education an experience in life. Life is an array of rich and diverse experiences and integrated learning will help us hold them together in one big picture that is framed within real life. And even more, the *learner* has the joy of piecing this together. This is one of the hallmarks of integrated learning – it is learner centered. The teacher provides tools for the learner to employ in a lifelong adventure.

Curriculum must certainly change. The content of skills and knowledge we share with students must be integrated to the learner's real life experience. It is this that will make education a rich "social experience". Dewey said "Education is, not preparation for life; education is life itself." When education and life get integrated the possibilities are unpredictable. Learning in this sense becomes one's own possession which soon will turn into an unquenchable passion. And this passion will translate into very meaningful actions.

THE SEAMLESS COAT OF LEARNING

"The Seamless Coat of Learning", we saw, appropriately highlights Whitehead's view of the essential unity in all learning. His stress on the integration of knowledge and application sharply contrasts with educational practices that continue to demand academic exercises within isolated gyms. With more

and more specialization the student is thrown deep into particular fields of study that require no reason to perceive what is happening outside of his or her world.

Whitehead provided the richness of harmony and color to make learning a multicolored experience rather than a stagnant classroom event. The rhythm of education, as he put it, is a sequence of three stages - romance, precision, and mastery. The progression provides the scope to view education as a growing adventure in a wide world and not a singular pursuit oriented towards a termination with degrees and graduation. Integration must prepare the learner for an exploration of life in all its multifaceted challenges.

Rabindranath Tagore continued the sense of romance, in our discussion, and introduced the need for the integration of cultures. Writing at a time when anti-colonial voices were screaming out loud within British India, he sought to draw the best from everywhere. It was definitely his cultured upbringing that urged him to discover harmony within diversity. Integrated learning must prepare students with hearts and minds for this kind of an appreciation.

Economist Amartya Sen, himself an alumni of Tagore's Shantiniketan and a recent Nobel prize winner described the ease with which classroom discussions moved from Indian traditional literature to contemporary as well as classical Western thought, or China or Japan. Integration must challenge "cultural conservatism and separatism" or even the "elitism" in education that can so easily stifle the student's quest for of acquaintance of the real world rather than knowledge within his or her restricted field of study.

Moving towards some practical applications, Africa's Julius Nyerere provides the much needed challenge for Africa to pur-

sue education for self reliance. Inspired by Gandhi, his first task was to create a socialist society based on three principles: equality and respect for human dignity; sharing of the resources which are produced by the people; and work by everyone and exploitation by none. The end of the colonial rule in Africa brought a deep sense of confidence to those concerned that education could bring about socio-economic and political change towards such a society.

The developing world must have some clear vision of where it wants to go and in doing so educational models begin to integrate into this vision. Like Gandhi, Nyerere called for Education to be oriented to rural life. In a country like India with its growing enchantment for higher education one could easily forget this need which looms large even today. He advocated for productive work to become an integral part of the school curriculum and for educators to provide meaningful learning experiences through the integration of theory and practice.

The ACTS model in Bangalore, India has strived towards something similar over the past thirty years. The integration of "Work, worship and witness" that resulted from a vision from the book of Acts has begun to prove itself in the area of self-reliance. Self supporting servants selflessly serving will take education into needy areas and eventually bring about the transformation that God intends for the world.

LIFE-LONG LEARNING

It is in this context that we can appreciate the compelling concept of life-long learning. Once the taste for learning is truly acquired, the learner sets out to integrate his or her knowledge and skills into actual life. We learn to integrate into life

itself. When learning becomes an integral part of life, life seems empty without learning. The hunger for learning is something that needs to be inculcated into students who will otherwise hanker after other passions in life if not provided with opportunities for fulfillment.

Keeping up to date in knowledge and skills has become a requirement for almost all professionals in our world characterized by its phenomenal leaps in learning. Christian ministry training programs must also deliberately develop this desire within its students. The majority tend to leave seminaries or Bible colleges with the feeling that they have learned sufficiently. In fact, need I say that many are even waiting to leave as they have had enough! Life long learning skills come through properly integrated teaching programs and therefore providing tools for integrated learning becomes essential in our training programs.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) have been widely used and are greatly responsible for bringing opportunities for lifelong learning into the most remote parts of the world. Although the internet or the World Wide Web is being increasingly employed today, ICT in very basic forms could still be used to enhance the teacher's inputs within the classroom or on the field. There is need to exploit its positive potential rather than being threatened by the increasing negative influence of ICT today.

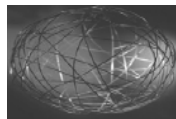
SOME REAL OUTCOMES

Education must impact life through some observable outcomes. Freire provides a framework for education that was designed for liberating the oppressed. He set theory within *praxis* - a term referring to the application of theory through

practice in order to bring about social change. Integration must evince such outcomes from education. The ills of society could be cured with deep rooted and long term solutions when the practice of education remedies itself.

Corruption and other social diseases, HIV and AIDS and a host of other ailments plaguing people must be addressed. Integrated programs can prepare men and women to connect academic knowledge to actual corrective actions. Such tools for integration must be intentionally nurtured right within training contexts.

Christian educators must proactively seek to utilize education to transform individuals as well as communities. We claim to know Jesus Christ – the way, the truth and the life. If truth is taught then its impact must be seen in transformation of life. The Word must come alive and this will be the beginning of integrated learning.



"Hear my teaching, O my people;
Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
I will open my mouth in a parable;
I will declare the mysteries of ancient times.
That which we have heard and known,
and what our forefathers have told us,
we will not hide from their children.
We will recount to generations to come
the praiseworthy deeds and the power of the Lord,
and the wonderful works He has done.
He gave His decrees to Jacob
and established a law for Israel,
which He commanded them to teach their children;
That the generations to come might know
and the children yet unborn'
that they in their turn might tell it to their children;
So that they might put their trust in God,
and not forget the deeds of God,
but keep His commandments;
And not be like their forefathers,
a stubborn and rebellious generation,
a generation whose heart was not steadfast,
and whose spirit was not faithful to God. "

Psalm 78:1-8

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