A HUMANISTIC APPROACH TO STUDY-SKILLS-WITH EMPHASIS ON THE INTANGIBLES: SELF-CONCEPT, THINKING, AND MOTIVATION

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A HUMANISTIC APPROACH TO STUDY SKILLS - WITH EMPHASIS ON THE INTANGIBLES: SELF-CONCEPT, THINKING, AND MOTIVATION

by

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Introduction

The concept of study skills is one that is much bandied about in both the formal literature of education and in process materials, books, articles, journals and so on that one comes upon as a teacher involved in educational endeavors. To one such educator specifically involved in the teaching of the educationally deprived - Special Education - for approximately the past decade, it has been both a point of fascination and wonderment to realize that this concept - study skills - which is so prevalent in discussions at teacher gatherings, university classes and in various writings is on closer examination an educational concept incomplete in at least one area of intent relating to the relationship of learner and learning or knowledge acquisition.

At the outset of this paper, several individuals made comments to the effect that there is presently so much written already on study skills and since everybody already knows exactly what they are and how to use them, then this paper may merely be an exercise in futility. However, one has but to walk into the various classrooms of our Province or indeed teach an educationally destimulated assemblage of students to realize the inconsistency of this belief.

If one can generalize from my search, one can readily see that what are held as accepted truths are quite likely in

reality a myth or misconception. At best many of these accepted truths are in fact basic 'assumptions' and as such are open to variants of interpretation both as to their actual effectiveness and desirability of intentions. Through my own experience and that of many teachers with whom this subject has been broached, it has come to light that a great number of teachers not only do not really know what a study skill is, or more fundamentally, how to teach one or all, but they do not know how a student actually achieves competence in the areas of study skills. Many teachers accept as fact the assumption that, apparently, through some beneficent force in schooling a student will, if he "really wants to", come upon the 'right' way to study. Yet, when questioned on this accepted belief, these same individuals will indicate that they do not actually, during class time, devote energy to the actual presentation or encouragement of what the student must actually engage in to acquire these said study skills. Experience has shown that these teachers however generally accept the belief that if the students are to really succeed academically then it is an absolute essential that they possess these study skills.

So, the question then begs to be asked, "How, when and where does a learner acquire these study skills as well as the necessary self-motivated drive to succeed coupled with an acceptance that this is a function necessary to his

intellectual growth, if the methods, approaches and philosophy necessary for their attainment are not presented and handled as 'essential' in his school framework?"

CHAPTER I

STUDY SKILLS

The Setting

> Knowledge is not simply the apprehension of the structure and operation of a ready-made world. Knowledge is the formulation by means of action and reaction of a process of which it is a part. No absolute divisions, distinctions or limits, internal or external, are part of the process without respect to knowledge, but process as known is process formulated and structured by the mind.[1]
>
> (Harold N. Lee, Percepts, Concepts, and Theoretic Knowledge, p. vii)

Benjamin Bloom, in his Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (p. 38) states:

> Although information or knowledge is recognized as an important outcome of education, very few teachers would be satisfied to regard this as the primary or role outcome of instruction. What is needed is some evidence that the students can do something with their knowledge, that is, that they can apply the information to new situations and problems. It is also expected that students will acquire generalized techniques for dealing with new problems and new materials.[2]

Thus, it is expected that when a student encounters a new problem or situation, he will select an appropriate technique for attacking it and will bring to bear the necessary information, both facts and principles. This has been labelled "critical thinking" by some, "reflective thinking" by Dewey and others, and "problem solving" by

still others. In the (Bloom's) taxonomy the term "intellectual abilities and skills" has been used. The most general operational definition of these abilities and skills is that the individual can find appropriate information and techniques in his previous experience to bring to bear on new problems and situations. This requires some analysis or understanding of the new situation; it requires a background of knowledge or methods which can be readily utilized; and it also requires some facility in discerning the appropriate relations between previous experiences and the new situation.

In the same general area of skills, Hilda Taba (in her magnum opus Curriculum Development, p. 225), asserts that "There are skills to be learned in connection with any area of competency. The objectives pertaining to skills, therefore, range from the basic academic skills, such as reading, writing and arithmetic to skills in democratic citizenship and group living."[3] Usually the objectives pertaining to skills are concentrated on the "three R's", which constitute the basis for academic study. In the minds of some persons these constitute the essentials, at least on the elementary level.

The skills necessary for independent and creative intellectual work - the ability to locate and evaluate information from sources other than textbooks and the processes of solving problems and analyzing data - have

received some emphasis. These skills are especially important in programs that have made a transition from "following the textbook" to assignments which require the use of multiple sources.

Emphasis on problem solving suggests a need for additional skills, such as the ability to define problems of investigation, to plan a method of inquiry, to assess discriminatingly the appropriateness and limitations of the sources for particular purposes and the ability to master simple research skills, such as tabulating and classifying information and experimenting with different ways of organizing and interpreting.

An especially neglected area of skills is the complex pertaining to the management of interpersonal relations and the conduct of groups.

It is from the thoughts of the great thinkers such as Benjamin Bloom and his contemporaries of the 1950's and 1960's that we have come to receive in education both input and momentum in the area of study skills, their implications, and the method of implementation. Since then, in education, great strides have been made in the actual use and modification of these self-same study skills.

Towards a Working Definition

Webster's Dictionary defines study as "... a process of acquiring by one's own efforts knowledge of a subject."

To accomplish this process a student is required to bring to bear on a problem all the skills which are appropriate to the solution of that problem. This act, however, is bounded by a basic assumption, since the term assumes that students already possess a basic competence in the reading and thinking skills requisite to the study task. However, based on experience and available literature, one cannot assume that students have competence in the disciplined and independent application of those skills which will result in the definition, analysis, resolution, and reaction or report on the problem. Students need guidance in the development of this competence in order to become successful students. It is the teachers' responsibility to develop this competence in their students.

But, what are 'these skills' or skill areas essential to the intellectual development of the students? The literature on the topic indicates that there are at least six basic learning skill areas:

A. Reading
B. Writing
C. Listening
D. Remembering
E. Note-taking
F. Test-taking[4]

These R.A. Carmen and W.R. Adams have termed "survival skills".[5] Yet Alice Meil would see us go even further than these six "survival skills",[6] when she states that,

> It may be useful...to think of ourselves as engaged in teaching skills for the purpose of developing students as individuals who have acquired both the disposition and the skills for obtaining knowledge on their own.[7]

Study skills are not merely something to teach, but may be viewed as a way to teach - a way of teaching which advances not only the student's knowledge of subject matter but his ability to learn subject matter independently and at will. This would lead to the aim of unifying knowledge learning with the skills of acquiring this knowledge.

Accordingly then, to acquire this unity another basic assumption must be postulated - here it is now assumed that the student at any given point in schooling possesses the ability to both read and think. Given that this may be the case, the skills required of these reading and thinking skills would fall into three major areas of competency:

A. Receptive area
B. Reflective area
C. Expressive area[8]

Briefly, here is each of these areas:

A. Receptive Area: Reading and thinking skills related to the receptive areas of competence in study are those required to perform what Donald D. Durrell calls the "....simple intake of ideas through reading"[9] and Nila Banton-Smith categorizes as, "patterns of writing in different subject areas".[10] This area involves the identification of main ideas and significant details as well as the exercise of judgment in discarding unrelated details.

It involves the exercise of various locational skills so that the desired information may be found in texts. The ability to read the many types of illustrative materials is also important, as too, is the ability to follow direction. There needs to be flexibility in the application of these skills to meet the requirements of the various sources of information to which a student may have to refer. The students must possess an awareness of the many sources of information at their disposal and appreciate the fact that these sources are tools for learning to which their skills must be applied.

B. Reflective Area: Guy L. Bond and Stanley B. Kegler suggest that:

> The student should be aware of the fact that the major outcome of reading is to understand and to react to the reading matter in light of the purpose for which it is being read. The heart of the process of study is the reaction to the details obtained through the reading. Only as students reflect upon what they read do they become personally involved in the ideas. Without the reflection process the details will remain as isolated bits of information with no fusion, focus or purpose. Applying the skills related to the reflection process; skills such as interference, interpretation, association, assumption, drawing conclusions and prediction; students will be able to formulate concepts by synthesizing the facts or details and by subsequently relating these concepts to form useful patterns of knowledge.[12]

* Neil Bolton views six correlates to concept formation:

1. Concepts are the expressions of the ways in which experience has become organized.

2. All concepts are the result of particular instances becoming general by being treated as examples of a type of rule; further, language stabilizes these general meanings in the process of social interaction.

3. Concepts are the result of acts of co-ordination. The existence of a rule of relation signifies that the elements subsumed by a concept are ordered by the same relation.

4. From the point of view of the subject, a concept is a disposition to organize events in a certain way and it implies the expectation that it is capable of being applied to fresh instances. In this sense, a concept is essentially a prediction.

5. Since a concept is a result of the application of a rule to particular elements, this can only mean that to study concept formation is to study the emerging correlation between such acts and the stimulus conditions to which they are related.

6. A concept may be defined, then, as a stable organization in the experience of reality which is achieved through utilization of rules of relation and to which can be given a name.

Concept Formation, Neil Bolton: Pergamon Press, New York, 1979, pp. 21-23.

C. Expressive Area: Knowledge accumulated for its own sake has little value. If the process of study were limited to the receptive and reflective areas alone, it would have little value except for enlarging the student's own store of knowledge. This third area of skills required for competence in study supplies the purpose and fulfillment for this study. Skills in the expressive area are those which help students to organize the knowledge gained through exercise of the receptive and reflective skills. Further, students use these expressive skills to apply this knowledge in a well ordered and practical fashion, giving evidence that the knowledge that they have gained is useful and worthwhile.

According to H.L. Herber then, study skills are those reading and thinking skills which are

> drawn from the three areas of competence and applied in various combinations to specific study tasks according to prescribed purposes as well as the variables of subject matter, grade level and student ability and achievement.[12]

But, schools do not exist for the sole purpose of preparing people for work in education, industry, hospitals and so on. There is now a much greater need for people educated or trained not only to perform their professional duties, but able also to pose and solve such questions as, How should this be done and done better than before? To become such a person more than training alone is needed.

There must be an accompanying dislike of incompetence and an alertness or appreciation of efficiency. Such awareness serves to speed up the process and is in itself an invaluable feature of any community. Thus, a knowledge of the principles of a rational technique of studying will be found to be most profitable when it is regarded as an additional means of cultivating a creative attitude to efficient action and not simply as a set of procedural instructions. As Z. Pietrasinski states:

> One must learn to appreciate things of apparently trifling importance and set oneself the goal of always working with maximum efficiency, i.e., to achieve maximum effect with the least effort. Such is the truly creative attitude to work, study or indeed to work in general.[13] *

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* We define creative attitude toward work as the showing of initiative, partly or wholly independently, in the elaboration and introduction of improvement in methods and products. The most simple example may be perception of the possibilities of some specific improvement with proposals for its realization..... The fullest expression of a creative attitude toward work, in contrast to dead routine, is the perception and formulation of work problems and their simultaneous solution. A creative attitude then can lead to valuable and original results and a higher level of occupational knowledge. As well, "The educational program in many countries consists in teaching to all pupils subjects which can be of real value only to a minority of them, whereas it would be much more advantageous to cultivate their creative ability."

The Art of Learning. Z. Pietrasinski, pp. 109-110.

The General Application

Here, now, let us deal directly with the major implication of the concept, study skills. Study skills implies first and foremost the idea that what one is to deal with here is the skill or the ability to study. Studying then is central to our comprehension of the concept study skills. Here studying takes on the mantle of self-directed learning. It is not accidental, but rather it is internally controlled by the learner. It is a series of practicable skills that one combines to grasp a given piece or material - whether this material be in any subject area or related to any subject area. Joan Morris, in her work at the Guidance Centre at the University of Toronto has come up with the following general ideas concerning studying:

A. Studying by whole is often more effective than studying by parts.

B. Studying must be done with the INTENT to learn something.

C. Studying must be done with understanding.

D. One must find one's own best method, place and time to study.

E. One must learn to actively concentrate.

F. Break your study period occasionally in order to test yourself and see how well you are doing.

G. Make effective use of your study time; do not spend it all on one subject exclusive of others.[14]

As noted in Brammar and Brammar's How to Study Successfully, "Studying is an active, thinking process of observing, comparing, criticizing, discriminating, questioning and synthesizing."[15] This studying, then, being self-directed, is a deliberate action on the part of the individual and as such allows one the choice of ways or methods in how to proceed. How is one going to study? Are there acceptable and non-acceptable methods? Efficient and non-productive methods? And so on. Thus, this concept of study skills includes much more than meets the casual eye. Let us look at some possible areas of involvement in study skills: to borrow from Walter Pauk in How to Study in College, the following headings:

A. The Academic Setting
B. The Supportive Skills
C. The Basic On-going Skills
D. The Academic Skills[16]

and add to it

E. Planning of Studies
F. Habit Formation
G. Intangibles[17]

We may, as we progress, use these major headings as umbrellas to cover all those that are to follow.

The Academic Setting:

A. Understanding why you are where you are. What is your purpose?
B. Maintaining an emotional balance
C. The classroom setting

The Supportive Skills:

A. The ability to concentrate
B. Forgetting
C. Memory
D. Listening

The Basic Skills:

A. Listening
B. Vocabulary building
C. Improving reading and comprehension

The Academic Skills:

A. Note taking
B. Textbooks
C. Papers
D. How to study for exams
E. Objectivity
F. Consistency
G. Clear cut rules (appropriate)
H. Library
I. Writing
J. Reading

Planning of Studies (Scheduling):

A. Time
B. Place
C. Reading

Habit Formation:

A. Plateauing
B. Habit vs. skill
C. Time
D. Self-image

As an entity study skills must have a finite sense. It is this finite sense that often presents trouble to students trying to master the schooling process. A fine point of starting for somewhat mature high school students is to know just where they wish to concentrate their studying energy. Such a device is a Study Habits Checklist. This following checklist will serve as a starting point and may easily be enlarged or reduced as the need of each individual is perceived. Also, this checklist may be modified and presented to much younger students as an early step to mastery of study skills.

I shall use a rating scale of Rarely, Sometimes or Usually to give a very quick and somewhat comprehensive picture of where one's areas of concentration lie.

General Headings:	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
1. Health Habits which affect studying			
2. Time Scheduling			
3. Note-Taking			
4. Classroom Activities			
5. Studying an Assignment			
6. Examinations			
7. Study Habits related to reading			
8. Habits of Concentration			

(This checklist comes from How to Study Successfully, Brammar/Brammar, pp. 4-13.)[18]

Realistically as a base on which to start, a student should become aware of the necessity of utilizing to maximum effectiveness the use of Time for Scheduling. Students must be more than encouraged to plan time wisely; they must be given instructions in how to do just this. This may tangent itself into the discovery of the efficiency of organization and a consequent increase in applied ability. Students should be presented with ideas for effective time planning which may encompass ideas such as:

A. A weekly home-study schedule based on the weekly class schedule.

B. A longer term (1 month, 1 semester, etc.) study schedule.

C. Built-in revision periods in the schedule.

D. Practise use of the schedule.

These and many other ideas may form a flexible starting point from which the student may advance. Coupled with this starting point should come the realization of the importance of note-taking.

Note-taking as an ability must be learned and practised if it is to be used effectively. Therefore time in the school process must be used to achieve this skill development. Especially important are the notes since accurate and complete notes facilitate preparation for all examinations and will serve as guides for subsequent endeavors in the same area, as well as serving as good

training in the continuing skill development of note-taking. The following general points may help to improve the technique of note-taking.

A. Use a large notebook with plenty of paper.

B. Get set as soon as the class commences.

C. Listen for the main points - and try to learn the cues that the teacher invariably gives off to indicate importance of certain 'main' points or ideas.

D. Write notes in a systematic order: create major headings for main points and subheadings for its discussion or presentation. You may have to reorganize the teacher's class presentation to facilitate your learning. This organizing feature may become a most important skill that when mastered will differentiate between efficient and inefficient learning.

E. Space your notes: let the ideas stand out. Use different colors if you wish, but make the ideas jump off the paper at you. This will also provide space in which to add additional information during your studying of these notes.

F. Go over and rework your notes at the end of the day.

G. Try to become aware of whether your notes or your note-taking ability are slipping as time progresses. (Keep checking on yourself, as you are the only judge of how well you really are trying.)

H. Always use your notes as review, especially before exams and periodic reviews in the class.[19]

Brammar/Brammar, pp. 29-30

But to facilitate this note-taking skill a most important ingredient must at all times be present, that of 'active listening' with the subsequent skills of listening and concentration. These, of course, should be developed and encouraged from the earliest of time in the student's life. These skills, however, must be coupled with another most important skill area -- Reading Skills. These reading skills take on great prominence when one realizes that it is quite probably the greatest fallacy of the foundation on which study skills are built that the student 'can' and 'does' possess the ability to read not only words but rather can read both comprehensively and interpretively. As Brammar and Brammar state

> reading is more than a mere mechanical or word-recognition process. It requires not only the recognition of main ideas and supporting details, but also the organization of ideas followed by deliberate reflection on what has been read. Thus, reading becomes another aspect of thinking. (p. 50)[20]

This then leads us back to the overall headings of H.H. Herber of the three areas of thinking and reading - receptive, reflective and expressive.

At this juncture, however, one must stop and at least briefly discourse on one of the foundational concepts espoused so far in this writing. The term assume-assumption has been used on various occasions to date and as such it logically demands a reckoning as to the ramifications of its use of intent.

Here I am referring to the basic assumptions, or concepts or attitudes about education and students which are so deeply ingrained in each of us as part of our culture, that they are taken for granted and used unquestioningly. (They were developed in earlier times in response to needs now outgrown, but because they are not amenable to evaluation in the light of changed conditions they form a barrier to change of behavior in response to current needs.)

Each of us needs to become aware of his basic assumptions so that he can evaluate their contribution to his behavior or adopt alternatives if necessary. Though it is possible to consider assumptions as is of stable units, they are in practice closely related to each other and mutually supporting. Any one person's assumptions together form a tangled, coherent network which is the basis of his personal style of thinking and behavior. Change in one assumption may affect and indeed require, change in others. Within a person's own frame of reference, the relationships between his behavior and assumptions are logical, and however ineffective his behavior may be, it does not change unless the relevant assumptions are changed.

The idea is still prevalent that the pupil is an empty jar waiting to be filled, an 'innocent'. This empty jar concept was useful in the early days of universal education but recent studies of child development,

especially those of Piaget give us a different picture from that of the empty jar. Piaget perceives of a mind that, at whatever level of development and however ignorant of the substance of what is to be taught, is already furnished with ideas or concepts or attitudes, some of which may stand in the way of responding to new knowledge in a simple open receptive way. The learner is not a passive receptable, but always has to undertake considerable work to rearrange the furniture of the mind to accommodate new material; the difficulties are idiosyncratic and not easily understood. The following quotation from R.D. Laings' Knots seems to aptly express the consequent difficulties of communication and understanding:

> I don't know what it is I don't know,
> and yet am supposed to know,
> and I feel I look stupid
> if I seem both not to know it
> and not to know what it is I don't know
> Therefore I pretend to know it.
>
> This is nerve-racking
> since I don't know what I must pretend to know.
> Therefore I pretend to know everything.
>
> You may know what I don't know, but not
> that I don't know it,
> and I can't tell you. So you will have to
> tell me everything.[21]

In human communication the message received may be very different from that intended by the sender. This can be doubly so if an assumption as to ability, interest, clarity of message, ability and so on to seeming infinity, is made regarding any of the sender, receiver, or message.

of this strategy. The acronym SQ3R represents the 4 steps in the method:

> S for Survey - read topic headings and summary, Q for Question - turn topic headings into questions, R for Read to answer the questions, R for Recite - try to recall the answers to the questions without looking back at the text, and R for Review - check back in the text to clarify the answers you may have missed or are confused about.[23]

Over the years critics of the SQ3R method have held as a major criticism the fact that it has not been researched as a total method, even though there is ample research to support each of the separate steps. But, for any fearful student faced with a long, difficult text to read the SQ3R method provides at least a technique for getting started. However, this point seems to be often overlooked.

Other strategies that may be of use to students in the area of study skills are found in Hanna's book, The Study Game: How to Play and Win with Statement-Pie (1972) which is widely used in study skills courses in health-science programs. This strategy combines cartoons, gamesmanship and full page 'rest periods' with a method for studying textbooks and taking notes that requires students to engage in hard thinking and questioning. Her book presents a challenging reading method in a context designed both to interest and relax students. Statement-Pie requires students to identify the statement in a text or

The learner does not necessarily learn what the teacher aimed to teach and conversely the teacher may not teach what the student wished to learn.

Strategies: Manuals and Materials

Many study methods identified by acronyms are described in the manuals and materials used in study skills programs or approaches. Each represents someone's interpretation of the basic laws of learning expressed in a formula. As an example, here are two methods designed to improve students' listening and note-taking ability/skills:

A. The 5 R's - Record meaningful facts/ideas; Reduce by summarizing, clarifying and reinforcing; Recite by covering the notes and recalling aloud; Reflect by thinking about meaningful categories; Review by going over your notes regularly.

B. Wreck - wonder; approach note-taking from a curious frame of mind; Record by writing down as much of what the teacher says as possible, except the repetitions and digressions; Edit as soon as possible, condensing notes in a separate notebook; Correlate by comparing your condensed notes with notes and information from the texts; Keep and review your notes periodically to ensure retention.[22]

The textbook-reading method taught most widely in study skills programs is the SQ3R method, developed by Frank Robinson of Ohio State University. Nearly all study skills books published since the 1940's suggest that students use SQ3R or at least present some modification

lecture and separate it from the PIE, which means classifying ideas into Proof, Information and Examples.

When applying these strategies instructors/teachers have traditionally made use of peers as study skills counselors to help other students master these methods. Study skills programs have historically accepted student aides and trained them as peer counselors both because students respond well to peer helpers and since those who have completed the skills program themselves provide a convenient and motivated pool to help those others who need help.

Articles by Jackson and Van Zoost (1974),[25] Johnson-Davidson and McCarthy (1977),[26] Newman (1971),[27] Ross (1972)[28] and Yuthas (1971)[29] describe typical programs that use peer counselors, while Adams and Stevenson (1976)[30] present guidelines for planning, implementing and evaluating peer counseling programs.

Another study strategy is presented in Davidson's 4 T's: Teacher/You, Test, Talk and Test - A Systematic Approach to Learning Success (1977).[31] In it she points out that most study methods are single techniques that the student applies to all textbooks, whereas her approach stresses helping each student build a personal system consistent with his special needs and skills and decide how much effort and time he needs to spend studying for each course and whether he needs to develop new skills. Once a

student has set up a system for evaluating the teachers' demands; analyzing his own skills, needs and time, and implementing a study plan, he presumably will be able to adapt the plan to his courses in subsequent terms. This, of course, is essentially a task-analysis approach in which students analyze the skills required by the teachers' assignments and methods.

Aside from the previously noted strategies another technique has found great prominence in methods to improve students' study skills. This technique is that of Behavior Modification.

Behavior modification techniques, from their inception, have been analyzed as to their utilization ability for students in the area of study skills. Groveman and others (1975),[32] reviewing the literature on self-control approaches to improving study behavior, suggest that study skills programs include structured group counseling, self-monitoring, progressive relaxation, self-instruction and self-reinforcement. The goal of the structured group program is to teach students how to use behavior modification techniques to control their own study behavior. In self-monitoring the student records the target behavior - shall we say, the number of minutes he spends studying literature each day - over a prescribed length of time - a day - and tries to increase his time per day over the period of a week. In progressive relaxation, tense individuals learn relaxation/desensitization

techniques along with effective study skills methods which would seem more effective as a combination than relaxation or study skills training alone. Stimulus-control methods encourage students to improve concentration by conditioning themselves to study for longer periods. For example, students can be asked to find a comfortable place to study each day and to record the number of minutes they spend actually concentrating. If they find themselves daydreaming they are to get up and leave. At first students may find that they are able to concentrate for only very short spans of time, but gradually students should be able to condition themselves to concentrate on study for longer periods of time.

Generally, however, there are hundreds of study skills books and materials on the market ranging from very effective and applicable to students needs to multimedia, activity based, self-instructional programs such as Christ and Adams, 'You Can Learn to Learn' (1978).[33] Most, however, are directed at the college student and must be reinterpreted in light of the present needs of our school-age learners. But, there are, on the market, books to meet almost any need and learning style and a quick glance at some of the titles suggests the range of styles and methods available.

Also, in self-instructional methods, students are trained to say positive things to themselves such as 'I

know that if I study hard I can improve my marks, so I'd better get started', and thus help eliminate negative thoughts. Another method called "self-reinforcement" requires students to select a reward for completing a study goal. Wark (1967)[34] and Wark and Johnson (1969)[35] report case studies in which self-reinforcement techniques were used.

Finally, Appleton (1967)[36] suggests that study problems and difficulties in concentration stem from the need to turn away from pleasurable activities and study alone. He postulates that denial affect is required at exam time in order to study and that other defense mechanisms such as isolation and intellectualization are useful for sustained concentration. He notes that one way students have found to augment sensory input as well as providing companionship is the study date. But for most students, the lonely arduous task of studying demands both high motivation and the elimination of such distractions as socializing.

It is this concept, this high motivation, which now demands an audience and present attention. So, from here we now move away from the physical aspects of study skills, the terms, the techniques, methods and strategies into one of a fixed density.

This area I have termed 'The Intangibles'.

Notes

[1]Lee, Harold N. Percepts, Concepts and Theoretic Knowledge, p. vii.

[2]Bloom, Benjamin. Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, p. 38.

[3]Taba, Hilda. Curriculum Development, p. 225.

[4]Herber, H.L. Developing Study Skills in the Secondary Schools.

[5]Carman, R.A., and Adams, W.R. Study Skills. A student guide for survival; John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1972, p. vii.

[6]Ibid., op. cit.

[7]Meil, Alice. How to make a student, The Reading Teacher, xv, September 1961, No. 8.

[8]Herber, H.L., op. cit., p. 27.

[9]Durrell, D.D., Improving Reading Instruction, World Book Company, New York, 1956.

[10]Banton-Smith, Nila. Patterns of writing in different subject areas. Journal of Reading, viii, October, 1964, No. 31.

[11]Bond, G.L. and Kegler, S.B. Reading in Senior High School, in Development In and Through Reading, Ch. XVIII, 60th Yearbook of the National Society for the study of Education, Part I, Chicago Press, 1961.

[12]Herber, H.L., op. cit., p. 5.

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Transition: Part I to Part II

From experience over the past decade, from my fellow teachers, from the literature reflecting the hopefulness, implementation and the non-applicability resultant from our present approach to study skills and learning in general as well as, most importantly, contact over the past decade with 'slow-learners', it has come to light that there is still something missing from the area of study skills and study skills application. As well there appears to be something lacking from our approach as specific to these skills implementation in our educational endeavor.

This 'something missing' then is the topic to which this section of the paper is directed.[5] This direction is not to be taken as a panacea for all the ills afflicting us in education, but rather presented more as a questioning thought to provoke an idea that there may still be ways of viewing that have not as yet been entrenched or educationally accepted which may be more appropriate to our learners of today.

Consequently, this paper accepts the concept of study skills as they are, has defined and restated them as they appear in the literature and shall now attempt to deal with a new categorical approach entitled 'The Humanistic Approach' which shall incorporate into itself a section called 'the Intangibles'. This section shall form the basis for this new approach as well as provide some insight into the need

for such a novel approach. A presentation of this basic humanistic approach shall also be presented which has as its key element a repositioning of the individual learner to that of being the absolute center of this process called education. This novel approach, The Humanistic Approach to Education will encompass all three areas listed under the Intangibles: A. Self-concept, B. Motivation, C. Thinking.

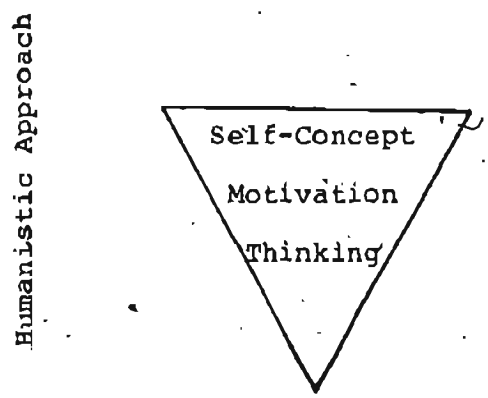
Historically, study skills have generally encompassed certain definitively clear cut aspects or components as has been stated previously. But, with our knowledge explosion of the past few decades there has been presented to our society many new and divergent approaches to knowledge acquisition and knowledge generation that many traditional approaches, which are still embodied in our school systems, seem unable or perhaps unwilling to explore and maintain as new levels of consciousness. These new approaches may allow and even encourage learners to effectively deal with this great knowledge explosion of our time. Present methods and approaches to study, study skills and general knowledge acquisition are such that they do not allow for the catering to or the maximizing of the potentialities of each learner.

Something of great moment appears to be missing! This is especially so when one realizes that given the present standard of knowledge acquisition techniques that today's educators have at their disposal, coupled with the knowledgeable strides that have been achieved in the

consciousness of the public as to the 'need' to learn, then one is left with the very nagging question of, "Why do so many of our learners develop into such poor academic achievers?" The problem that this question implies may have at its root a misplaced or missing attitudinal component or approach to the area of study skills as is presently embodied in our educational approaches today. It is this possibly missing attitudinal component that I have termed The Intangibles.

This area of 'The Intangibles' consists specifically of three basic sub-headings, all encompassed in one pervasive intellectual approach to both learners and education, that of humanism or more appropriately a Humanistic Approach to Learners.

In diagram form then, this is how the approach is envisioned:



This concept is such that all three sub-headings or categories are locked together in a reverse triangular relationship in that the most important element, the ability to think - which has a basis in the very questioning nature of children - has to be relearned as a learner progresses through his schooling. A careful scrutiny of our educational system indicates that in schooling the young learner, who comes to education at such a tender age, already possesses a most natural inquisitiveness which after but a very brief period of years in school seems to atrophy and disappear. Why is this so? The answers, unfortunately, are as multitudinous as there are learners and educators. However, it is the contention of this writer that in large measure it is due to this missing element or the 'missing intangibles' to which this section of the paper is directed.

This reversal form of the triangular configuration of the three sub-headings, self-concept, motivation and thinking is in itself an example of the problem-solving approach which seems to be another missing component in learning and learner study skills. Indeed, to view any one sub-heading the others must be considered and to be able to even consider either one as embodying something that is lacking in their (our) specific intentional definition, then one must of necessity be able to view the learner in a manner somewhat divergent from the generally accepted manner in which today's school and specifically,

today's learners are viewed. This new viewing of the learner, coupled with this approach of humanism is merely a renewal or return to the idea of our early Greek influences which viewed the learner as the essential element in knowledge acquisition.

This view or approach - the Humanistic view - is definitely not new, but in light of our accomplishments in the psychology of thinking (cognition) behavior or in general social psychology coupled with all the inroads and insights achieved in our viewing of human nature afforded us from all the social sciences and education, we may now be better able as educators to realistically approach the learner as a unique individual. Consequent to this may be one more method to help each child toward an education that will prepare him to live life in our time to the ultimate levels of his physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

CHAPTER II

THE INTANGIBLES

A. Self-Concept

This section of the paper shall deal with the three components entitled the 'Intangibles', Self-Concept, Motivation and Thinking. These are topics about which schools show little concern or relegate them to the grey areas of 'they belong to the student' or 'they are his/her ultimate responsibility'. This can be accepted as being true enough, but the student as such must be presented with both the opportunity and the wherewithal to be able to handle these applicable concepts.

As a point of reference, the starting point shall be a developmental definition of intelligence:

> Intelligence is the ability to understand ideas and to utilize symbols in the solution of intellectual problems. This ability is a function of the total personality and is interwoven with and interdependent upon other parts of the personality. It is affected by present feelings and motives, past experiences, and environmental background and culture.[1]

One can readily see that intelligence is not a thing on its own but is an element of the total person and is consequently dependent for its optimum functioning upon the well-being of the whole person. This consists of all three aspects of the person; mental, physical and social. Intelligence is not a single element that functions in momentary isolation apart

from all the elements that constitute the total person, including all past learning experiences.

It is this aspect of intelligence, the belief that it can be separated from the whole person, that seems to be pervasive as a functioning belief in many schools today. What does this suggest for us? Basically, intelligence is treated as an isolated element, and yet present knowledge would have us not view it in this manner, then indeed we may be able to see a root to the problems facing our learners. Given that this may be so, then a logical off shoot would be - How then is the individual viewed and treated? Sadly, the ideas of the learner as a self-generating entity possessing a self-concept is also often relegated to the sphere of 'things that belong in university classes.'

Yet, self-concept is just that, a concept of the self and is viewed as an integral aspect of the individual's growth potential by many psychologists and educationists. The self-concept is the screen through which a person views his experiences and interprets and evaluates them. It is not a fixed entity but is one that through the student's life becomes influenced both in a positive and negative manner. The positive experiences that a learner encounters can bolster it, while negative experiences can just as easily hinder it. Thus our self-concept is simply the way in which we see and feel about ourselves.

It is this viewing and seeing of ourselves that is both the hope for development in learners and at the same time one of the major areas where learned disfunctioning is occurring. For it is here in this area of how the learner views himself that a strong influence is exerted on methods of acquisition of knowledge. From How to Study Successfully:

> A personal problem that plagues many students with study difficulties is a feeling of inferiority or inadequacy. Such students see themselves as dull, lazy or poor students. No wonder they study poorly, since it is a common psychological principle that people tend to act as they feel and as they picture themselves.[2]

Is the learner to be treated as subject or object? The more the learner experiences in subject terms the more his view of himself and of the world will seem as potentially valid as that of anyone else. While he will naturally react to the world around him, the realization of the capability of modifying those reactions which are unpleasant is present and he is then able to exert some measure of influence on the world. Conversely, the more he experiences himself in an object sense, the more he begins to perceive himself from the outside and a process begins of defining himself in terms of how others see him and (possibly more importantly) in terms of his meaning for them. The problem here is simply that the person, as he experiences less and less contact with his subject side, begins to view himself

as an object who is acted upon and done to. Conceivably then, it is but a very short step to viewing himself as having an essence that is fixed and that has been primarily created and determined by external forces. E. Keen describes this self-as-subject, self-as-object in this way:

> The experience of <u>what</u> I am is at times dwarfed by the experience <u>that</u> I am. This is a second, entirely new sort of self-experience. Rather than viewing myself as an object of my self conscious scrutiny, I am now living the part of a Viewer, the subject of the act, 'I-see-me.' The 'I' experience does not contain attributes, characteristics and traits, as the 'me' experience does. Rather than being experienced as a fixed entity, the 'I' is experienced as a dynamic, open-ended activity without the stability of the me-as-object, i.e., without an essence. The 'I' is pure existence, noteworthy because it <u>is</u>, not because it is <u>such and such</u>.[3]

Further, according to humanistic personality theorist Gordon Allport:

> ....Human beings have an essential core or being that integrates their seemingly isolated traits into a unique, patterned whole which gives each of them their own, never-to-be repeated character. ...In this holistic conception, none of our outstanding characteristics or traits (including intelligence) can be isolated from any other because they are dynamically interrelated. To leave out the central organizer, core, or 'self-concept' is to leave human beings fragmented and hollow.[4]

Unfortunately though, this has been and continues to be the case. If we could stop both ignoring the need for a frontal assault on the problems facing the learner and dealing individually and comprehensively with this area of

the learner's realm - the self-image, then may we well be able to view a change in learning situations and knowledge attainment that we so badly strive for. As Liam Hudson so bluntly states:

> It is on our own areas of smugness and conceptual laziness that we would be wise to dwell.... Among these, I strongly suspect, is the assumption that as parents or teachers, the use of moral rather than factual categories should be taboo. To treat the child in terms of the external causes that play upon him is half-way to envisaging him as a cog, and to treat him as a cog is more than half-way towards ceasing to care in any profound or personal way about him.[5]

And if we as educators forfeit this caring for the individual, what then are we saying to the learner if not, "you as an active individual entity are not really that important, you are just a cog"?[6] Do we not then affect the learner's self-image? Must we not ultimately take major responsibility for the resultant effect on the learner? Again in the words of Hudson,

> To see the individual as passive - either as the victim of events that lie outside himself, or as a mere knot of sensations - we strip the individual of his special status as an agent: someone who makes sense of himself and the world around him, and then acts in the light of the sense he makes.

This overlooked area of teacher-school-learner interaction is one wherein "personal knowledge"[8] could most conceivably be made, but not with great input of monies, materials and resources. This "personal knowledge"[9] could

be simply accomplished by a straightforward act on the part of educators. This act would be a reassessment of their role and relationship to the learner and not to any external criteria. This act would be of itself a 're-evaluation of priorities'.

We cannot alter the past, but we may have a most profound effect on the future. (This work situation shall be dealt with in Part III, A Humanistic Approach to Education.) However, for the time being, the actuality is that the first step in our dealings with young learners is to accept a conscious regard for one aspect of the individual learner, his self-image. We must begin with the desire to help in the formation of self-actualizing, free thinking individuals capable of making decisions, while giving them the strength and encouragement to live with the consequences. To quote Eric Klinger:

> Insofar as one wishes to create individuals with the largest possible sphere of inner freedom, the way to do is to teach people quite explicitly the techniques they might use to free themselves. Such education would acquaint them with the widest possible array of human possibilities, train them in the capacity to analyze and to think through the consequences of their value choices and teach them to teach themselves the skills for goal-striving that they may need later but cannot anticipate now.[10]

The right to choose must belong to the individual - it is his right not only to be right but also to be wrong. As long as they - the learners - have some control over their own destinies, then freedom can prevail.

To attain freedom, one must of necessity be able to choose. But to choose one must have the skill of knowing the hows and whats. To acquire <u>any</u> skill requires practice, and it is here where the school must present to the learner the opportunity to make choices and to help the learner reflect on choices, methods and consequences of choices as well as how to assess before acting.

Behavior or action which forces others into inferior positions and portrays these conditions as unalterable and natural is characterized by individual psychologists as "authority". The effect of authority is to add to feelings of inferiority and feelings of subjugation. That alone would be enough to prove the harmfulness of authoritarian attitudes.[11] These feelings of inferiority in situations wherein one finds oneself daily can have but one possible outcome: a reduction in positive self-image and a rise in a negative one with its inherent negative consequences. Imagine, over great periods of schooling, what devastating effects this must have on learners who through the various acts of casuality, socio-economic status, parent neglect, teacher preference, teacher prejudice, medical disability, physique and so on - start out by being considered and treated as 'not quite up to par'. As time reinforces this aspect of their life, how can they but grow more negative?

Fortunately a humanistic approach does allow both the learner and the educator to escape from the bind of this

insipid dehumanism which is all too frequent in schooling. We must ourselves give to others - the learners - what we would most wish for ourselves: the ability to freely think and act, to choose.

In 1940, Dr. Kurt Goldstein (in Human Nature), in the light of psychopathology, concluded that one's very basic human motivation is directed toward unity and wholeness. A similar idea was embodied in the work of such other phenomenologically and humanistically oriented personality theorists as Gordon Allport, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers:

> These theorists saw the strivings for unity first emphasized by Goldstein as embodying a search for what they at times called "self-actualization" - self-actualization being a process wherein individuals attempt to realize some of their unfulfilled potential, to be something more than they presently are, and in so doing become more complete.[12]

This of course leads us to the realization that humanism has at its base two central themes which can become guides for us, the educators, who wish to move outside the present view of education and more into the arena that views the learner as an essential entity. These two basic themes are:

A. man's essential wholeness

B. his/her unfulfilled potential.

It is this unfulfilled potential that should most concern us and not Liam Hudson's "cog" mentality. We must do much more than merely realize that the learner is unique and that his self-image is an essential aspect of schooling and learning. To deal responsibly with the learner we must

live this respect for the individual.

As a first step, an awareness of the essentiality of the self-concept as an active functioning aspect that should not be stricken from the learner is necessary. But it must be dynamically encouraged as a most important first step in a positive manner towards the learner attaining a more complete conceptualization of understanding and learning. For

> thinking and self-creating are inseparable .... Human freedom involves our capacity to pause between stimulus and response and, in that pause to choose the one response toward which we wish to throw our weight. The capacity to create ourselves, based upon this freedom, is inseparable from consciousness or self-awareness.[13]

It appears that it is here in the area of the self-concept of the individual that we as educators must put our emphasis, coupled with a desire to help the learner gain Polanyi's "personal knowledge" - the idea that knowledge is not something external to oneself but something to be absorbed and incorporated into one's own world view. As the following statement indicates,

> We may someday discover the one right and universal way of presenting the world so as to guarantee comprehension, retention, and the power of generalization to new instances, but until that day teachers are going to have to improvise, diagnose, analyze, and intuit to find new ways to open each individual's senses and understanding to the marvels of reality. Since adult understanding is far from perfect, we also have to bear in mind that sometimes the children's discoveries and insights will outrun our own, and we have to be prepared to listen carefully and to learn from the children themselves.[14]

We must ourselves become learners. We must learn from the children, for who better is there to teach us, we who are the most receptive to the ideas of learning, we who spend our lives dealing with understanding, we who live the theories of learning?

If we become receptive, ourselves; if we tune our abilities to perceive, if we live our life as we would have our learners do, can they not but be influenced in like manner? The contention is, that to respect fully the learner's self-concept we must firstly revalue or even revisit our own. Should our own be lacking, how can we give positiveness to those of our learners? We who are ultimately responsible for so much life and learning of the learners must be prepared to interact and guide, and how can we, if we ourselves are rigid, structured and bound by our past indoctrinations?

To teach others one must first become a learner, capable of the insights necessary to perceive not only ourselves but the uniqueness of our situation in all its ramifications. We can help create, but we can just as assuredly and as easily destroy. We can destroy by our in-actions as easily as by our conscious acts. If we do not actively and consciously maintain a belief in the integrity and uniqueness of each individual learner and his 'right' to a complete education then we slip into the role of the authority figure closeted in the self-righteousness of power.

Once we have achieved an insight into the absolute veracity of the learner's unique self-concept, once we have judged ourselves, once we realize that to be able to perceive the learner as unique, only then may we be able to view ourselves as such. Then may we be able to really get down to the most serious aspect of our profession - "How can I help the learner to learn?"

It is here now, with this question ringing in our consciousness that we move into the next aspect of this element called 'The Intangibles', that of Motivation.

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[2]Bamman, Brammer, How to Study Successfully: Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1974, pp. 94-95.

[3]Keen, E. Three faces of being: toward an Existential psychology, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, 1970.

[4]Allport, G. Theories of perception and the concept of structure, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1955.

[5]Hudson, Liam, Human Beings, London: Jonathan Cape, 1975, p. 165.

[6]Hudson, Liam, op.cit., p. 165.

[7]Hudson, Liam, op.cit., p. 165.

[8]Polanyi, M. Personal Knowledge: towards a post critical philisophy: University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1958.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Klinger, Eric. Meaning and Void, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1977.

[11]Sperber, Manis, Masks of Loneliness, Krishna Winston trans., Macmillan, 1974, p. 100.

[12]Shaffer, John B. Humanistic Psychology, Prentice-Hall Inc., N.J., 1978.

[13]May, Rollo, The Courage to Create, Boston: Norton, 1975, pp. 99-100.

[14]Stone, J. and Church, J., Childhood and Adolescence, 1968, Random House, p. 427.

B. Motivation

> Schools and classrooms are constantly making a powerful yet unconscious statement about motivation. They insist that children spend a major portion of their working hours eagerly learning about those things which adults decide children should know; the kids must learn those things in an environment where material objects, activity and social interaction matter little compared to words, books and passive absorption of prescribed facts and concepts. Children who do not behave in accordance with the school's established rules of conduct are labeled unintelligent, hyperactive, ostrepersons, disturbed and, especially, unmotivated. They are often accused of distracting their peers, diminishing the motivational level of the class and interfering with the teacher's ability to sustain the involvement of the group. The origins of this misbehavior are attributed to children, and teachers often call upon an arsenal of psuchological weaponry - admonitions, threats, guilt, special rewards and peer pressure - to deal with this problem.[1]

Motivation is a force; it is more than a mere concept. It appears as a tangible entity for anyone who has observed a child in unstructured, free play. All people are physiologically motivated to survive and live. Yet this same delicate intangible which many psychologists would indicate as essential to very life itself, this self-same untouchable 'thing' has been the source of great controversy. This entity has been studied, researched, debated, discussed and thoroughly investigated in so many phases of our existence that it has taken on the mantle of acceptance to the point of complacency.

This generally held belief that all one has to do is 'motivate' the learner is so very dangerous that the results of the past few decades in the field of schooling should be enough to make anyone who hears this belief shudder and worry. For this very institutionalized belief can often lead to a mutilation of the spirit that the young learner brings to the doorsteps of the schooling time in which he must partake. As Charles Silberman once stated:

> The most deadly of all possible sins is the mutilation of a child's spirit. It is not possible to spend any prolonged period visiting schools' classrooms without being appalled by the mutilation visible everywhere - mutilation of spontaneity, of joy in learning, of pleasure in creating, of sense of self. The schools - those "killers of dreams" - are the kind of institution one cannot really dislike until one gets to know them well.[2]

This acceptance of this idea of motivation as a simple aspect of education can be as devastating as that of not becoming aware of the concept in actual practice to the learner. Schools are merely as good and as aware as the people who work there. But, if this group allows itself to accept at face value this one mode of perceiving the concept of motivation then a dangerous situation is at hand.

As L.W. Bixby puts it,

> Education can be tyrannical. Educators - teachers and administrators - profess a love of children as a rationale for despotic overloading of youth. But, it is easier to love children, than to love a <u>child</u>. Some of the most 'dedicated'

Now, how can a learner, then, actually demand as a right 'an education' if those in whose care and intellectual feeding he is placed are neither suited nor fully involved in giving this motivational care? Obviously he cannot! Happily though, our education system is one based on hope. Hope that the vast majority of those who are educated as teachers will somehow be exceptional at their tasks of dealing with learners. Unfortunately however, this is not the reality. Some teachers are exceptional, some good, some adequate, some uninterested, some hopeless and some dangerous.

This leads us then in this area of motivation and schooling itself. As Ivan Illich pointed out in, On Education, "A second major illusion on which the school system rests is that most learning is the result of teaching." Schools have for too long been viewed as 'the' place of learning and in essence then been placed on a pedestal in an ivory tower. Learners learn from experiences. To quote Jean Piaget:

> Experience is always necessary for intellectual development.... But I fear that we may fall into the illusion that being submitted to an experience - a demonstration - is sufficient for a subject to disengage the structure involved. But more than this is required. The subject must be active, must transform things, and find the structure of his own actions on the objects.[5]

When we first encounter the term "motivation" it is used in reference to the belief that it is something to be used to prod a lazy individual - or worse, a bright but lazy

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> teaching systems of our day are genuinely intended for the service of children, yet they function on pride in petty rules and an autocratic insistence on dull and archaic 'learning' methods.[3]

Unfortunately, schools and schooling can easily become institutions where it is easier to create the illusion that learning can take place only in the quiet rigidly structured class, bound by the textbooks and completely controlled by the overseer - the teacher. Then, motivation, through methods of encouragement, threat, punishment and so on can be passed out, dealt with and worked upon in an orderly manner. The classroom then comes to be the area in which the learner, as captive audience, can be manipulated to do something academic.

But is this really education? Is the learner not a spontaneous, active organism whose free flight of fancy as a child allowed him to learn so very much even before he entered the hallowed halls of learning?

Of course the learner is and as such, can ethically demand, merely as a learner and fellow human, to be treated as such, and not to be restricted, molded and have every aspect of his academic life and learning controlled by some other. For Cowen and Lee state in <u>A Sign of Change</u> (1971), "When a man whose job it is to educate young people gets to the point where he believes he is an authority he ceases to be a teacher and becomes useless".[4]

individual. Here in this short comment may lie a possibility as to our misdirection. Must motivation be used as a prod? If we accept that it must, then do we not also accept as axiomatic that our conception of the learner is already formed and that we are placing both the student learner and ourselves, the teachers, in opposition? As well, since we accept that the process of education is for the development of a learner's experience, life-growth and intellect are we not at divergent odds within our own perspective not only of the learner and motivation but motivation and ourselves?

Motivation, to be effective, does not have to be taught as something outside the individual but is rather a self-maintained presence that all individuals hold to varying degrees. This, of course, holds true for the educator. Motivation for the teacher must be a self-realized aspect of his psychic make-up for, if it is not, then how can he effectively deal with individuals and their handling of motivation if he is unaware, except in a sense of the written word, of what the actualized concept actually is and how it affects his and others' behavior? This, then, is our misdirection!

We approach, as educators, the concept of motivation as if it were 'something' that we are able at times to brandish about for effective use in 'others'' learning. We accept the notion that it is a tool - but nowhere are we encouraged to try to fully understand what it is that we are

accepting, nor is there even a need to lay bare the essentials of motivation as it applies to ourselves before we include it as one more weapon in the arsenal of teacher preparedness. In effect, our own vision of motivation is given to us by others who hold a view similar to that so far expressed and who place it in our hands to be used as we see fit. But never are we accountable for our use of this 'motivating concept' nor indeed are we ever asked, or is it demanded, that we accept any type of responsibility for our possible misuse of our good intentions.

As an individual teacher, each person must come to grips with how motivation is to be employed, but much more importantly, every individual if he is even remotely concerned with the individuality of the learners in his care would be wise to re-examine his own internalization of what the concept of motivation actually is.

This is our point of skewness, not that motivation is bad, not that it is lacking in our effects as educators, not that we do not have the best interests of the learner at the heart of our considerations, but rather the eventuality of how this concept is given to us, how we are induced to use/abuse it and most importantly how it has come to be so totally debased as a functioning entity that it has been removed from its realm of 'helper' to the individual learner and teacher and placed in the realm of a useful tool to prod.

This questioning of ourselves would further start one on the road to self-realization and improvement or at least toward a realistic comprehending of one's self-concept and hopefully the resultant off-shoot of being at the very least more aware, if not better able, to perceive the 'other' with whom as teacher it is our function to interact. As Harold Entwistle states:

> .....the distinctive, academic disciplines are merely attempts to explore, organize, extend and make explicit what is known, INTUITIVELY, about the common experiences of daily life, as well as providing the instruments of self-discipline whereby we develop our understanding, our interests, our tastes.[6]

Education must allow for the free development of the capabilities of each unique, individual learner and to do this fully and realistically our present stance on many issues of schooling must be re-assessed or we are merely going to continue to go nowhere at all.

This need not be so, this waste of human potential to be offered as so much common fodder when now at this moment in human history we have available to us as educators so very very much material to see, preview, assess and use in our preparation of youth for the future. We live in a time of massive and far-reaching changes; why then can we not at least look to see if some of the cherished beliefs that we have held have not been based on premises that if not altogether false then were or are at least inconsistent with reality as it is lived outside the enclosed classroom walls?

Motivation, self-concept and the reality of the learner are aspects of a learner's existence that for far too long have either been taken for granted, viewed incorrectly, not viewed at all or used to control the learner to the extent that we have the problems in education that we are experiencing in our society today. To change we must want to. We who control must want to change. We must be motivated. But how can we be motivated if we persist in viewing motivation as something that someone else uses to prod, move or motivate another human being.

We must become aware not only of the unique individuality of each learner but also come to realize the uniqueness of ourselves and then maybe as J.B. Shaffer so admirably states:

> (Our).... Humanistic conceptions of education (would) generally try to eliminate the distinction between means and ends, so that learning is EXPERIENCED as a source of pleasure in its own right, rather than as an instrument for competing with others or for guaranteeing one's social status in the future .... to be able to ensure that a lesson's content is not divorced from its personal meaning for the learner. Therefore, the teacher is encouraged to pay some heed to the pupil's emotional response to what he is learning - here the stress is on the learner's holistic need to integrate feeling with thought. Lastly, humanism casts the teacher into a catalytic, not an authoritarian role.... The more the student is viewed as the source and motivation of his own learning, in that his spontaneous curiosity is the driving force behind what he masters and how well he masters it, the more his schooling approaches a humanistic model, a model where there is consistent respect for his individuality and his autonomy.[7]

Then, it is quite possible with a view similar in orientation to that of a humanistic approach one may be able to view oneself and the learner in a situation of equality of wanting to learn and outside the confrontationist sphere where so much education happens. Maybe then, we can remember as this following poem of Ben Thompson attests to, a time of easy innocence and harmony:

> Remember as children our easy innocence
> when alive with the new ability to see
> we devoured with fresh eyes
> a many faceted world.
> Our unfettered imaginations
> explored the mysterous corners
> of small-scaled universes,
> followed the paths of radiant lights
> and joyous colors.
> Harmony among many things
> was so apparent then -
> We had frogs as friends.
> Our hearts were ever open
> to continued discovery and surprise.[8]
>
> (Benjamin Thompson)

[1]Drew, W.; Olds, A.; Olds, H, Motivating Today's Student, Education Today, Co., Palo Alto, California, 1974, p. 6.

[2]Silberman, Charles, Crisis in the Classroom, New York, New York, Random House, 1970.

[3]Bixby, Louis W., The Excitement of Learning the Boredom of Education, Lebia Pubs, New York, New York, 1977, p. 107.

[4]Cowan, R.; Lee, Phillip, A Sign of Change, Commerce Stat. Associates, Mass., 1971.

[5]Piaget, Jean, from Piaget Rediscovered. Eleanor Duckworth, The ESS Reader. Nuston, Mars., Education Development Center, 1970, p. 138.

[6]Entwistle, Harold, Child Centered Education. Metheun and Company Ltd., London, 1970, p. 89.

[7]Shaffer, John B., Humanistic Psychology, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1978, pp. 95-96.

[8]Thompson, Benjamin, from Motivating Today's Student. Drew, Olds and Olds, op. cit, p. 4.

C. Thinking

> The ability to think or to conceptualize distinguishes man from most other animals in the animal kingdom. No normal human is without this capacity and no other species is known to possess it to the same degree... Our possession of meta-reason, or the ability to conceptualize about concepts, carries with it some inherent limitations, however. The act of thinking, like the act of reading, continue to defy formal analysis. While we may be able to 'read' music, mathematics and various languages, and while we may be able to deliberately increase our reading skill, we have only vague notions as to what the reading process itself entails. Similarly, while we may learn to think about a variety of topics, and while we may acquire great skill in thinking logically, the act of thinking remains a mystery.[1]

The area of critical thinking is another of those rather intangible areas that we in education give various responses to, ranging from 'Everyone knows what thinking is.", to 'If the Psychologists don't know then why should I bother about it at all?' How can we as educators of the learners deal effectively and efficiently with knowledge acquisition and learning if all are ignorant of the process that is the absolute base on which learning resides, that of thinking, let alone critical thinking? Experience has directly indicated and reading has collaborated the belief that our education system as it presently functions does not deal in an effective manner with the issue, place, or proper function of thinking as it applies to all aspects of

the learner and our teaching. This may be so for a great variety of reasons not the least of which is lack of exposure by prospective teachers to this at times mystifying area - that of thinking. This may as well be so since thinking as an entity itself is shrouded in the mysteries of the mind. But, the mind is essential to our purpose. The mind and its functionings are the things that make for education.

Once again one is faced not with answers but questions that come as hard as possible. What is Thinking? How can I effectively deal with this area? Am I able to really understand the hows and whys of this most diverse concept? Where can I find the appropriate information to help in my guidance? Questions and more questions. But, finally the air is being cleared and possibilities, if not answers, are forthcoming from an area of study and research which encompasses just such questions and a multitude of others within its grasp and proceeds to deal most effectively with them all: This is the area of Cognition. But for our present purpose I merely state that the concept of thinking which we in education continue to use as if it were an internalized item in all of us, is not as simple or as easily an understood concept as we have allowed ourselves to assume. As well, and coupled with this assumption is the corollary belief that thinking is something both simple and natural. We seem to accept that every learner must

possess this functional ability if not to the same level then at least close to each other or 'they' are just not using this given ability.

It is here in these assumptions that I now wish to discuss, not in how one actually thinks but rather in how we now perceive this ability. Experience and reading have indicated an acceptance of the thinking process as I have noted earlier as 'just another of those accepted functionings that everyone has'.

If thinking is merely a 'something' that we all possess and certainly we all possess the ability, then how, if it is to be viewed as an ability, can we have allowed our learning system to have become pervaded with the notion that it is common across all segments of our learners? Were one to disagree that this is not the case, that we do not treat this ability as being consistent across the strata of our learners, then the question begs to be asked: "Where are their classes that

A. Teach or deal with teachers in how to teach, deal with, and improve thinking in ourselves and more importantly how to impart ability improvement in learners.

B. Teach learners in our schools how 'to think' both generally and critically--or for that matter any classes that have as its essence 'teaching thinking'?"

Sadly my experience over the past decade and half indicates naught but their absences.

Yet, we accept as essential the fact that to succeed in school one has to have at least a working ability in thinking, since without this skill one cannot really understand and consequently learn.

"But, we encourage learners to think!", and so say many in the field and this as a statement is indeed truth. It is true in that we, the educators, do encourage learners to think and that schools and our educational system is in and of itself actively engaged in the promotion of thinking in learners. However, the contention here is that as a truth, this encouragement is based on at best a tenuous base. We do want learners to think, but do we actively promote the process of thinking as an essential and justified in itself and for itself--as a desirable end? George Kelly has stated that

> ....Novel ideas, when openly expressed, can be disruptive to ourselves and disturbing to others. We therefore often avoid them, disguise them, keep them bottled up in our minds where they cannot develop in the social context, or disavow them in what we believe to be loyalty to the common interest. And often, against our better judgment, we accept the dictates of authority instead, thinking thus to escape any personal responsibility for what happens.[2]

Realistically, as a tangent of this idea of Kelly and coupled with our knowledge and experience of schools, as well as the ideas of how the learner is viewed, how classes are 'controlled by teachers', how the system 'controls' the teachers and how the system functions to maintain itself,

it is a very small cognitive leap to realize that the school has historically been an institution of conformity and that this conformity has not and is not restricted to dress, manners and so on but is also an institution of conformity of thinking. For, as Kelly would have us realize, new or novel ideas, i.e., thoughts, can be very 'disruptive' or discomforting as well as disturbing and we fully realize that our educational system does not tolerate disruptions except as things which are non-acceptable.

And yet, when we look at a working definition of thought it becomes readily apparent that 'thinking' is an active, ever-searching non-accommodating aspect of the human mind. To take just one example:

> Thought is the process of achieving new representations through the performance of mental operations. When the operations are systematic and under the general guidance of a conscious plan, the thought is organized. When the operations are unrelated and chosen without reference to a plan, the thought is idle and similar to daydreaming. While aspects of either kind of thought may be conscious, it is only the former which gives the subjective feeling of great effort and difficulty. It is this kind of thought which is prominent in Problem Solving.[3]

This thinking must be present at all levels of our learners life as well as ours. This no one would deny! The fact that it must be present is not the point of contention. The actual point of contention here is not that thinking is not an essential element in life, but rather that because we are so close to thinking, each and all of us, from the

youngest infant to our most respected educationists, we cannot, or rather have not historically been able to stand back and view thinking across our range of humaneness as something that can no longer be taken for granted.

This process of thinking must be asserted as not only an extremely important element in learner's attainment of study skills or as general to his education, but rather, if we are to do justice to the complete learning of the individual learner, then we must re-evaluate our conception of not only what thinking is but also our conceptions on how we should deal with the concept, where most emphasis should be placed for the ultimate benefit of the learner, and indeed how to go about creating thinking in learners generally?

From the outset it has been the contention in this paper that there are certain factors related to the individual learner that are either absent in his schooling or otherwise structured in such a manner that to be able to help the individual learner a re-assessment of each aspect in its entirety, including the ramifications of each to the viability of the learners' knowledge acquisition must be initiated. It is also the writer's view that such an area is thinking.

Experience has also indicated that even where thinking is encouraged it is still not 'original' thinking that is stressed. Again, here allow me to note that even

this encouragement does not take in the necessary knowledge presentation by the encouraging individual or school as to 'how' one can go about learning to think: what is done is to verbally use the language to offer encouragement to continue to think. This indicates strong desire to help but what is lacking is the insight necessary to realize the futility of this suggestion. Only to those individuals who have been lucky enough to stumble onto or have had the good fortune to have an outside environment where thinking is actualized does this encouragement actually mean something positive. To others it is as often as not a source of frustration, especially if they 'believe' they have indeed been 'thinking' and are still not able to meet the criterion to the point where they are accepted by the school system as being one of the 'bright-ones'.

So, back to this thinking encouragement. Even here, where thinking is indeed encouraged it is of such a nature that one--the learner--is indicated as doing well not through the creation of new or novel ideas but rather is more rewarded if the end product shows internalization of what others--most specifically teacher indicated--have produced on whatever, at the time, the particular topic may be. This, then, being the case one can most readily envision the end product of such a system on an impressionable learner over twelve years of conditioning by many and various individual 'guides'. Most sadly such an individual comes to accept the dictates of envisioned authority as being proper and

correct, not because they are proper and correct or indeed not because he has clearly, logically and demonstrably 'thought' his way through the 'dictates' but rather because he has come to accept as normal such a state of affairs. Though this may appear harsh and anti-social it is neither. It is but a verbalization of a genuine feeling gleaned over a decade and half in education in many centres and at many levels in this, our educational system. Experience has shown that the learners do not know how to think and it has also shown that not only is there very little being done to alleviate this problem but that actually there is extremely little accepted awareness that this lack of 'teaching the skills of thinking' is indeed a problem at all.

So where then does this leave us? Is there a problem or isn't there a problem in (i) Thinking ability of our learners; (ii) The teaching of thinking skills to improve the ability of our learners in this area: To the writer the answer is painfully obvious. To colleagues I have proposed as an answer to this two-part question a quite simple statement: "If there is no problem, why in every school and in every educational class that I have been in is there so much discussion generated about 'the ills of our present system!" It seems that everyone realizes that there is a problem but they do not realize what the answers may possibly be. This paper wishes to go one step further in the process by going backwards one step. This step is not

to provide the answers as such, but rather to try and draw attention to the fact of what the problem may be. For, how can one present an answer to the problem when one is not even aware of what the specific problem may be?

Here in the area of thinking the problem is essentially not that the learner does not know how to think but much more curcially the fact that our educational system does not really get to the root of his non-thinking by re-educating the teachers to the awareness of the problem. And, the problem is based much more in our perception of the learners' thinking ability or style that it is in his ability to actually think. We accept that everyone can think, but what is not accepted is:

A. That all learners are individuals, unique onto themselves and with this uniqueness are all the ramifications of individual learning that go hand in hand with this uniqueness.

B. Simply, that thinking is a skill and as with any skill, this one too, must be initiated, helped, guided, and essentially taught and consequently, if it is to nurture, grow, and develop, it must be practised.

Now then, where is this practice to take place? Where should be the most and best available environment for the fruition and development of this essential mental skill? Logically, it should be the classroom and its attendant functions. For it is here where the learner comes face to face with a multitude of various information

sources, ideas, statements, systems, methods, processes and on and on of all the base essentials that could possibly be needed or used to develop and practice this mental skill--this thinking.

The learner has the tool--the thinking ability--now all that is necessary, aside from his natural desire and willingness to engage in practice and to develop it is the environment where such a development can be initiated and continued for many years:

> Teachers can promote thinking skills in their classroom, from the primary grades through the University. And unless there is a deliberate effort on the part of the schools to do so, there is no guarantee that adults will ever possess the skills. The Educational Policies Act (U.S.) stated in 1961 that many agencies contribute to achieving educational objectives, but thinking is one objective which might not be generally attained unless the school acts on it. Teaching students how to think should be, in the first place, a primary goal of every teacher and every school district. In-service training should be provided for teachers to familiarize themselves with the process and provide them with teaching techniques. In the 2nd place, teaching should be planned and sequential throughout the school system. First-grade teachers should know what their responsibilities are as should twelfth-grade instructors. All should recognize that the skills of thinking do not develop automatically, by themselves, or as a consequence of living. The skills must be taught and promoted.[4]

Is this the case in our school systems? — not just a novel question but the first step to accepting the fact that there is even a problem in this area and also quite possibly the first step in the solving of any such perceived problem.

Awareness of limitation, coupled with a sincere desire to overcome limitations is in most cases a sufficient first step which eventually leads to the eradication of any problem. So too may be the case in point.

Once we become aware that our learners have a problem not of their own making but just the same a problem that has great negative features both for themselves and our entire society, then and only then may be begin to see its demise. But its demise will not come about with ease. Ease in the field of human development and human to human treatment does not appear to even be the case. However, an approach committed to the dignity of every individual just might be a promising one.

Such an approach is being postulated in Part III not as a panacea or even as the ultimate answer to this perceived problem regarding thinking but rather as just another approach. With so many individuals critically thinking about any topic or aspect of a topic, whether it be to find operable or functional answers to the perveived problems, we may be able eventually to encounter the products of such critical thinking. The products would be the many various approaches, all of which may have valid conceptual points, all of which may also have glaring inoperable elements, but all of which would be the product of critical thought or as a point of starting reference.

It is this product--results of critical thinking--that would give rise to a motion to actively review our present system and quite possibly give rise to a need to re-assess where we presently stand on the concept of learners' thinking skills, which of itself may have many positive and far reaching ramifications for the ultimate knowledge acquisition of learners. Therefore, such an awareness is deemed essential as a furthering of the concept of thinking and to allow for the view that our generally accepted belief that thinking is simply something that everyone is capable of, is much too simplistic and because of this simplistic view of the process of thinking we have allowed our education system to be lulled into complacency concerning the varied topic of thinking as it applies to our learners. For, as Piaget would have us accept:

> If different stages in the development of thinking in a child can be distinguished, and if there are stages of a process leading to an objective way of thinking, it is society and the educational system that must ensure that this process is gone through.[5]

This, in itself, would give us reason enough to delve into the realm of thinking, but if this is not sufficient then the following may complete a sufficiency of reasons:

> The suggestion that in growth of understanding we are initially tied to the concrete and particular, and only generally extend our thought into the abstract and general is a very natural one. It is a suggestion to be found in Aristotle's observation that the

> particular is prior relative to us even if the general is prior for knowledge in itself. Our normal picture of human beings is that they gradually extend their understanding so that what is initially understood in particular and concrete instances comes eventually to be understood in a more general and abstract form. How indeed could it be otherwise? One answer to this question is that it could not be otherwise, because the development of understanding comes through learning. Learning involves the acquisition of knowledge and understanding; indeed, it involves the use of experience. Experience itself involves confrontation with particulars, even if, as Aristotle would say, the knowledge that this confrontation entails is knowledge of the particular as a such and such. It is this inevitable and necessary element that the development of understanding involves the progression from the more particular and concrete to the more general and abstract. No acquisition of understanding based on learning could be otherwise.[6]

Consequently how can we acquire this understanding if we do not possess the skills necessary to critically think our way from the general to the abstract? And, how indeed can we have this skill, if we are not to be given genuine guidance, based on prior knowledge of its structure and process on the part of the guide? Obviously we cannot! But until it comes to pass that this guidance is allowed, encouraged, and demanded for our learners, must they be condemned to the oblivion of complacency and regurgitation of others' ideas. Yet at the same time we must thank whom ever that there are still those who manifest against all odds the concept of Rene Decartes pronouncement 'Sum Ergo Cogito'.[7]

Notes

[1]Elliot, John (Ed.). Human Development and Cognitive Process. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971, p. 395.

[2]Kelly, George. Behavior is an Experiment (1966) 255-269 in Perspectives in Personality Construct Theory, D. Bannister (ed.). Academic Press, 1970.

[3]Posner, Michael I. Cognition an Introduction: Scott, Foresman and Company, Illinois, 1973.

[4]Warren, Robert W. Teaching for Thinking, Studies in Education, Vol. XX, 1981.

[5]Foreman, G.E., and Sigel, I.E. Cognitive Development: A Life-Span View, Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, Montrey, California, 1979.

[6]Piaget, J. The Child's Construction of Reality, Routledge, London, 1953.

[7]Hamlyn, D.W. from Cognitive Development and Epistemology, Theodore Heishel, Academic Press, New York, 1971.

[8]Durant, Will. The story of Philosophy, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1961.

CHAPTER III

A HUMANISTIC APPROACH

> As civilized human beings, we are the inheritors, neither of any inquiry about ourselves and the world, nor of any accumulating body of info, but of a conversation, begun in the primeval forests and extended and made more articulate in the course of centuries. It is a conversation which goes on both in public and within each of ourselves. Of course there is argument and inquiry and information, but wherever these are profitable they are to be recognized as passages in this conversation, and perhaps they are not the most captivating of the passages.... Conversation is not an enterprise designed to yield an extrinsic profit, a contest where a winner gets a prize, nor is it an activity of energies; it is an unrehearsed intellectual adventure....Education, properly speaking, is an invitation into the skill and partnership of this conversation in which we learn to recognize the voices, to distinguish the proper occasions of utterances, and in which we acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to conversation. And it is this conversation which, in the end, gives place and character to every human activity and utterance.
>
> (Michael Oakeshott, Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays, Methuen, 1962, pp. 198-199)

For one to actually become actively engaged in the teaching of study skills it is essential that an approach not only to this element of teaching but to teaching in general, to the aspirations of teachers and learners, to a true, acceptable statement of beliefs be externalized. To do so, one must of necessity possess a schema, a pattern, a series of beliefs that he believes worthy of application.

So far, we have seen study skills defined. We have engaged in proposing what they should consist of and indeed how one may approach them effectively. But all of this is merely wishful thinking if one does not possess both an approach and atmosphere conducive not only to the presentation of methods and terminology but most assuredly also the environment where these aspects will find acceptance, fruition and growth. This is a two-way process. For the students who shall hopefully internalize certain methods and aspects of one's presentation or guidance of study skills must also become central to and completely involved in all aspects of this venture if any form of success internally for themselves and externally for the teacher is to be achieved. A necessitating philosophy of intent is then most desirable. With this point to ponder I shall now proceed to present just such a compendium of ideas which shall be called The Humanistic Approach to the Learner.

> What I am saying is that those who do make decisions, whether they are English teachers, lawyers, economists or physicists, must base their actions on human values rather than economic or technical expedients--on the elemental need to survive, yes; but also on the need to survive with freedom and a sense of human dignity and purpose. This understanding of human values is precisely the aim which humanistic education has always set for itself.
>
> (O.B. Hardison, Toward Freedom and Dignity, John Hopkins University Press, 1972)

Starting in 1960, with the publication of Paul Goodman's Growing Up Absurd (1960) a series of books began to appear on the American market which documented the degree to which American schools at all grade levels encouraged mindless conformism, a deadening of excitement, and a sense of pessimism concerning the possibilities for meaningful work and for certain play in adulthood.

Humanistic conceptions of education generally try to eliminate the distinction between means and ends, so that learning is experienced as a source of pleasure in its own right, rather than as an instrument for competing with others or for safeguarding one's social status in the future. (Here the emphasis is on the importance of present-centeredness; learning is exhilarating and meaningful now.) Humanistic approaches ensure that a learner's content is not divorced from its personal meaning for the learner. Therefore, the teacher is encouraged to pay some heed to the pupil's emotional response to what he is learning. (Here the stress is on the learner's holistic need to integrate feeling with thought.) Also, humanism casts the teacher into a catalytic and not an AUTHORITARIAN role. The more a student comes to be viewed as the source and indicator of his own learning, in that his spontaneous curiosity is the driving force behind what he masters and how well it becomes mastered, the more this schooling approaches a humanistic model, wherein there is a consistent respect for the

learner's individuality and autonomy. This humanistic approach is grounded in two key features:

A. encouraging students to become maximally involved in what they are learning

B. encouraging them to freely express their personal reactions to the materials.

For

> as any experienced teacher knows, the minute a child discovers that his education is a search or quest for himself and therefore for the limits of himself--in that moment an enterprise that was sicklied o'er with the cast of unreality suddenly becomes vital, alive, 'challenging', and worthy of commitment.[1]

Which in effect leads us to this simple statement that "our job (as teacher) is to teach students to be learners--when there are no teachers".[2] And again from a perspective of someone interested in the child and his development into a whole person a need to re-evaluate our view of the school institution seems a logical step. As Dennis O'Brien so elegantly states:

> If we emphasize again the notion of the School as a learning community and not only as a teaching institution, then we have to believe in learning outside the conventional classroom structure. To express that notion, the School could make explicit what is already explicit in its basic philosophy. The basic aim of School is to start off a process of education which continues for a lifetime. In the twelve years of School one can only hope to whet a person's appetite for learning, not satisfy it. The ideal graduate is not someone whose head is full, but someone who leaves desperately dissatisfied with what he or she has accomplished relative to all the things yet to understand, to appreciate and enjoy.[3]

Now this approach--Humanistic--must of necessity have as a basic tenet the corner stone of any and all democratic principles: Choice - That is, the right of the individual, with a commitment to the belief of freedom and the essentiality of free will, to choose or at the very least to have an input into those things which affect one's life. As Jacob Bronowski so aptly put it:

> What we really mean by Free will, of course, is the visualization of alternatives and making a choice between them... the central problem of human consciousness depends on this ability to imagine. The act of imagination is the opening of the system so that it shows new connections. I originally put this idea in Science and Human Values when I said that every act of imagination is the discovery of likeness between two things which were thought alike....All acts of imagination are of that kind. They take the closed system (shall we say our present system of study skills), they inspect it, they manipulate it, and then they find something which had not been put into the system so far. (To this writer, the thing left out of our system of study skills is a Humanistic Approach to it.) They open the system up, they introduce new likeness, whether it is Shakespeare saying, 'my mistress eyes are nothing like the Sunne', or is it Newton saying that the moon in essence is exactly like a thrown apple. All those who imagine take parts of the Universe which have not been connected hitherto and enlarge the total connectivity of the universe by showing them to be connected.[4]

This leads us more fully into the concept that choice, free will, and imagination are not only necessary but absolutely essential if learning, true learning and not mere

memorization, is to take place. The role of both the learner and the teacher must be re-emphasized to accommodate learning in the school. The learner must become once again the key ingredient around which the school revolves.

With this humanistic approach, of course, there enters into the realm of learning another aspect associated with choice, free will and imagination. This is the right to make errors. Again Bronowski states:

> We must accept the fact that all the imaginative inventions are to some extent errors with respect to the norm....Progress is the exploration of our own error. Evolution is a consolidation of what have always begun as errors. And errors are of two kinds: errors that turn out to be true and errors that turn out to be false. But they both have the same character of being an imaginative speculation.[5]

Learners must be given the opportunity to learn, and this means trial and error or just plain error. The function of the teacher is as a guide and not to act as the sole dispenser of the knowledge of the universe.

Experience has shown that students are often frustrated because they are not being given the truth or the 'knowledge' they desire. Their expectation is that this truth resides some place outside themselves, usually with the teacher. If this is so, then the schools can be as guilty of indoctrination and dehumanizing as any totalitarian society. However, as an alternative we have

various methods or approaches to teaching and learning based in and on the principles of Humanism. One such method is Ruth Cohn's Theme Centered Model (Cohn 1969). In the theme-centered method, each person speaks from his own subjectivity, so that, in effect, what we have is a series of individuals, including the teacher, each expressing his unique point of view. This method, in encouraging every student to participate, strongly implies that each is worthy of respect and of being listened to. To the extent to which a student feels he is not learning, or is not getting what he wants, he is responsible for trying to do something about it. If he assumes that it is automatically the teacher's job to increase his learning, he is attempting to deny his own autonomy. Similarly, for the teacher to assume always that learning is taking place simply because the students are not complaining is for him to evade his capacity for autonomous judgment. If the majority of students believe that the model is not working for them, it is important that the teacher be willing to consider revising the structure.

An instructor's skill in teaching the essence of humanism lies as much in his ability to be genuinely humanistic in his style of relating as in his expertise in explaining conceptual material. To the extent that the teacher retains a firm sense of his own identity at the same time that he exhibits a willingness to allow others

to develop differing identities and differing values, he is relating in a humanistic manner. The teacher's identity and values are demonstrated in the way in which he structures the classroom, and there is no means by which he can evade this responsibility for determining that structure. The teacher's respect for the students' integrity is demonstrated in his ability to listen to, and at times accept, their suggestions as they react to the structure and attempt to modify it. One of the great values of this approach is that it is not content-specific or course-bound, so the teacher with imagination and a genuine respect for learners can apply it in any area of our present school system. All that is needed is a belief in the learner, faith in oneself, and realization that the sole function of a school is to cater to the learners, and not to the teacher.

Another approach or model based solidly in the humanistic mold is that of the Freedom to Learn model of Carl Rogers. In this Freedom to Learn model, Rogers explores various approaches to organizing classrooms and course materials. Being true to his firm belief in the autonomy of both learner and teacher, Rogers does not endorse any one approach as being superior to any other, for he is fully aware that no method can work in the hands of any teacher who is uncomfortable with it--and this indeed is one of the aspects of humanism--a conviction or belief that it just doesn't make any sense to discuss a

specific method without including at least some consideration of the attitudes towards it possessed by the user. As rogers sees it,

> A humanistic school or college administrator gives the teacher considerable latitude in selecting methods and curricula, just as the teacher similarly tries to maximize the student's freedom to select and pursue learning goals most minimized to himself. Important elements in an education transaction between two parties, whether they be administrator and teacher or teacher and learner, are not at all dissimilar from those that ideally exist between a therapist and a patient: they are genuineness, acceptance, sympathy and trust.[6]

All this material, in a humanistic approach to a learner's education, with its principles founded in freedom, choice and human dignity, having guiding principles as to what should not be included. These are:

A. that there is only one correct answer to any given question;

B. that once we have labelled something we have understood it;

C. that everything and everyone in the world has an ever-fixed unchanging identity.

These points may lead more to the 'Inquiry Method' of education where the teacher constantly asks questions of the learner and in turn expects the learners to ask questions of the teacher and never to accept blindly any presentation. These inquiries may propel the learners to

think more deeply and may indicate to them how to think and question for themselves, thus enabling them to internalize this procedure of viewing the world in wonderment and with a questioning, searching nature. Here in this humanistic approach the teacher's primary role is to facilitate the learner's coming into contact with the right material at the appropriate time, to give sincere encouragement and support. The teacher must become a guide and not merely a processor of spilled facts to fill in so many empty brains.

To recapitulate, the humanistic approach to education and learning is based on three principles or central emphases:

1. The motivation behind learning should ideally be pleasure and excitement now.

2. The personal context in which the learning occurs, including the learner's feelings and motivations, must be attended to and not merely the intellectual content of what is being presented.

3. The teacher's role is most meaningful when it's catalytic and facilitative and not authoritarian.[7]

As well, pervasive throughout the belief of a humanistic approach to education is the assumption that "the educational system exists first, last and always to serve the development of the child as an individual". But to stress the essentiality of the <u>individual</u> learner is to believe, and live according to the belief, that each learner is unique in the complexity of ability, aptitude, interest and experiences which he brings to the school

environment. The teacher, then, must meet each learner as an individual having a unique personal history, accepting the consequence that he will view the world in his own idiosyncratic manner. To this the teacher must try to add, not [illegible]-mold in his own image, or to destroy.

Thus, these learning and study skills which the school exists to disseminate must be assimilated within mental structures each of which is unique. It is this uniqueness of the individual as an entity onto himself that the teacher must come to grips with, both morally and intellectually, if he is to provide an environment where learning is facilitated to the maximum and the skills necessary to learn and study are a major by-product of an ongoing, productive educational system.

Herein lies one method of not "how-to-teach study skills", but rather a concept, an idea that can generate an attitude and atmosphere where the individual learner is the most important element and the facilitating of learning the most acceptable goal. This attainment of skills, knowledge and methods of achieving this attainment will coalesce to form an educated person who learns to value and respect himself and all others as unique individuals with lives, feelings, emotions, and desires of their own. This method of approach, encompassing a humanistic viewpoint may eventually lead to Maslow's 'Self-Actualization' for all participants--educators and learners--, not as an end product to be achieved, for this defeats the concept of

self-actualization, but rather as a by-product of knowledge attainment and the skills of practice necessary to fully appreciate its limitations. As Viktor Frankl so aptly phrases it: "Wisdom is knowledge plus the awareness of its limitations."[9]

Should, then, this approach become central to our dealings as educators with learners, then we can only improve on our humanity. If we destroy this pervasive, accepting, non-thinking attitude of our learners and replace it with an atmosphere where learning is not only central but indeed an essential participatory function, then we shall in essence create a future where by the ripple-effect a greater sense of humanity, humanism, may ensue. Finally, then, we may be able to return to Plato's prescription: "Let your children's education take the form of play",[10] and move away from the view which John Dewey verbalized: "The old education....may be summed up by stating that the center of gravity is outside the child."[11]

Education is a bulwark against tyranny of any form, whether it be of the body, the mind or the spirit. It is up to all concerned in the educational process, be they teachers, instructors, parents, government officials or learners, to demand that an education, as a right, be made available to all, and that this education be based in the right of the learner to do just that--to learn, not merely to memorize. In so doing, the demand for the methods and

skills of how to acquire knowledge, and indeed of how to use it to further gain insight will, of necessity, result.

We must guide the learner from the earliest years in how to learn, how to study, how to acquire, store, keep and retrieve knowledge, as well as how to use it! This we can only do if we instill in each learner the idea of the sanctity of every individual. We cannot merely preach this; if we do so, the learner will most assuredly perceive our falsehood. We must live it in the classroom as an essential aspect of learning. Thus we shall facilitate learning and shall have given of ourselves to help others to create what shall hopefully continue to be a better world.

But is this acceptable in the real world of teaching, of learning? I most assuredly believe so! It is my experience with Special Education students over the past decade that leads me to say unequivocally, "Indeed it is possible." Moreover, not only is it possible but it is essential. A.A. Barnett once wrote that:

> There is a division, but it is not between scientists and artists. The real conflict is between those who create, or at least enjoy, new ways of looking at the world, and those who fear novelty and try to protect themselves from the alarming strangeness of the world by surrounding themselves with barriers.[12]

To those who ascribe to reasoning in this manner I give the title Barrier Mentality.

It is from this premise that my outlook and humanistic approach proceeds. These special education kids with whom I have dealt on a daily basis for nearly a decade have provided me with much more learning and insight than I am capable of providing them. They have constantly made me aware of my own humanism and have provided me with an opportunity to reflect and hopefully to create, for as Warner Kaplan states, "....Human beings are not merely, nor mainly organisms reacting to stimuli or responding to things-of-action. Man forms his Umwelt by relating to his environment in a new manner: he is directed toward knowing."[13] Human beings are, or at the very least should be, learning organisms: organisms open to new ideas and not closed by a barrier mentality.

It is my contention that this barrier mentality, this conflict between ideas and creativity in education and a strict, rigid adherence to a status quo is all too pervasive in our present educational system, and as such may be another of the root causes of so much dismay. For it is the school, replete with barriers, and at times apparently immune to ideas, that is the fostering agent. As Neil Postman states in The Politics of Reading, "the schools are still the principal source of the idea that literacy is equated with intelligence."[14] This idea pervades as a pragmatically accepted truism, yet I live with it as a manifest falsehood. Every day in numerous ways I learn through the learners that the opposite is

likely to be closer to the actual truth. It is in this humanist approach, where barriers are overcome, that one can truly actualize this truth. Again from Neil Postman: "A student's ability to create an idea should be at least as important as his ability to classify and remember the ideas of others."[15] This idea at this particular juncture appears to be a radical one--but only to those who cannot see humanism as a valid approach to our learners. For humanism puts to flight the notion that learners must be told and the teachers are the appointed tellers of. For if indeed we are to accept this novel idea of creativity rather than regurgitation, coming from the learner then we (the teachers) would have to lessen our "control"[16] and where then would lie our "authority"?[17]

Yet, as O.B. Hardison in Beyond Freedom and Dignity points out "In dealing with humanistic education...(it) will not work with teachers so committed to their own private views of a subject that they cannot be comfortable with other human beings except in a Master-Slave relationship."[18] Once more to refer to Neil Postman: if change, new ideas and new thoughts can breathe a semblance of life into our education system, then "teachers would have to stop acting like teachers and find something useful to do, like, for instance helping young people resolve some of their more wrenching emotional problems."[19]

This, then, would lead to a lowering of the barriers to learning,

> and then perhaps a school would become a place where everyone (including the teacher) is trying to learn something. Such a school would be problem-centered. In this process we might find that our students would also learn with pain and with a degree of success and economy not presently known.[20]

Even here, accepting the possibility of this approach, the conflict between the ideas of those of creativity and those of the present controllers would still be present. For if we take as a starting point our own Western cultural orientation and place upon it the words of Abraham Maslow: "Individualized man is culture bound; each culture indoctrinates its members according to its own accepted pattern,"[21] coupled with the belief of Philip Pacey that "vision only comes to those who have a chance to actualize their potential: to be for the sake of being,"[22] then indeed may we be able to perceive a root of this problem of barrier mentality. Consequently, it is inconceivable that our learners will ever, in any great numbers, be able to reach a process of self-actualization if from their earliest beginning in school 'the self' as an active thinking entity is exorcised and replaced with rigid conformity to a culturally-indoctrinated regurgitation of others' ideas as the ideal to be striven for and hopefully attained, wherein the learner is viewed as just an empty space to be filled from textbooks and ideas supplied solely by the school and its representatives.

If this be so, we must then move on to another question: Can we then blind a learner's natural inquisitiveness from the time he is placed in our care and mental feeding at the ripe old age of five years? Sadly, from the writer's perspective the answer is yes. Of course we can structure and of course we can blind. As O.B. Hardison so aptly phrased it:

> Human beings have a natural and inborn desire to learn and find the right kind of exceptional experience totally absorbing. Yet, they are frustrated, alienated, made hostile by mental blocks created by psychological conditioning during early childhood or by social fashions like racial prejudice or anti-intellectualism or by authoritarian and de-humanizing teaching methods.[23]

Consequently, we limit intellectual growth and perpetrate our own barriers for the learners. Where then lies Pacey's vision? For that matter, Immanual Kant regarded 'imagination'[24] as our most truly human possession. He postulated that this imagination is born within each of us, and is a common heritage to all human beings. To believe and accept this idea to be so, are we not then as educators, if we deny our learners their uniqueness and humaneness, whether consciously or through an unconscious complacency, guilty of the most diabolic sin against humanity--the destruction of this gift to the world, this 'imagination',[25] this precious thing that allows us our uniqueness, our humanity, this thing which allows us the ability to create and if not to truly create, then at the very least to enjoy

creativity, new ways, new methods of viewing all that lies about us? Are we not limiting the development of our very existence, our future, if we do not allow the learners to achieve their possibilities and cease viewing them as merely "empty jars which we fill with facts?"[26]

Consciousness of the humaneness of the learners is the first and possibly the most difficult step that must be taken to break this barrier to learners and allow each one to fulfill his potential. For the teacher to be receptive to this novelty of ideas he must strive for a conscious awareness not only of himself but also of those around him who collectively constitute that universe wherein he lives and grows. As Aristotle put it,

> A person ought to be conscious of others' existence, and this can be achieved only by living together and conversing and exchanging ideas...for this would seem to be what living together means in the case of human beings, not being pastured like cattle in the same field.[27]

The teacher must achieve meaning for his own humaneness if he is to reflect this to those with whom he must deal with daily--the learners. This meaning is the essence of this statement (as postulated by Gunter Stent,

> For man the concept of meaning can be fathomed only in relation to the self, which is both the ultimate source and ultimate destination of semantic signals (with semantic being the symbolic representation of events),[28]

coupled with Bronowski's concept of free will: "the visualization of alternatives and the making of a choice between

them."[29] Only with this consciousness of his own humaneness would the teacher be able to approach this consciousness of others' existence. This ability to perceive oneself could lead one to learn from others and be open to new ideas. This consciousness would allow one "shared discourse--the art of discovering warrantable beliefs and improving on those beliefs."[30] The result would possibly be a culture wherein one is encouraged to think, to feel, to reach for one's potential, to actualize. Such a culture would demand, as essential, humaneness - living together in constant search for creativity and newness of viewing the world around us and a sharing of the uniqueness of the individual. As Roland Stromberg expressed it so well:

> Now as always, people live in a world of ideas: they think no matter what they are doing, and their thoughts draw on the store of ideas supplied by the intellectual culture around them."[31]

We must give our learners this intellectual culture so they can really learn and question and strive to grow. To take the view of George Kelly:

> In recognizing the inconsistency between his anticipation and the outcome, man concedes a discrepancy between what he was and what he is. A succession of such investments and dislodgements constitute the human experience.[32]

It seems essential that we should cater to the growth and intellectual development of the learners by not only catering to their abilities to learn, and by providing them

with the skills and tools necessary to learn, but also by creating an atmosphere where learning and the learner are the most important central function of the life of the school. We must strive to create an atmosphere where the learner does not slip into a complacency of living but where change is ever-present and ongoing. But

> Life is more than mere change; it involves an interesting relationship between parts of our universe wherein one part, the living creature, is able to bring himself around to represent another part, his environment.[33]

It is here now that we, the educators, can most nobly and aptly function. We are, in fact, in a position to create such a universe, a tiny cosmos called a classroom. All we have to do is become conscious of ourselves, of those around us and of what we wish for the lives of those individuals with whom we interact. Each educator must pursue his own method, for that is the humanistic approach--the uniqueness of the individual. But, once respect for the individual learner is an internalized, actualized concept, then there can be no holding back. As has been suggested more than once, it is the ends that make us what we are, and we the educators make the kids what they are, for we control the ends they must accomplish to succeed in our world.

What then is my function as educator? To create an atmosphere where there is a dynamic acceptance of the individual as unique, where the learner is supreme, where knowledge is the striven-for end, where the means to the

end are ever-changing and where there is an active onslaught against negative conditioning that leads to anti-intellectualism and complacency. To accept this challenge there are many possible routes to travel. One is the humanistic approach and yet to travel this route one should be aware of the thoughts of Erich Goode,

> The only reality available to each individual consciousness is a subjective reality. Yet, this insight poses a dilemma: we must see in a skewed manner or not at all.[34]

Notes

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CHAPTER IV

A CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The intent of this paper has been a threefold process. First, to present collective ideas - study skills, definition, method, strategies - and secondly to indicate that even though we in the field of education use some or many of these skills and methods there still appears to be a discrepancy as to their effectiveness. To this point, this paper focused its intent: The point drawn was that something is missing from our implementation of these study-skills strategies and that this something is in reality an intangible collective entity which is composed of at least three parts. All three of these parts are in the realm of accepted, internalized attitudes with their resultant consequences as they are implemented.

Thirdly, after presentation of these three intangibles an umbrella approach to enclose all three was postulated. This was called a humanistic approach to learners. This approach allows for the development of all three of these intangible areas, but more, by its very nature, it encourages a reviewing of itself as an essential characteristic of itself. This allows for constant revision and updating of techniques, methods and implementations so that a consistent dynamic involvement would be the constantly strived-for achievement.

It is to the concept of improvement in awareness of a possible problem and a possible solution that this paper has striven, not as a panacea but rather more as a statement of personal awareness of the fact that something is missing in our learner-teacher-school relationship. A humanistic approach demands constant questions and strives to avoid an attitude or accepting complacency in regard to other humans, and schools are, after all, only collections of humans interacting for the sole purpose of helping the young attain knowledge.

It is for this purpose that this paper has been composed, to ask a question, and to pose at least one possible solution. To the success of this end then the reader is left to judge. To its applicability in the classroom, the results of this approach over the past decade in my special education classes attest to a partial, modest success.