

Nourishing a Thirst for Limitlessness

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Introduction

The purpose of this masters thesis is to lay the theoretical framework for a Neo-Humanist school that I plan to open in Weaverville North Carolina in the fall of 2005. This will not be a definitive blueprint for that school but rather a starting point from which to launch discussions and collaboration. Neo-Humanism is a basis of a philosophy propounded by P.R. Sarkar in the latter half of the last century. Simply put it is the practice of love for all creation. Sarkar did not define precisely what a Neo-Humanist school would entail rather he gave talks about a system of education might include based upon his understanding of the people, the world and the universe. The system of Neo-Humanist education is being developed all around the world ranging from open classrooms under trees in Africa and Haiti to a fifteen year old establishment in Merrick, New York. By principle it is an active, ever growing, and changing system which will vary according to the time place in which it is being applied. A clearer picture of what it might entail in the school I hope to help open is what follows. For the purposes of this paper I will refer to the proposed school as The Progressive School of Weaverville or PSOW although I have not actually decided that that is the name it will finally bear.

On the surface, I come from a position of relative ignorance, with a few years of focused study of education and a few years of elementary school teaching. However I also come from the position of 25 years of observation and critique of the society in which I live. From my early teenage years to the present I have actively listened to, questioned, studied, and learned about, people, this society, our world and myself. I have lived in four countries on three continents and visited over thirty others. I have lived in the first world and the third world. I have been a student, a dishwasher, an environmental activist, a business owner, a manager, a trainer, unemployed, a traveler, a disaster relief coordinator, a teacher and a myriad of other occupations. I have been a son, a brother, a friend, a husband, a stranger, and a foreigner. All along however I have been something more important. I have been a soul trying to make sense of the world it finds itself in. One of the many exquisitely poignant moments of my life took place at Dachau, the site of a Nazi death camp in Germany, the land of my grandfather. I had visited this place with my friends and we had been crushed by the inhumanity that was evidenced there. By the time we finished touring the grounds and the museum I was sobbing inconsolably. I came across the visitor's book or as I think of it, the witnesses' book. There were thousands of names and comments and beside each one was written the country of origin of the signer. I could not order my thoughts coherently enough to write something but I knew from the depths of my soul that I didn't want to be identified as a nationality or an occupation or a relationship although I was each of these things and much more. What I needed to write was that I was a human. Invested in that thought for me was the understanding that I had been given the body, intelligence, spirit and free will to make a difference in the world and in myself and that I had an undeniable responsibility to do so. Even in that purest moment, my ego hoped that others would get the message. I went outside and sat in the sunshine still sobbing for myself, for humanity and for the world. At that moment a little girl went flying by laughing blissfully as she chased a colored leaf over that darkened ground. The spell was broken and my spirit roared free, loosened by the innocent joy of another soul who at that moment knew no

boundaries and simply reveled in the splendor of existence. Had I been a more intuitive person at that time I might have understood that my life would be inextricably bound to the joy of children and the preservation of true freedom. As it was, it would take me another twenty years to recognize one of my great callings in life: to help open a school for young children.

Two other pivotal events in my life guided me on the way to this dream. While I was enjoying teaching English in Japan, I was introduced to the worldwide yoga and service organization, Ananda Marga. Throughout my life I had had the desire to develop myself spiritually and to somehow make a contribution toward the betterment of the world. P.R. Sarkar, the founder of Ananda Marga, which means the path of bliss, had developed an organization which welded these two desires together. Through spiritual practices, based on ancient tantric principles and austanga yoga, one could gain a greater understanding of one's true divine self while at the same time applying the insight and energy gained from those practices toward positive action in society. According to his system one could not progress far along either path without incorporating both into their life. Sarkar had laid out a comprehensive philosophical and practical framework for how society could move forward toward a more spiritual, egalitarian and universalist way of life. His work was far reaching and included ideas on the political, economic and educational transformation of society. These ideas greatly appealed to me and seemed to be an incredible synthesis of so many thoughts, beliefs and, values that I had held my entire life, although Sarkar had laid them in much greater depth and completeness. I decided to explore the Ananda Marga organization and to see how these ideas and practices were being applied in the world.

My search led me to a small private school called The Progressive School of Long Island (PSOLI) in Merrick, New York which had been set up in accordance with Sarkar's ideas on Neo-Humanist education. When I first set foot in this school I knew that it was a place unlike any other that I had ever visited. There was a vibrant energy of love and joy and the students were excited to be there and to learn. I decided to return for a three week observation so I could get a sense for what made this place so awesome. I spent that time in morning circle singing spiritually uplifting songs with the children, sharing their classrooms with them, talking to them and their teachers, and talking to the school's director, Eric Jacobson. At the time I was on a short sabbatical from volunteer service work in Nicaragua where I was living with monks and trying to decide if I should become one. After my visit I knew that if I did not become a monk I would return to the U.S. and get a job working at the PSOLI. What I had seen was so inspiring that I knew I wanted to become an elementary school teacher and help Eric open more schools. As events turned out I returned a year and a half later and began working. My experience there, marriage, and educational work through Goddard College convinced me that I wanted to open a school of my own. I hope you can find inspiration and food for your mind and your soul in them. The following thesis contains a blueprint for the school I hope to open. Because the scope of my work is so broad, the topics are covered briefly and not in great depth. What that school will be like is still not possible to know exactly. My thoughts and dreams are taking shape however. I welcome all feedback or suggestions that you might have.

Chapter 1

Historically Situating A Neo-Humanist School

Neo-Humanist education can be considered part of the holistic education movement which has a long history in Europe and in this country. Ron Miller (1997, p. 92) describes holistic education as schools and educators that seek to serve human beings in their entirety to reach their full potential rather than seeking to mold them to the needs of the society around them. From a holistic perspective we will best meet the long term needs of our society by seeing to it that we enable children to grow into that which is innately inside of them. In his book, What Are Schools For? Miller traces the roots and history of holistic education in America. What follows is a

brief and by no means complete synopsis of his work. Sarkar did not make reference to these theorists and educators in his work but many of the themes and ideas of Neo-Humanist education can be found in their work.

History of Holistic Education

Pestalozzi (1746-1827)

When I first started to learn about the long the history of the holistic education movement I came across a quote by Pestalozzi that said:

God's nature which is in you is held sacred in this House. We do not hem it in; we try to develop it. Nor do we impose on you our own natures. It is far from our intention to make you people such as we are. It is equally far from our intention to make of you such people as are the majority of people in our time. Under our guidance you should become people such as your natures - the divine and sacred in your nature – require you to be." (Gender neutral language mine) (Miller, 1997 p. 94)

I decided that this should be in the entrance of the school that I was dreaming of building as I felt that it clearly expressed the goal and ideals of that imagined place. Pestalozzi gave recognition to the idea that children need space and freedom to grow into themselves and that schools could be more limiting than liberating. He also clearly recognized that schools more often informed the child of what he should be, as determined by the society around him, rather than letting him develop into individual he could be. Also strikingly, Pestalozzi was aware that the people who run the school also have the ability to tremendously impact the personality and thinking of a child. He was determined that this should not happen and recognized the inherent right of each child to develop according to his own natural tendencies. Explicit in Pestalozzi's thinking is the idea espoused by Rousseau that the divine is within each child and needed to be nurtured and supported but not directed. This thinking was in direct opposition the prevailing Calvinist religious thought of the day, which remains in our society, that God and human beings are separated and that we are essentially bad and need to be redeemed by God. (Miller 1997, pp. 92-94) This concept of non-duality which runs through holistic thinking points to an essential core belief in the inherent goodness of human beings which, of course, includes children. Pestalozzi talked about the growth of the whole child. The physical, intellectual and spiritual development of the pupil were all important. (p. 97) Since then many holistic theorists and educators, including Montessori and Steiner, founders of the two most prolific and enduring holistic education systems have also emphasized the importance of this. (Nava, 2001, p.60) Pestalozzi and his colleague Joseph Neef, who emigrated to the U.S. and set up a school with William Maclure, also emphasized the importance of experience in education. Knowledge was not to be gained from a book but from doing and learning from that action. This idea was greatly expanded upon by Dewey (1990) and has recently been supported by brain research and learning theory. (Caine & Caine, 1991)

Froebel (1782-1852)

Pestalozzi's ideas spread around Europe and across the sea to the United States. In Europe Froebel started his own schools based on the belief of the inherent goodness of children. He emphasized play as a means for young children to educate themselves as opposed to forcing them to learn what adults felt they should as was and still is customary. The unfolding of the child would occur to the divine that was within them and this design was considered to be beyond the understanding or guidance of adults. (Miller, 1997, p.100) He believed that children would naturally learn by following their own inclinations. Froebel's technique has been accepted in the United States only as far as very young children were concerned and thus we saw the establishment of kindergartens. Although his ideas were not widely put into practice his thinking influenced future holistic educators such as Francis W. Parker and Maria Montessori. (p.101) John Dewey also explicitly applied his understanding of Froebals principles to the Elementary School of the University of Chicago. (Dewey, 1990, p.116)

The Transcendentalists (1830s)

The Transcendentalist movement in New England in the 1830s held individuality and spiritual development as the primary aims of education. Leading Transcendentalist thinkers such as William Ellery Channing and Ralph Waldo Emerson reacted strongly against the materialist thinking and spiritual shackles being put on Americans during the industrialization of this country in the 1830s. Their critique was holistic in that it held that the current society actively inculcated a "consensus consciousness" in American children and did not allow them to develop as their natures dictated. (Miller, 1997, p.102) Channing believed that experience, reason, observation and moral judgement were the basis for truth and learning. While he held spiritual development in the highest regard he rejected dogmatic thinking that told people what to believe. The human soul was to be the guide for human development. (p. 105) Channing believed that his ideas could be incorporated into mainstream without radical social change. His colleague, Emerson, felt that the social, political and economic institutions of the United States needed to be changed to support the growth of individuals rather than molding them to its own needs. (p.107) This idea clearly echoes those of Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel and is a central part of holistic thinking. Transcendentalist educator A. Bronson Alcott tried to put these views into practice at the Temple School in Boston in 1834. At the outset he claimed to want to educate the whole child:

The animal nature, the affections, the conscience, and the intellect, present their united claims for distinct and systematic attention. The whole being of the child asks for expansion and guidance. (p. 113)

In practice Alcott stressed spiritual development and awakening as the most vital aspects of his school. (p. 117) While this may be understandable given the spiritual void in many aspects of our society it should serve as a warning that we can make spiritualist schools without necessarily making holistic ones. The transcendentalist movement was either subsumed into mainstream education, as was the case with Horace Mann's treatment of Channing's ideas or rejected as too radical as was the fate of Emerson and Alcott. However the transcendentalists ideas and critique are still very relevant for the holistic education movement today.

Frances W. Parker (1837-1902)

Parker also held the belief that personal spiritual growth should be the paramount aim of education. Knowledge was not to be gained for its own sake nor for the sake of society but rather to help a person better develop spiritual awareness. Parker also brought moral training within this idea: "There is absolutely no separation of intellectual and moral power in education. Morality is the direction of mental power, is the movement of the being upward". (in Miller 1997, p.119)

Thus for Parker, moral development and education went hand in hand. He was not proposing that we indoctrinate children just we should not force dogmatic beliefs on them. One of the important areas that he focussed on was in the area of motivation. Parker saw punishment, rewards, grades and rankings as a means of motivating or controlling students to be immoral. He saw that we were generating fear and greed in our students rather than helping them develop naturally into their essential selves. (Miller 1997, pp.120-122) He urged that schools focus more on intrinsic motivation where the children's work and learning would provide them with joy and satisfaction. If the children would be allowed to work in a direct and sustained manner on areas of interest to them then their passion would be all the motivation they needed. Parker was therefore against skills based teaching which was and still is prevalent in the traditional school system. Rather than being a radical who wanted to change the entire American socio-political structure Parker was a reformer who thought society could be changed by creating the right kind of schools. (Miller, 1997) His ideas about motivation and self directed learning can be clearly seen in constructivist education theory today. (Kohn, 1996; Beane, 1997; Gibboney and Webb, 1998)

John Dewey (1859-1952)

Dewey played a major role in the development of key aspects of holistic education theory today. Like previous holistic educators, Dewey railed against the idea that students should primarily be taught through books. The primary means for understanding the world according to Dewey was experience. (Dewey, 1938) These experiences should be linked to the child's world and to the social world around her/him. The habits that the child formed would provide the impetus for new situations in which the child could deepen her/his understanding of the world. These experiences should be constantly evolving so the child is engaged in reflecting upon past knowledge and constructing new ideas based upon her/his new experiences in the world. (Miller 1997, pp.125-127) Some of Dewey's contemporaries took this to mean that a child should follow its own lead in deciding what and how to study. This was a similar idea to earlier holistic educators who believed that the child's soul would lead her/him to pursue knowledge most suitable to it. Dewey rejected both of these ideas. He believed that teachers should observe their pupils and create situations where the child would have experiences that would enable her/him to grow as noted above. Rather than the soul providing for the main impetus for learning Dewey felt that it grew out of social conditions and the intentional need for the person to make a meaningful connection to them. (Miller 1997, p.126) When the child was engaged in an activity that was meaningful to them and based upon previous experience she/he would be motivated to learn. Academic learning should be used to supplement and enrich experience not replace it. (p. 30)

Another important aspect of Dewey's work involved his belief in the proper preparation for children to take an active role in Democratic society. He saw that the traditional educational system destroyed the individual's ability to learn by promoting a set agenda that did not consider the individual but rather sought to prepare them for a specific place in society. Such an education created individuals who would do follow others ideas and not be able consider their society in a critical fashion. Dewey saw critical reflection by individuals as vital for the formation and continuation of a just society. (Miller, 1997)

The Progressives (1920s-1930s)

Dewey's work inspired the Progressive education movement. Many theorists and educators sought to utilize and build upon his work, but they did not necessarily agree upon how his ideas should be used. Miller divides the Progressives into two separate movements; the "child-centered education" and the "social reconstructionists". (Miller, 1997, p.139) The former characterized by Naumberg and in the tradition of Channing and Parker sought to change schools but not to aim for radical societal change. They applied Dewey's idea to bringing Democratic and reflective practices into the classroom. Also significantly, Naumberg introduced the idea that in nurturing the whole child we need to consider all aspects of her/his intelligence which could include music, art and creativity; an idea that has very much come to the fore in recent years with the work of Howard Gardner and the Project Zero team. (Gardner, 1984) Child-centered educators sought to shield the children from the social agenda but not necessarily change that agenda. (Miller, 1997)

The "social reconstructionists", such as Bode and Counts followed more in the tradition of Emerson and Dewey in putting greater emphasis on social change. They argued that it was not enough to simply change the classroom when the prevailing societal values were so diametrically opposed to what was being done in the classroom. The social reconstructionists pointed out that individualism in the United States meant freedom to become part of the economic machine and to exploit others if you could, but not freedom to develop as you wished. Like Dewey they sought to fight against the prevailing materialistic and mechanistic system by educating people to be able take an active role in social change. (Miller 1997, p. 146) Counts went so far as to advocate that teachers should purposefully indoctrinate our children into a movement for social change. (Counts, 1978) Such ideas scared many people and his and other social reconstructionists were dismissed as too radical and contrary to accepted American values. (Miller 1997, 149)

The dichotomy of the Progressives highlights an important question for anybody considering a holistic approach to education. Miller shows that historically the more radical approaches toward education and social change were doomed to failure because they flew too much in the face of entrenched societal norms and values.

However, the less radical approaches usually suffered the fate of having their ideas so watered down that they often made little impact on traditional education. (Miller, 1997)

Maria Montessori (1870-1952)

Maria Montessori started the Montessori school movement in Italy working with children who had been institutionalized for a wide variety of disabilities. Montessori sought to help children develop naturally on all levels. To this end she devised numerous materials to help them learn about themselves and the world. Montessori was influenced by the work of Pestalozzi and Froebel and sought like them to educate the "whole child" including spiritual unfolding. This unfolding however was to be guided by a disciplined approach to work and life. Montessori, like Dewey (1990), believed that freedom did not mean that children should do whatever they wanted. Rather by being in a disciplined organized environment, children would be free to pursue that which is most important, physical, mental and spiritual growth, without being pressured by societal expectations or their own disruptive impulses. Montessori was a keen observer of children as well as a scientist. Her education system considers learning stages for children as well as their all around development in movement and the arts as well as academic disciplines. (Montessori, 1964)

Rudolph Steiner (1861-1952)

Rudolf Steiner, founder of the Waldorf School movement, developed a comprehensive education philosophy called Anthroposophy. Steiner held that humans were made of the body, the soul and the spirit. He stated: "Anthroposophy is a path of knowledge, to guide the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the Universe." (in Brim, 1999) Steiner felt that the world had become too mechanistic and that in order for it to progress it needed to shift to a spiritual approach. Waldorf Schools, like Montessori schools, have carefully prepared environments where children are led to experience different aspects of life. Steiner emphasized creativity, rhythm, and a generally aesthetic approach to life as essential for the spiritual growth of the children. Like Montessori he believed that children go through stages of growth. Significantly, and in stark contrast to other education systems, Steiner believed that cognitive challenge in the first seven years of a child's life would be disruptive to their natural growth process. (Miller, 1997, 169) This highlights his main critique of Western society, that it focuses on the material and rational world and ignores the most significant part of human existence, the spiritual. Science and the scientific method do not need to be rejected just refocused on and accepting of the spiritual aspect of human experience. (p. 170) A vital aspect of Waldorf education is the building of the relationship between the teacher and the students. To this end teachers will stay with their class for throughout the Elementary grades. Another significant aspect of Waldorf schools is they are sometimes located in communities of families that follow Steiner's philosophical approach to life. Thus what is learned in school is also followed at home, which must be a powerful reinforcement of what the children experience. However, this contributes to the fact that Waldorf schools are generally isolated from society and given an almost "cult" status. This has limited their impact on education in general. (Miller, 1997, p.176) Waldorf schools have continued to thrive however as a new more holistic way of thinking has been coming to the fore over the past several decades.

The New Holistic Paradigm

We can see from this overview that various elements of holistic educational thinking have a long history. What is exciting is that recently many fields of human endeavor and experience are also arriving at holistic models. This change can be seen in the scientific community as well as in the emergent environmental and holistic education movements.

Fritjof Capra (1982) points to a significant shift in our perception of the universe and our place in it in his book The Turning Point:

The universe is no longer seen as a machine made up of objects, but has to be pictured as an indivisible, dynamic whole whose parts are essentially interrelated and can be understood as patterns of a cosmic process. (p.78)

Capra is a modern physicist but his prognostication of a fundamental paradigm shift in human thinking comes from the consideration of many fields of human study and experience that point to the interconnectedness of all creation. Carl Jung's theory of a collective unconscious points to the wholeness of human existence and its connection to the universe. His theories on intuition and synchronicity are also congruent with modern physicists linking mind and matter. (Capra 1982, p.362) Chaos theorists such as Robert Shea have provided further proof for the interconnectedness of the universe. (Holland, 2000) They have shown that there is similarity between the patterns of the microcosm and the macrocosm. Additionally they are providing evidence that even a small event in one part of the universe could cause tremendous changes in another. Mathematical constructs such as the Fibonacci series and the golden ratio have been found throughout the natural world and have also been seen to have an effect on the human mind. The field of medicine has seen a rise in holistic therapies that treat the whole patient as opposed to attempting to isolate an individual physical problem or symptom. These "discoveries" have led western science to a point where it is adopting an essentially eastern mystical and synthetic understanding of the wholeness of creation. (Capra, 1983)

Humankind's abuse of the earth and the rise of global environmental problems have led to a rise in environmental consciousness in recent years. Deep ecologists such as Arne Naess have pointed to the need for people to reconsider their view of where they fit into the cosmos. They challenge us to discard our anthropocentric thinking and move toward a geocentric way of thinking and living. (Dodian, 2000, p.26) Naess argues strongly that we need to move to a holistic paradigm immediately.

All natural systems are wholes whose specific structures arise from the interactions and interdependence of their parts. Systematic properties are destroyed when a system is dissected, either physically or theoretically into isolated units. (pp. 23-34)

While human beings continue to treat the earth as it is theirs to exploit then we hasten the destruction of our own lives as well as the rest of the planet's. The deep ecologists urge that we begin to work in partnership with nature so that we can all survive.

Eighty holistic educators met in Chicago in 1990 to address what they saw as the beginning of a paradigm shift in education. The result was the formation of GATE - The Global Alliance for Transforming Education. Over the next few years they formulated ten principles of holistic education. (Appendix 1) In his preamble to these principles Ron Miller gave a concise statement of why holistic education needed to be pursued in the current cultural context.

We believe that our dominant cultural values and practices, including emphasis on competition over cooperation, consumption over sustainable resource use, and bureaucracy over authentic human interaction have been destructive to the health of the ecosystem and to optimum human development as well. (Miller, 1997, p. 206)

Capra has defined our moment in history as "The Turning Point". He and other holistic theorists believe that we are living at a crucial time in the history of the world when humans can consciously become part a holistic earth and universe or we can continue down a path leading to greater misery and destruction. I believe that Neo-Humanist education provides one model for helping move us in a holistic direction.

Neo-Humanism

Sarkar's concept of Neo-Humanism was not meant for a particular culture at a particular point in history. His ideas were universal meaning that they could be applied at any time or place. Inherent in his thinking was that

Neo-Humanism would vary according to the conditions of the place where it was being utilized. Having said this it can be clearly seen that it is a holistic approach and shares many concepts with past and current holistic educators.

Development of the whole child

Sarkar like Pestalozzi, Montessori and Steiner, stated that children needed to be guided in the development of all aspects of their person.

The real meaning of education is trilateral development—simultaneous development in the physical, mental and spiritual realms of human existence. This development should enhance the integration of the human personality. (Sarkar, 1956, p. 56)

He felt that our current society put too much emphasis on physical and mental development and ignored the spiritual side of the child. Like Steiner and the Transcendentalists, Sarkar emphasized that the ultimate goal for a human being was to gain a spiritual understanding of the divine. By maintaining balance in the complete development of a child one allows that child to most effectively pursue spiritual growth. (Sarkar, 1982) This development would include a well rounded approach to learning including the development of all aspects of intelligence such as creativity and intuition as proposed by Naumberg, and the more recently the multiple intelligences of Gardner (1983) and the emotional intelligence. (Goleman, 1995)

Knowledge Comes From Inside

We have seen that holistic educators consider that it is vital that children be allowed to develop free from dogmatic or limiting influence from the society they are in. Sarkar stresses the same point. In his book, The Liberation of Intellect, (1982) he explains the influence of narrow minded thinking on children and society. He examines how human beings are afflicted by sentiments for the various groups they belong to, be they based on place, beliefs, or race or any other narrow definition of self. Children need to be educated free from dogmatic beliefs with an understanding that they are part of the whole. Their sentiments should be universalistic, which means that they should have a love for all aspects of creation equally. Neo-Humanist education seeks to foster a sense of wonder and joy in learning and existence in the children. This will feed their natural thirst for knowledge and help them become lifelong learners. Since the divine is within them they will be helped in unfolding their essential selves.

Exist in Society

Like Dewey and the social reconstructionists, Sarkar felt that students needed to take an active role in their society: "They are 'educated' who have learned much, remembered much and made use of their knowledge in everyday life. Their virtues I will call education". (Sarkar, 1998) What is important here is that education is not simply about learning or growth of the individual, it is about putting that learning to use. Sarkar coined the phrase "subjective approach through objective adjustment" in suggesting how people should lead their lives. By this he meant that we all have to work to develop and discover our true selves but at the same time we must be aware of our connection to the rest of creation and of our responsibility towards it. (Sarkar, 1982) Hence for Sarkar, true personal growth cannot be obtained without actively taking part in the upliftment of society and the world. It is not enough to facilitate the all around growth of our children if we do not engender a sense of social responsibility in them.

Beyond Humanism

Sarkar went one step past many historical holistic educators in that he recognizes the inherent worth of every aspect of universe. Humanism, or the recognition of the inherent right for all people to achieve maximum growth or happiness, has disregarded the inherent worth of other living and nonliving aspects of creation.

Working for the welfare of the entire world including plants and animals all animate and inanimate entities is an essential part of the Neo-Humanist philosophy. Sarkar therefore included the idea of deep ecology in his education system. (Sarkar, 1998, p.210) The more out of balance humankind is with its environment the more out of balance our society will be.

The goal of PSOW then, is as follows. To educate for the maximum development of the physical mental and spiritual aspects of the children while seeking to instill a sense of dynamic universalism and love for all people and the other living and non living parts of our cosmos. Dynamic universalism means taking an active role in their own personal growth and the growth of society and the world. How this great ideal can be worked out in a small school in rural North Carolina remains to be explored. What follows is a list of principles that I feel will guide the school toward achieving this goal.

Principles

1. School should be a place of joy and excitement and the prime medium of education will be love: Too often schools are places of fear and stress for children. This certainly runs contrary to the need to model love and joy and allow the children to feel safe and supported. The climate which permeates the school and the primary message that must be totally clear to the students is that they are loved and valued for who they are.
2. We take a holistic view of the child: Neo Humanist Education considers that every individual is made of different layers of mind. The development of the whole person implies a balance of the physical, mental and spiritual potentialities of the person. Here "mental" includes the intellectual, emotional, and social/ethical, aesthetic and intuitional realms, thereby spanning one's thoughts, feelings and actions. The full spectrum of the human being is integrated leading to greater wisdom, freedom, joy, sensitivity, compassion, benevolence and purpose. (Brim, 2001) An awareness of the inner self can be fostered in the child which will lead to an understanding of "who I am" and "what is my role in this world".
3. Our education is inherently values based: Human values form the basis of an emotionally-balanced, self-confident, self-disciplined, integrated and discriminating individual who is well adjusted and can take responsibility in society. It is impossible to take values out of the education process because our words, actions, and systems will proclaim our beliefs. Therefore it is better to be conscious of the values we want to encourage and emphasize in the school.
4. Each child will be taught as an individual. We recognize that each child will have a range of intellectual abilities and their own developmental level. Additionally all children are recognized as having their own tendencies and learning styles and individual areas of interest.
5. Learning is gained through experience: Merely receiving information is not the same as learning it. Students need to be actively engaged in the learning process to truly make sense of their world. Teachers will act as facilitators and guides. Students will be encouraged to construct their own meaning and to take as much responsibility as possible for their own learning. The teachers will play an important part in guiding, but not controlling student learning.
6. Social Equity will be emphasized in the school. In our current society special emphasis needs to be given to issues of equity. The imbalance between the sexes in this country and around the world is a major factor in the imbalance of human society. Issues such as race and the gross disparity between the rich and poor in this country and globally also need to be directly addressed. The School will engender a sense of social responsibility at the local, national and global level. Knowledge is not to be gained for its own sake but for the

betterment of the individual and society. For this it needs to be applied to the world around it in a socially responsible way.

7. The school will prepare students to be an active part of a community and democracy. Cooperation rather than competition will be the primary focus of the school. Additionally skills and habits important for the child to take a dynamic part in a democratic society will also be fostered.

8. Cultivation of a sense of deep ecology is essential. Emphasis will be put on helping the students experience their interconnecteness with the natural world and their place in that world. A love for the inherent worth of all creation will be engendered. The environmental crisis facing our world is extremely critical and a new ecological awareness needs to be awakened in our children. A geomorphic rather than anthropomorphic worldview should be modeled for the children.

9. Holistic growth of the staff, parents and community is important. Our children do not learn in isolation. All parts of our school community have important roles to play in the education of our children. We need to establish a sense of coordinated cooperation amongst ourselves. Not only do the students learn from the other members of their community, those members will benefit from the students. We cannot expect our children to strive to grow holistically unless we strive to do so ourselves, as well as fostering such growth in the entire school community. Parents in particular have a vital role to play in the school and in the educational growth of their child.

10. The internal message of the school should be matched by its policies and practices: Our beliefs and principles should be mirrored in all aspects of the school from its architecture to its methods and curriculum. It is nearly as important that we, as educators, say what we believe, as it is that we act according to our beliefs.

Chapter 2

Principles 1 - 5: The School and the Individual

The next two chapters will examine the theoretical, historical and personal reasons for why I feel that they are vital for the success of the school. Chapter two will deal with the first five principles which are primarily concerned with how the child is viewed and how their personal growth will be ensured. Chapter three will cover the second five principles which are more concerned with what will be emphasized in the school and how it will be structured.

As this school will be built in a certain place, at a certain time and into a certain society and world, I will also be comparing these principles to the more mainstream approach currently taken toward education. I have also visited schools and have gained some insight into what these ideas can look like in practice. Those experiences will also be woven into this discourse.

Principle 1. School should be a place of joy and excitement and the prime medium of education will be love:

What struck me most forcefully upon entering the Progressive School of Long Island for the first time was the feeling of excitement among the children and their complete lack of fear. As I spent time there over the next three weeks the teachers' great love for the students also became evident. They valued the students for who they were and took great pains to show them that in their actions. Having had limited exposure to elementary schools since my own education years before, I was struck by the wonder I found before me. Now that I am a teacher there I see that in reality it is by no means a mystically perfect place. However it is very special, and the love that I am allowed to feel and give to the students is a constant source of joy for me. I have visited other schools private and public and found great love for students there as well, and wherever I do I find children in full

bloom learning and living. Unfortunately, I have also talked to and read about many teachers who would like to bring this to their classrooms, but simply can not due to the current climate of public schools.

Roland Barth spent years visiting public schools and speaking with teachers, principals and administrators. He was also a principal himself for nine years. He describes the current state of most schools as seen by teachers:

Add to the routine work of school people the expectation to do more with less. More pupils per class, more evidence of pupil achievement, and more energy in a climate of decline in the number of jobs, in resources, in morale, and in public confidence. Many teachers would probably agree with what one fourth grade teacher told me recently: "Excellence is no longer an appropriate goal toward which I aspire. Now I'm satisfied if I can do it at all, let alone well." (Barth, 1990, p. 13)

This demoralization is heartbreaking. Add to it the fear of losing your job if your students don't do well enough on standardized tests and you don't have a good recipe for a classroom governed by joy and free from fear. Barth found that an important question facing many school people is not whether there will be a job for them the next year, but whether they would want one if it were there for them. (p. 14)

Even if teachers wanted to create a climate of love in their classrooms, many do not because of the inherent aims and expectations in a mainstream classroom. The goals of education in this country are far from those that I have listed for my proposed school. While educators may be interested in developing the minds of our young people, there is little interest in nurturing their spirits or in freeing those minds. On the contrary, traditional education seeks to prepare them to be part of the soulless capitalist machine. Ron Miller provided a chilling quote by a businessman:

Students are trained from an early age to adopt an entrepreneurial attitude - to understand that their skills are a product, and that the world is a vast marketplace where they should be prepared to compete, to create a demand and eventually to sell for the best offer. (Conn in Miller, 1997, p.66)

This aim is the very thing that drives us toward high stakes testing and the terrible situation described above. Happiness in our culture is equated with material and social success. What's more the spiritual aspect of happiness, which I hold to be the most important, has also been linked to materialism. Goodman (1992) identifies the adoption of the Calvinist ethos, that one's spiritual worth can be directly measured by one's material gain, as the underlying "spiritual" justification for our unbounded pursuit of material gain and social prestige. Individuals are rewarded by our society for being selfish. So while teachers throughout the country undoubtedly bring love to their classrooms and provide a wonderful example for children when they can, the system is strongly arrayed against them.

These ideas and this situation should be contrasted with the thoughts of alternative educators and learning theorists who call attention to the critical need for joy and love in education. The two most prolific and accepted alternative educators of the last century, Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner, both placed a love for the child at the heart of their education systems. The holistic education movement rejects the idea that children should be prepared to be parts of the machine, even if we aim to make them "intelligent" parts. Indeed the whole concept of intelligence is considered differently. When spirituality is brought into consideration, everything changes qualitatively:

When one comprehends the nature of love, when one has that quality of mind in the heart, that is intelligence. Intelligence is a comprehension or discovery of what love is. One might be adept in one's studies, and in one's work, capable of arguing with much aptitude and rationality, but that is not intelligence. (Jiddu Krishnamurti in Nava, 2001, p.47)

Therefore no matter how hard we strive to get children to understand facts or concepts, or to make connections and develop ideas, in the absence of love they have learned nothing. This is because a holistic education does not have limited economic, social, or egoistic success as its aim. A famous proverb says, "Even if a person gains the whole world, all of its knowledge, all of its possessions, all of its fame, all of its power, and he lacks compassion he has nothing". This is not to say that helping a child learn about the world that he lives in is not important. It is of course vital, as the child needs to take her/his place in that society and our society needs children to take a dynamic role in moving us toward a more humane, sustainable future. Sarkar's concept of subjective approach and objective adjustment is useful here. The true understanding of the world must come from inside of the child but to do that she/he must be thoroughly acquainted with the world in which they live. By emphasizing joy and universal love in a classroom we promote them as our highest priority. Children can easily sense this and our actions will always speak louder than our words to them.

On the more mental and physical levels, Carla Hannaford explains that there is a physiological link between emotional life and education. This link is stress. When a person or child feels stress they release hormones into their body. These hormones called glucocorticoids and are meant to prepare the body for a flight or fight reflex. A hormone called Cortisol constitutes ninety-five percent of them. Glucocorticoids also have a deleterious effect on the learning process. Hannaford notes that, "Research at McGill University concluded that increased Cortisol correlated with decreased learning and memory as well as with increased attention problems." (Damasio in Hannaford, 1995, p.162) It can hardly be stated any more clearly. Increased stress leads to decreased learning. It stands to reason then, that we would strive to create a school environment that is as stress free as possible. Not exactly the model mainstream education is following in this country. Classrooms ruled by fear of authority or fear of grades or test results are not likely to be conducive to the healthy expression of emotions. Joy in the learning environment is often the first victim of higher standards and high stakes testing. On the opposite side, if we create a positive loving atmosphere, we are more likely to create emotionally healthy children. We will create physically and mentally healthy ones as well:

If the emotions that are expressed by a child are listened to seriously, in a safe, supportive environment, the child will learn to express them responsibly. ... when we are able to responsibly express and resolve our emotions, or feel positive, exhilarated, excited, getting the AhHas of learning, we actually boost our immune system. (Hannaford, 1995 p.169)

We can see that there is a cycle here. Create a positive environment with a minimum of stress and you will increase learning. Increase learning and happiness and you increase the health of the child. This leads to an increased ability to cope with stress and the cycle continues. The environment that we create in the classroom then will affect our pupils on all three levels and is essential for providing the maximum opportunity for students to grow.

Principle 2: We take a holistic view of the child:

Howard Gardner has done the holistic education community a great service with his work on multiple intelligences. The idea that intelligence is not simply a matter of logical thinking and literacy skills is not new. Gardner (1983) freely admits he based his theory on previous brain research. However his work has brought the issue to the forefront of the education discussion. Although we can't say that his thinking has transformed the field of education it is no longer fringe thinking to seriously discuss addressing spatial awareness, bodily kinesthetics, musical awareness, and personal intelligence in schools. The fact that little has been done in mainstream education in response to this new acceptance has, I would argue, less to do with its relevance and more to do with who controls our public education system and what their goals are. As a Neo-Humanist educator the most exciting part of Gardner's work being widely discussed as a relevant, if not wholly accepted theory is that it brought the realm of contemplative science in from the fringe as well. This had the effect of allowing discussion about the benefits of yoga and meditation without seeming so radical that parents might be afraid to send children to schools that did such a thing. Of course Gardner and other theorists are not solely responsible for this shift in attitude but the general acceptance of their work has greatly bolstered the use of a

contemplative approach. The school that I am currently teaching at offers an excellent example. The Progressive School of Long Island (PSOLI) is located in a well-heeled fairly conservative section of the very wealthy Nassau County. Every morning the children gather in the gymnasium for "quiet time". The program starts with about ten minutes of stretching, basic yoga postures and possibly some movement activities. This is followed by the singing of songs with uplifting messages. The most common theme is "love is all there is". Following the singing, the children sit in meditation for several minutes. Not all children wish to participate in quiet time. Those who do not are asked to be quietly contemplative during this time. On a regular basis over the last fifteen years, the director has been threatened and sued over his use of meditation in the morning. Many parents would threaten to pull their children out of the school unless he changed his policy. He never did and always maintained the positive effect that quieting and focussing the mind had on the children. Over the last three years he has seen a difference however. Now more people are coming to the school *because* it has a meditation component rather than questioning or challenging it. While some of these parents simply practice and believe in yoga, others have been exposed to Gardner's and others' ideas and are happy to find a school that addresses some of the issues they raise.

Gardner breaks personal intelligence down into two parts: the interpersonal and the intrapersonal intelligence. Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to identify feelings and moods in other people, and to discriminate in our actions due to those moods. Intrapersonal intelligence governs one's ability to access one's feelings, and the ability to discriminate amongst them and use them to guide one's behavior. (Gardner, 1983) Emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995) is another concept currently being widely discussed. Again the emphasis is away from traditional views of intelligence as tested on I.Q. or standardized tests and more on how well children can access and utilize an awareness of their own and others emotions. The effect of Gardner's and many others' work is that general discussion of what aspects of learning and growth should be considered in schools has been greatly broadened. Academic institutions such as the mind/body institute at Harvard have been studying the linkage between the mind and body for some time. They have been joined by a host of new brain researchers who are making the physiological understanding of learning much clearer. Thus western analytical science has led us to the understanding that a link exists between the body and the mind and that we all have the ability to go within and know ourselves to a certain extent. They have brought themselves to the point where a more Eastern view of knowledge has been for thousands of years. Instead of taking pieces and adding them together to achieve an understanding of the whole (an analytical approach), the eastern approach is one of synthesis or a consideration of the whole to enable an understanding of the parts. Sarkar writes, "We should remember that morality, spirituality and humanity, and a happy blending of occidental extroversial science and oriental introversial philosophy is the very foundation of our system of education". (Sarkar in Brim 2001) Hence NeoHumanist Education would encompass both the analytical and synthetic modes of thought. Sarkar contends that body and mind are inextricably linked and connected to the subtlest form of mind which lead us to spiritual understanding. (Sarkar, 1998)

Spirituality is in and of itself difficult to define. From my personal experience and desire to be a spiritual person I would define spirituality as: Being as aware as possible, on a moment by moment basis, of the divine essence of myself and my interconnectedness with all existence and acting on that awareness. This leads to a way of experiencing and living in the world that is loving and joyful. Living a spiritual life is to be engaged physically, intellectually and emotionally not only in the quest to understand one's world and one's place in that world but to also strive to understand the incomprehensible, that is the divine nature of existence. This type of knowledge cannot be learned with the rational mind. It is the ultimate in experiential education because it can only be experienced and felt by the individual. James Moffet(1994) describes spirituality in this way:

It brings our daily efforts to improve our life in this world a sorely needed focus on being good for one another because we are not just thinking of ourselves. It energizes these efforts with a life force common to everything but working through each of us in a particular way characteristic of our individuality. It validates our inner life of thought and feeling and the sense of personal being in the face of depersonalization and preoccupation with physical things. It calls us back from surfaces to essences, to whatever may be at the bottom of things or beyond

our immediate kin and ken. It invites us to seek commonalities beneath commonplaces, for the sake of mind as well as morality. ... (p. 19)

This way of being is not something that can be given to someone. We can structure a learning environment where this type of "being" is modeled and supported. We can try to enable our students to have experiences and make connections that will help attune and train their mind to move naturally in consideration of these things but inevitably spiritual understanding comes from within the person. This type of living does not include or preclude any particular religious belief structure. It is a way of being and living and experiencing the world that is mindful of oneself, others and everything. Eastern mystical science has always emphasized the importance of experience over received knowledge. "Know thyself" has been a clear dictum. The same can be said of many Christian mystics as well who emphasized introspection. In our society Yoga has become much more mainstream in recent years. Its different elements emphasize the health and balance of the body, mind, and emotions. Yoga also encompasses the idea of action and service and introspection. Moffet compares the combined aims of Yoga to the traditional aims of our American society as originally intended by our founding fathers:

Were they offered as a means of ideal secular education one might never suspect that they issued from a spiritual discipline aimed at enlightenment or awakening. As a program these paths would fulfill the traditional American goals of citizenship, employment, and personal development. (p. 29)

Moffet points out that the majority of the framers of the constitution were Freemasons and had a strong albeit secret spiritual side. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness can easily be looked at as freedom from physical hardship, freedom of the mind from dogmatic beliefs, and the pursuit of lasting happiness which comes from understanding and experiencing the divine within all. The fact that these beautiful ideals have been warped to include primarily materialist goals does not denude their potential as the basis for a glorious society. (p.30)

Knowledge of self is a fundamental aspect of holistic education, but one which has been generally overlooked in the field of education in the United States. Nava (2001) expresses it this way: "In holistic education learning is not solely a cognitive function. It is not something that takes place only in the head. It is a social, physical, emotional, aesthetic and spiritual process." (p. 54) He goes on to explain a theory propounded by Ken Wilbur based on the insights of Saint Bonaventure. Wilber stated that there are three ways in which we acquire knowledge, three eyes which allow us to understand existence. The first he called the eye of flesh which allowed perception of the external world through the senses. The second eye is that of reason which deals in the realms of ideas, images, logic and concepts. He states that this eye includes but transcends the eye of flesh. The third eye is that of contemplation which is the receiver of direct wisdom of what is essential. The third eye encompasses and transcends the second eye. Nava (2001) contends that, "almost all modern education is rooted in the eye of the flesh, the empirical eye". (p.59) He traces the problem back several centuries: "The birth of mechanistic science in the seventeenth century was based on a particular development in the eye of flesh. Science was born as an empirical set of facts. It was a relevant and appropriate development of the eye of the flesh." (p. 59) He goes on to point out that this approach which he calls scientism became accepted as the only form of knowledge in the occidental approach. Wilber does not mean that we have stopped developing theories or ideas, just that the basis for acceptance of these ideas by society as a whole has been rooted in whether they can be proven scientifically. Thus knowledge gained through philosophical discussion or contemplative practices has not generally been accepted. (Wilber, 1983) Sarkar points out that this led to a dynamic expansion of our empirical and technological knowledge of the world but led to an to a fundamental imbalance because the other spheres of knowledge were left behind. He sees this as a major cause for the great increase in psychic malaise which has manifested itself in this country over the last century. (Sarkar, 1998) Edgar Morin holds a similar view, he says, "One aspect of the planetary problem is that the intellectual, scientific or philosophical solutions to which we customarily recur are the most urgent problems and the ones most difficult to solve." (in Nara, 2001, p. 61) The solution needs to come from outside the mechanistic model which has predominated our thinking over the last few centuries. To do this we have to change the way we consider learning and learners. As Maria Montessorri writes in the conclusion of her book about her educational method:

We have been mistaken in thinking that the natural education of our children should be purely physical; the soul, too, has its nature, which it was intended to be perfect in the spiritual life, - the dominating power of human existence for all time. (Montessori, 1964, p. 373)

Neo Humanist Model of the Mind

The Neo-humanist model considers six layers of the mind (kosas) acting within the three realms of knowledge, physical, mental and spiritual. It holds that each of these layers should be taken into consideration when preparing learning environments and situations for children. Each level of the mind is linked to the others and it is bringing balance to all levels that we can experience our connection to the divine.

Anamaya Kosa - Physical Body

The first layer of mind is the physical. The body is controlled by a complex system of glands known as the endocrine system, which secretes hormones into the bloodstream. Hormones effect all levels of the body's functions including the mind. "Over or under secretion of the various glands can cause mental disturbances and negative emotions such as anxiety, hatred, anger, or fear, which destroy health and piece of mind". (Ananda Mitra 1982, p.4) Sarkar stresses the importance of proper diet, exercise, and a positive environment for individuals to maintain hormonal balance. As children learn about and experience their physical world they can learn to live in harmony with it. A child's impulses, some of which they are born with and some of which they acquire, (Sarkar, 1991) will cause them to come into conflict with their environment. (Shambushshivananda, 2000, p.10) Therefore children need to gain an understanding of their relationships with the living and non-living world.

Kamamaya Kosa - Conscious Mind

The conscious mind has three functions: sensing, desire or aversion and acting. The functioning of the mind at this level is similar to that of animals. We experience the outside world through our senses, we develop a desire or aversion to what we have experienced and then we act on that feeling with our motor organs (hands, feet, vocal cord, sexual and excretory organs). (Ananda Mitra, 1982, p.6) For example hear a beautiful symphony, we like what we hear, so we move closer to the symphony. To function well at this level children need to learn practical life skills. These include not only survival skills but also those that will allow to function effectively in the world, such as interpersonal skills, mechanical and social skills. The use of these skills will be determined by the values that our children develop so these need to play a critical role in the education of the child. (Shambushivananda, 2000, p10)

Manomaya Kosa - Subconscious Mind

The subconscious mind has two functions: deep thought or reflection and memory. This is the level where most of our thinking occurs. It includes analytical thinking, problem solving and conceptual understanding. Rather than just gather information as the conscious mind does, this is the level where we can decide what that information means and how we should react to it. It is at this level that values and ideas are formed through reflection upon experience. Children need to learn to be reflective and to consider the consequences of their actions. (Shambushivananda, 2000, p10)

Atimanasa Kosa - First Layer of Superconscious Mind

The supra-mental mind is the realm of aesthetics and creative insight beyond the realm of rationality and logic. It includes performing any action in such a way that it brings joy and happiness all around. When we tap into this layer of our mind either through contemplation or the experience of beauty, we act in such a way to bring all of creation closer together. To help children be able to access this layer of mind we need to help them experience their connection to the natural world. (Shambushivananda, 2000, p.10)

Vijanamaya Kosa - Second Layer Superconscious Mind

This layer of mind is where we get intuitional insight. It can be compared to Jung's collective unconscious. It allows us to see beyond the needs and desires to everyday life and to consider what is true and eternal. It is the state of awakened consciousness. (Shambushivananda, 2000, p.11) It provides insight into long term consideration of where individuals and society need to be heading. In relation to teaching children it involves studying trends of the past to help consider where to go in the future and also the study of great personalities and thinkers.

Hiranyama Kosa - Third Layer Superconscious Mind

This is the layer of mind that deals with spirituality and the recognition of higher consciousness or universal love. Without recognition of this goal the other layers of the mind lose their meaning. This is the ultimate goal of human beings. People can have experience of this aspect of their mind through meditation or deep concentration on love. People who dwell in this state of mind are considered to be enlightened. For children it involves gaining discipline to follow contemplative practices so they can better consider the divine within themselves. (Shambushshivananda, 2000, p.10)

Since all of these aspects of the mind are considered present in all people it is clear that the holistic education of the child would include addressing all of them. An education based on this model would clearly encompass each of Gardner's seven intelligences. Ken Wilber (1983) presented a similar model where he links the three aspects of a being to what he perceives to be the three ways of knowing.

Aspects of a being Ways of knowing

Spirit Transcendelia

Mind Intelligibilia

Body Sensibilia

The lines correspond to five types of knowledge, each of which has its own epistemological relation. Relations two through four correspond to the use of reason to understand the physical, mental and spiritual worlds. Relation four includes empirical-analytical thought as we use reason to understand the physical world. Relation three corresponds to phenomenological-mental thought as we use reason to consider the world of ideas and symbols. Relation 2 deals with philosophical thought as we use reason to try and understand transcendental, transpersonal or contemplative sciences. Relation five corresponds to experiencing the physical world through the senses. Relation one corresponds to experiencing the spiritual world through direct knowledge of spirit including intuitional understanding of transcendence. (Nava, 2001, pg. 60)

Wilber's theory has many similarities to Sarkar's. There are also differences, the most striking being that Sarkar considers all aspects of a being to be in the realm of the mind. These aspects are therefore not separate from each other but exist together in a continuum. The balance of the lower layers of the mind allows for greater access to the upper layers. This points to the criticality of educating for the development of the whole child. Our societies current overwhelming emphasis on physical and basic mental enjoyment traps the majority of its members in their lower layers of mind. We need to address every aspect of a child's mind and seek to aid them in their journey toward accessing the higher realms of their mind. We must even go beyond the idea of teaching to separate intelligences. We need to develop an education system that integrates learning on all levels and considers the congruence of what is happening both internally and externally with our children. So even if Gardner's multiple intelligences are accepted and addressed in our education system, we will still not have gone far enough in addressing the whole child.

Principle 3: Our education is inherently and consciously values based

It is not possible to teach or live without expressing values. Our words and especially our actions carry with them an expression of what we believe. It is important to note that while I am strongly advocating the conscious modeling of behavior it would be completely contradictory to NeoHumanist thinking for a school to try and impose values upon children. Moral behavior can be modeled and promoted but the final decision on how to act and be must be conscientiously left to the child. Morality is needed to guide the intellect. Consider the words of Francis W. Parker. "There is absolutely no separation of intellectual and moral power in education. Morality is the direction of mental power, is the movement of the being upward." (Parker in Miller, 1997, p.119)

Educators are in the important position of being powerful role models for young children. It is vital that we consider what and how we model our beliefs. The most valuable lesson that I learned in college is that before we construct anything, be it an essay or a school, we should determine our belief in human nature and the cardinal values that are important in the light of that nature.

I believe that the inherent nature of all human beings is divine, that we are at our core, beings of universal love. I further believe that it is our nature to search for and strive to reach that core. Sarkar states, "Inside of every being is the thirst for limitlessness." (Sarkar, 1965, p.1) He also explains that we are ruled by our desires, these are what move the mind. Recall that the mind consists of layers ranging from the physical to the spiritual. Our desires also fall into this range. Each person has different desires and they change as we lead our lives. They can be broken down into four main categories.

1. Instinctual desires such as suckling or urinating.
2. The longing for physical enjoyment such as eating or comfort
3. The longing for mental growth and expansion such as learning
4. The longing for spiritual growth and understanding such as developing compassion for all beings

As we progress along the scale from 1 to 4 our desires can be said to be moving from the crude to the subtle. We all have desires in each of these categories. (Singh, 1998, p.56) How we act in life depends on how we channel our energy and control our desires. This will depend on our values and habits. What I mean by cardinal values are those that will allow us to be consistently moving from cruder to more subtle desires. For NeoHumanists this internal journey must be balanced with an external journey of aiding the society in which we live to move along this path as well. Our cardinal human values then will be those that aid us in this process. They are not necessarily the same as those of the society in which one lives.

Before turning to a consideration of what those values may be, let us look at the values that currently define our society and therefore our education system. The recent movie "BraveHeart" ended with the Scottish revolutionary leader William Wallace screaming "freedom" at the top of his lungs as the last words he would utter before the executioner chopped off his head. Historical and melodramatic considerations aside, this was a message sure to resound in the hearts and minds of the American people. Wallace was bound but the message was that he was free. In the United States we value freedom above all else but I would argue that we are bound. Jesse Goodman puts it thus:

Individual liberty, separation from past traditions and social arrangements, and personal freedom to prosper without restrictions were promoted as the founding values of American democracy and rooted the ideology of individualism deep into our psychic soil. (Goodman, 1992, p. 19)

We are free to the extent that we follow the dictates of our materialist society. Otherwise we can easily find ourselves poor and destitute. We are guaranteed the right to free speech but those who dare to speak against the prevailing system are labeled anti-American. It was less than fifty years ago that people who dared to express any socialistic sentiment could be railroaded into jail or blackballed. In our current climate we are told that if we don't support America's war on terrorists then we are on the side of the terrorists. Hence we have freedom to think and act in a certain way but not necessarily in accordance with our own conscience. To be fair, we do have much more freedom of expression and to choose the paths of our own lives than do most people around the world. However our economic freedom to prosper comes at the expense of the poor in our country and around the world. In order for the people of the United States to enjoy the lifestyle that we lead, we consume over 25% of the world's resources. (Brown & Flavin, 1999) It is only by exploiting other countries human and natural resources that we can sustain our economy. Furthermore our capitalist system is based on the creation of winners and losers in the economic struggle, thus creating an ever increasing disparity between the "haves" and the "have nots". Even more insidious than this are the mental bonds we put upon our youth. Individualism is promoted as the highest value but is not truly allowed in our country. Since our corporate structure demands but a few independent thinkers who can materialize their creative thoughts the rest of the society need not develop this ability. Hence the structure of our schools, which is becoming more overtly corporatized all the time does not promote true individualism. Instead it promotes and enforces social conformism. (Goodman, 1992) What Dewey said in 1930 is even truer today.

The influence business corporations exercise in determining present industrial and economic activities is both a cause and a symbol of the tendency to combination in all phases of life. Associations tightly or loosely organized more and more define the opportunities, the choices and the actions of individuals.

An economic individualism of motives and aims underlies our present corporate mechanisms, and undoes the individual. (Dewey in Goodman, 1992, p.19)

Thus freedom as a value in this country is not a freedom of intellect, it is a freedom to pursue our desires constrained by the norms of our society. We live in a time dominated by short term materialistic thought and opportunism, dominated by a culture of immediate gratification of wants and desires without serious consideration for the long term consequences of our actions. It is little wonder that I observe this type of thinking daily while teaching my 5th graders even at a school which tries to stress different values. It is an uphill struggle to get them to think about and experience another possible set of values.

Neohumanist education also values freedom but it is of a different nature. We seek to promote freedom from the bondage of dogmatic and narrow minded thinking and freedom from being ruled by crude desires. Dewey (1938) put it this way:

The crucial educational problem is that of procuring the postponing of immediate action upon desire until observation and judgement have intervened. ... Overemphasis on activity rather than intelligent activity, leads to the identification of freedom with immediate execution of impulses and desires. (p.69)

Thus we seek to help the children develop habits that will allow them to have mental harmony. This will give them the freedom to be who they really are on a deeper more meaningful level. These type of habits depend not only upon knowledge of self but also on a strong moral base that promotes the long term good of the individual and society. It does no good for us to teach children to control their immediate impulses and use their judgement if that judgement is going to be based on shallow selfish values. The values listed below represent those of ancient an Indian culture which emphasized the all around growth of the individual while also preparing her/him to be a positive force in society. These universal cardinal human values, which are oriented towards creating mental harmony, include principles of relating to society and principles for personal integration. They are divided into two categories, those that help the person live harmoniously in society and those that help the person live harmoniously with themselves.

Neo-Humanist Values

Societal Values: Personal Values:

non-harming cleanliness

benevolent truthfulness mental contentment

non-stealing service

universal love inspirational study

simple living self-knowledge

Let us consider each of these habits individually although it should be clear that

they are all interconnected.

Non-harming - This relates to both mental and physical injury. In fact it is the mental injuries that we cause each other that usually go the deepest and last the longest. Scars from childhood often affect people for their entire lives. Emphasis is also placed on intention. Even if nobody is hurt by what somebody does, it needs to be carefully considered. The concept of non-harming extends to thoughts, words and deeds. The goal is to remove the tendency from the mind as well as from overt actions. This is not a theory of complete non-violence. If someone is attacking you or someone or something else than it may be appropriate to use force to stop him or her. The hope is that children will learn to consider whether violence is truly necessary in any given situation and avoid it if it is at all possible.

Benevolent Truthfulness - As with non-harming this should be taken to be an internal as well as external habit. It is not simply the action of using words for the benefit of others that should be practiced but also the habit of being aware on a moment by moment basis of the potential effects of our words. This goes beyond the concept of whether it is okay to lie and looks at the intent behind our communication. Are we speaking for the benefit of others or are we suiting our own needs? A few examples may help illustrate the point. Suppose somebody is being chased and they take refuge in your house. A minute later an angry person with a gun pounds on your door and demands to know if you have seen anybody. The truth would not be beneficial at this point. Similarly if a child gives a report that is not great compared to others in the class but they have given an extremely good effort and achieved beyond their normal ability then it would not be benevolent for children to give feedback that hurts the persons feelings. In practice I have observed that most children are very kind in their feedback which shows just how sensitive they are to having their own work judged. The trick is to learn and model how to be critical but real and kind at the same time.

Non-Stealing - Most societies, including our own, consider stealing to be wrong. This principle goes further than this. Charging more than something is reasonably worth or taking excessive profit would both contravene this value. Also taking credit for or profiting from somebody else's work would also be considered wrong. As with the previous two values non-stealing is as much an internal struggle as an exterior one. While I was teaching English in Japan I asked a group of my students if they would partake in a number of activities such as cheating on their taxes or not paying a train fare if possible. Initially I was very pleased that I had a deeply moral set of students. However when I questioned them as to why they wouldn't do these activities their responses almost universally dealt with the possible negative ramifications if they got caught. There were few responses that indicated that it was simply wrong or bad for society if they acted in such a way. Those students practiced non-stealing externally but not internally. By following this value we hope to erase the desire to have something which is not yours not simply the action of taking it.

Universal Love - This leads to an understanding of the connectedness of all life and an overcoming of one's egoistic tendencies. By seeing the divine in all living and non-living aspects of the universe we become more empathetic towards all of creation. This will also lead to viewing all actions and deeds in a positive light. It relates the tendency to take a wide and long term view of actions and how they relate to the big picture not just our short term immediate needs or desires. People who can see the infinite behind all actions and deeds will also develop humbleness as they come to see themselves as part of the whole and not simply as a lone soul that needs to make it on its own.

Simple Living - In our materialistic world we have come to regard accumulation as a value. People are often judged by how many material objects they possess rather than on their actions. A survey of the U.S. population across all income levels from the very poor to the very rich once asked how much money people felt they needed to make in order to live comfortably. The answer was the same across the board; people felt that they needed to double their salary in order to live comfortably. The principle of simple living means that each person should aspire to have those possessions that will allow her/him to be comfortable while not being excessive. Some people may need to have a car or even two houses while others would not need these things. The underlying idea here is that we gain an understanding of what we need to be happy and we lose the desire to have more simply for the thrill of acquisition and the pride of ownership. As with all of these values there is a critical internal element which would be to lose the desire to acquire more than we need.

Cleanliness - This relates to our thoughts as well as to our physical person. If we understand that it is wise to keep our bodies clean and healthy for optimal functioning then we should be able to see that the same goes for our minds. If we allow our minds to focus on negative or crude thoughts that is what they will become. The company we keep can play a major role in our mental cleanliness. Everyone can observe what happens to people when they are in the company of others. It is very natural for us to adapt our behavior to be more like the people that we are with. People are social animals. So if children spend time with short tempered or nasty people they are much more likely to become angrier and nastier. Conversely if they spend time in the company of inspirational people than they are more likely to be inspired. A few less obvious examples might be television and video games. Constant exposure to the glorification of violence means that this is what is in their mind. The principle of cleanliness is meant to reinforce the reflex that we can see in children to avoid seeing or talking about things that are, in their words "nasty". Children have a natural desire and need to learn about the world but there is no need to expose them unnecessarily to aspects of it that will

Mental Contentment - The idea of mental contentment is that we should be able to accept limitations on our behavior and material situation. This can be seen to run contrary to the concept that life, one's society and especially ones parent's owe you everything that you want. In a sense it is the opposite of the driving force presented in the American Dream. We have been taught not to be content but to be constantly striving for more physical objects or freedom to pursue our desires. This principle does not advocate stagnancy. It is natural for humans to want to grow and be happy; the difference is in our state of mind while we progress. If we are always running after our desires in the short run then we don't give ourselves time to grow. We stay in a constant state of stress and desire and thereby lessen our ability to grow on all levels. While a lack of contentment might lead people to achieve a great deal in life in their pursuit of their desires but this pursuit will be endless and contentment and spiritual growth will not be gained.

Service - Once again the approach has to be both internal and external. We want the children to move beyond the idea of serving others because it makes us look good. We grow on the inside when we serve others at a sacrifice to ourselves. Service without sacrifice is not internal service. For example, A multi-millionaire who gives a thousand dollars to charity to improve her/his image is not really doing service because she/he has plenty of money and a thousand dollars is not going to be felt. On the other hand a hard working poor person could give that same thousand dollars but it would be their entire life savings. This is the true service and one that will lead to mental equilibrium, as we know inside that what we did was right. Again it is the intention of an action that makes the difference. A person who selflessly helps others can much more easily see the

greatness inside of himself or herself. Service can be done to other people or to plants or inanimate objects. The common factor is that one is giving of oneself for another without thought of a return.

Inspirational Study - This relates to the proper study of true human culture as opposed to studying something that will give short-term pleasure. If we want our minds to move in the direction of spiritual understanding then we need to provide them with uplifting material. Children need to be exposed to greatness and to worthy ideas so they have models for their own behavior as well as exposure to ideas that will lead them into a more subtle appreciation for the world. Merely ensuring that children are reading is not enough, careful thought needs to be given to what books and ideas should be promoted for children to read. While they should be free to make their own choices we also make choices. If we recommend or have certain books available for children then we are implicitly saying to them "we value what is in this book."

Self Knowledge - Consider again the words of Pestalozzi that I quoted at the beginning of this thesis. He stated that the children should become that which is inside of them, which the divine meant them to be. How can somebody become something if they cannot know what that something is? To develop through the layers of mind and to reach the ultimate goal requires an examination of the self. Neohumanism holds that the ultimate learning must come from the inside, through introspection and deep reflection not just upon our actions but upon our essential selves. Once again our society does not promote such a practice. A century ago William Ellery Channing bemoaned the state to which we have relegated the individual while we were supposedly holding individualism as our highest value. He said, "It is a sad thought, that the infinite energies of the soul have no higher end than to cover the back, and fill the belly, and keep caste in society." (Channing in Miller, 1997, p.104) Channing recognized the critical necessity of self-knowledge. "Of all the discoveries that men need to make, the most important ... is that of the self-forming power treasured up in themselves." (p. 106) In our current materialist society we are not encouraged to look at the roots of our actions, merely their end states. We have taken the Calvinist thought that success is proof of morality and laid other considerations on the shelf to be carefully disregarded. A moral person acts upon her or his understanding of the world and of oneself. They are not swayed by what others tell them is true or important. However to gain this moral strength a person needs to be able to rationally consider the world and themselves.

The application of these values needs to go beyond a do's and don'ts mentality. The children need to experience them and be helped to see how they relate to their lives and to the lives of the society. As they become part of their lives the child will experience the inner joy and balance these values will bring to their lives. These ancient universal values then need to be combined with values that we need to focus on specifically in the society in which we find ourselves. The dominant ideology promotes competition amongst individuals and accepts a gross disparity between "haves" and "have-nots". The school will seek to foster a more cooperative way of living that considers the long term implications of actions not only on the human community but also for the planet as a whole. It will seek to promote a culture that carries a reverence and deep appreciation of life.

Principle 4: Each child will be taught as an individual:

We recognize that each child will have a range of intellectual abilities and their own developmental level. Additionally all children are recognized as having their own tendencies and learning styles. Most educational models are based upon theories of child development as is only appropriate. We want to have a sense of where children are at in their physiological and mental development before we try and help them learn or grow. The question then becomes which developmental model will we follow. First and foremost I feel that it is important to note that development of the child is taking place in the physical mental and spiritual spheres simultaneously. To treat each child as an individual requires that we consider all of these aspects. With the current explosion in brain research, such as the work of Damasio, (Hannaford, 1995) our understanding of how the brain functions and how children learn has been greatly enhanced. Their work adds cutting edge scientific support for educational theorists such as Dewey (1938) and Piaget (1983) who have noted different stages in childhood development. Vygotsky (1983, p.84) added the important concept of "zones of proximal development". His idea was that children could not learn something that was too far beyond their current learning. Lawrence Kohlberg

(Kohlberg and Mayer, 1972) has developed a model of moral development which should be integrated into any holistic view of the development of a child. Other educational theorists such as Sarkar (1997) and Steiner (1969), coming from a more spiritually minded perspective focussed on the best medium of instruction for children depending on their age and developmental level. While I feel that it is vital to have an understanding of these models and that we can use them as guideposts in our observation and understanding of children it is paramount that we keep in mind that each child is different and will develop along her/his own path. These paths may be very similar and hence we have developmental theories, but care should always be taken to not unduly narrow our thinking about a child due to a theory.

What inspired me the most about the work of Maria Montessorri (1964) was how she developed a system of education based upon keen observation, clearly done with a focused mind and a loving heart, of her students. Such observation forms the cornerstone upon which we need to base our individualized instruction. Vygotsky (1978) also espoused observation as a critical part of teaching in a developmentally appropriate way. He offered a specific way to view child development and learning. He differentiated his approach from both the behaviorists and the developmental theorists who believed that child development occurred independently from learning. The behaviorist approach, which has traditionally driven our education system in this country, postulated that development is an elaboration of or substitution for innate responses. It focuses on acquired habits and modes of behavior. Instead of learning being preceded by a child's developmental level, Vygotsky saw them as interrelated. The biological growth of a child can also be linked to mental development. Hannaford notes that this is supported by Damasio's findings that emotion, body, and reason are physiologically inseparable. (Hannaford, 1995, p. 54). Vygotsky also decried the idea that development and learning proceeded at the same time. He considered the mental age of a child to be critical not its intelligence when determining how to teach them. Therefore a child of seven who was developmentally stunted for whatever reason might have a mental age of three. That is, they may think like a three year old. However this does not mean that they are not intelligent. If the problem is removed and the child can be taught in an appropriate fashion then they can achieve according their intelligence. (Vygotsky, 1983, p. 79) This is an important distinction for educators today where IQ testing and standardized tests are often used to determine levels and potential for children at an early age. The year I spent teaching a student who had been labeled as developmentally behind the norm, gave me what I feel to be a good perspective on the question of developmental models. I found that his development and age did not match Piaget's (1983) or Gardner's (1983) models. Some of his activities placed him in one category while others placed him at a different developmental stage. However, even though his behavior was not consistent within their models, they did provide a useful framework as to where he had progressed in each area. When I determined activities for him, I would try to push him to grow a little in each area of his studies. The method I was using corresponded closely to Vygotsky's "Zone of Proximal Development" which looked at what learning was possible given a child's developmental stage. Those stages were linked to biological functions, age, and/or disabilities but were critically associated by Vygotsky to learning. (Vygotsky, 1978 p. 84) He learning preceded development. Good teaching would include introducing ideas, skills and concepts to a child that were just beyond their ability. Hence to measure a child's developmental level a teacher has to see what activities could be achieved with help, rather than independently.

NeoHumanist education does not subscribe to one particular theory of child development but does offer a few critical guidelines for teaching young children. Children of elementary school age can be divided into two categories roughly divided around the age of seven. In early childhood we are in "The Stage of Wonder". Many psychologists (Piaget; 1983; Steiner, 1969) (Pearce 1977) agree that very young children still have an awareness of unity. They lack the dualism that develops in humans as they get older. For the young child everything emanates from themselves, they are the center. There is no distinction between the inner and the outer world, between the self and the universe. (Anandamitra, 1986, p. 115) The young child lives in a dreamlike state of vivid images and clear intuitions rather than rationally analyzing the world around them. It is interesting to note that this intuitive feeling of oneness is what we strive to return to once the rational mind develops. Neohumanism holds then that we should not impose rational thinking on very young children, rather we should help foster their sense of oneness, of wonder and sympathy with all life. (p. 116) The mediums through which this is done will be primarily play. Stories, and rhythm through music and movement will also allow the

children to explore the world in a fashion that is conducive to their current state of mind. All subjects can be taught to the child but the world should be introduced through these mediums. The second stage runs from around the age of seven to age fourteen and thus covers the rest of the elementary school years. Sarkar called this "The Age of Heroism". It corresponds to the development of the corpus callosum as determined by neurophysiologists (Hannaford, 19 82) and the increased ability the child to think rationally. It is at this stage when the ego starts to develop and the child perceives itself as separate from the world. This goads a strong desire to learn about the world and their place in it. Work and play can mean the same thing to the child. Stories and play should be geared to helping the child find its place in the world. Children at this age love challenges and as they overcome them they develop strength, courage, determination, and other attributes that will allow them to lead productive positive lives in the world. (Anandamitra, 1986, p.128)

Another powerful model that will guide the teacher's approach in the classroom will be Kohlberg's theory of moral development. (Kohlberg, 1972) The following is based on a presentation by the director of the Progressive School of Long Island, Eric Jacobson. (Jacobson 2001) Kohlberg's main idea, which he supported by studying children around the world, was that children pass through identifiable stages in their moral reasoning. As we have already noted that moral development is critical in a Neo-humanist education it is important to understand how this can be achieved. Kohlberg's classifications can be outlined in the following manner.

Kohlberg's Model of Moral Development

Level	Stage	Social Orientation
Pre-conventional	1	Obediance and Punishment
	2	Individualism, Instrumentalism and Exchange
Conventional	3	"Good boy/girl"
	4	Law and Order
Post-Conventional	5	Social Contract
	6	Principled Conscience

The first level of moral thinking, pre-conventional, is that generally found in elementary school students. Children behave according to socially acceptable norms because they are told to do so by some authority figure such as a teacher or parent. This obedience is compelled by the threat or application of punishment. The second stage of development is characterized by a view that right behavior means acting in one's own best interests.

The second level of moral thinking, conventional, is that which is generally found in society. Stage 3 is characterized by an attitude which seeks to do that which will gain the approval of others. Stage 4 is oriented to the law and responding to the obligations of duty.

The third level, post-conventional, is one that Kohlberg felt is not reached by many adults, but is clearly an aim of a NeoHumanistic approach. It is characterized at stage 5 by an understanding of social mutuality and a genuine interest in the welfare of others. The ultimate stage is based on respect for universal principles and the demands of individual conscience. Kohlberg believed in the existence of stage 6 but he could never get enough subjects to define it. Interestingly Neo-Humanists would probably want to add a stage 7. That would be gaining a spiritual understanding of the interconnectedness of life and acting appropriately. This would mean going beyond the demands of our individual egos and acting on the principle of universal love.

When all of these models are taken together we can see that developing a holistic picture of each child will be a complicated and detailed process. However it is a critical one if we are going to appreciate and guide each child individually. We also have to recognize that different children have different rhythms and interact with the world in different ways. In our careful observation of the child these could prove to be just as important as where they are developmentally. Two models that could be used at the school to gain insight into how a child would learn best include the Dennison Dominance profile and a framework used in dance and movement therapy.

Dr. Paul Dennison developed a model for determining how individual people vary in their learning styles depending upon which hemisphere of their brain is dominant and which of their senses they rely on most to process information. The method is outlined in detail in Hannaford's Smart Moves. (1995) "His approach is to develop basal dominance profiles that identify the lateral dominance of eyes, ears and hands in relation to the dominant brain hemisphere." (p. 178) This means that certain people, left brain dominant, focus more on details, verbal based, and linear thinking. They are likely to thrive in an environment which stresses these abilities, such as the traditional American classroom. Other people or right brainers are more able to take in the big image, feel emotional connections, access emotions and learn kinesthetically through movement. (p. 185) Modern brain research has shed some doubt on whether our learning styles actually corresponds so specifically to dominance on one side of their brain, however learning styles can be generalized. Many people have been helped using Dennison's classification and Brain Gym (p. 111) exercises. Therefore while probably few people are totally one way or the other most will have a dominant and weak side. Note how this ties in nicely with holistic education methods and goals that emphasize growth of the whole child. It would be valuable to understand where a child is most naturally inclined to succeed physically and mentally before we consider how to present ideas and activities to her/him. Another aspect of Dennison's analysis examines likely reactions to stress, which can shut down certain avenues for engagement with a student. For example certain people, such as myself according to a Dennison profile, rely solely on verbal functioning when stressed. Therefore it would not behoove me to try and communicate through writing under such a condition. As we have seen stress can play an important role in whether somebody is learning optimally or not. Having clues to help students deal with stress will make us much more effective teachers.

In a workshop given at Goddard College in August 2001 Will Freeman outlined a simple model used by dance and movement therapists to consider the natural rhythms of their patients. Will broke movement down into four linear scales that covered the four factors of movement.

Time sudden/quick ----- sustained

Force strong -----light

Space direct ----- indirect

Flow bound -----free

Different children will naturally move in different ways both physically and mentally. This can have enormous implications for how we can best reach them as learners. Involving a learner that is predominantly sudden and direct in nature in an activity that is sustained and indirect, such as a general observation of a large varied space over time, might be excruciating for that student. Whereas asking them to observe specific aspects of that space several times over the course of a day would be more likely to end in a result that the child would be happy with and take something meaningful away from.

Anybody who teaches even a few children at a time knows it would be nearly impossible to structure each activity or learning environment to their individual specific needs. However developing an understanding of students is essential if we are to treat them individually and guide them as effectively as possible. We can keep their strengths and weaknesses in mind while teaching and facilitating their learning.

Principle 5: Learning is gained through experience:

Discussion of the last principle led us to examine "what makes a child an individual?" and "how does that child develop?" Closely linked to those questions is the question of "how do we learn?" The answer to this question, which will clearly inform the teaching methodology of our school, must be considered on a variety of levels. John Dewey (1938) strongly espoused the idea that experience is essence of education. Many great thinkers have supported this thought. Albert Einstein said, "Learning is experience. Everything else is just information". (in Hannaford, 1995, p.50) Carla Hannaford's brain research into how the brain grows and the effects of sensory input upon it also bear out this idea. Although neither Dewey(1938) nor Hannaford(1995) consider the spiritual element of learning and knowledge their emphasis on experience can be considered to be especially relevant there. Let us first turn our attention to the physiological explanation for the importance of experience in education.

When we are born our brain is only slightly organized. As we interact with the world it starts to become more and more complex. The way this happens is that whenever we receive sensory stimuli the neurons in our brains form extensions to other neurons. As we continue to take in information we continue to form more and more connections. If we experience a situation through different senses then the neural connections that are formed are also interconnected. Hannaford states:

The process of nerve cells connecting and networking is, in reality, learning and thought. As associations are made and information is synthesized, pathways become complex networks. These networks can be altered as the system continues to self-organize in ever more complex ways. (p. 18)

Thus as we grow and learn, the brain forms and becomes increasingly more complex. All experience is channeled through the brain adding to its complexity causing it to create internal structures and systems of information processing. These systems allow us to access and use that information to better understand and grow in our environment. Our bodies are designed to take in our experience of the world through each of our five senses. These sensations inform us about the world around us and also give us an image of ourselves in that world. They provide the raw material from which knowledge, thought and creativity can emerge. (p. 30) Notice that our entire body is involved in the learning process. Each of the senses adds to the overall experience. If we limit the input to one or more of the senses then we don't simply lose certain information, we also lose all of the interconnections that input would have allowed. As we grow different parts of our brain grow and we become more able to make more complex connections to the world. Every one of our experiences creates new links in our neural net or increases the density of an existing link. Activities that we do over and over again lead to the formation of strongly interlinked groups of neurons in the brain. In effect they create smaller network systems in the brain. These systems link with other small networks to provide for increased efficiency. The more we use these groups the larger they become and the faster our thinking can become along them. Thus an action that we do over and over again can become almost automatic. As we encounter new information our brain will seek links to experiences that it has already received stimuli from. It will then make new connections to that experience. Those new connections are thus allowing ways for information to travel and thus allow new thoughts. If we receive a stimulus that is not easily or strongly connected to our neural net then that stimulus is unlikely to form exciting new connections or thoughts in our brains. Hence experiences and sensory inputs are learning. They form the basis from which we can generate ideas and think. Given this fact let us look at what education in this country has too often entailed. Instruction has generally been given through the medium of words chosen by a teacher or in a book and expected to be learned by students. Hannaford compares this to rich sensory education. She writes, "Words, though important, are only bits of information. They are not experiential and only poorly substitute for the directness and freshness of hands-on learning". (Hannaford, 1995, p. 49)

I have experienced this comparison many times in my classroom. We were exploring a certain aspect of social studies through an experiential simulation activity. The kids were actively engaged for an hour and a half, asking many questions and making many intelligent observations about the study at hand. When the activity ended they were happy to talk about it for about ten minutes, then their questions and enthusiasm had dried up.

The students still wanted to share their experiences but it was difficult for the rest of the class to stay as interested. The words were too far removed from the experience for them to have any great interest in them. Before long they were begging for the activity to begin again. Hannaford goes on to link emotion to thought and emphatically resists any separation of the two:

People make distinctions between thought and emotion in the same way they make distinctions between the mind and the body. However, despite our deeply ingrained assumptions, these distinctions don't actually exist. Body, thought and emotion are intimately bound together through intricate nerve networks, and function as a whole to enrich our knowing. (p. 50)

Note that this corresponds exactly to Sarkar's model of the human mind. (pages 29-31) Consider the class I mentioned above. As the students became disinterested they lost the emotional impetus to learn. Thus even if they tried to be interested in what was being said their learning was severely compromised because of a lack of genuine emotion or connection to the discussion. The students themselves felt this and strongly expressed their desire to go back to the simulation. They lacked the capability or desire to take their emotions from the concrete to the abstract. Yet without those emotions the experience became empty and their attention wandered.

Dewey's Views on Experience and Education

Let us move now to a consideration of Dewey's views of the importance of experience in education. He came at the idea philosophically rather than biologically as would a neuro-physiologist. He carefully observed students and children and inferred the proper method to ensure their maximum learning. Dewey (1990) not only developed a theory about experience and education but he helped set up the Experimental School at the University of Chicago to test and refine his theories. It is clear, however, that his assumption that we assign meaning to the world through our construction of ideas based on our experiences is well born out by the brain research surveyed above. Dewey considered the motivating factors behind learning. According to Dewey children have four main instincts for learning and these are the greatest tools educators have for teaching them.

Now, keeping in mind these fourfold interests- the interest in conversation, or communication; in inquiry, or finding out things; in making things, or construction; and in artistic expression - we may say that they are the natural resources, the un-invested capital, upon the exercise of which depends the active growth of the child. (Dewey, 1990, p. 47)

These are the main impulses that guide the child. They are by no means the only ones that drive her/him but they are the strongest. For Dewey children are constantly reacting to their inner impulses as stimulated by their environment. The goal of the teacher then is to structure the environment to feed into these constructive impulses. It is the interaction of the internal drives with the objective world that create experiences and it is through experience that we learn. Dewey criticized traditional education because it relied too much on external factors and controls and ignored the inner workings of the child. This approach creates boredom and conflict with the children. Compare this with the dictum of Sarkar (1982) who said that we should have: "a subjective approach with objective adjustment". (p.1) According to both thinkers therefore we need to first consider what is happening within the child and then create our learning opportunities from there. In this way we will be going with the will and desires of our students. Keeping their interest in what they are learning will cease to be a consideration because they will be doing that which they wish to do.

Dewey added another important dimension to his thinking. He recognized that learning experiences should not take place in isolation. They should happen along a natural continuum and extend as long as necessary. He states, "The two principles of continuity and interaction are not separate from each other. They intercept and unite. They are so to speak the longitudinal and lateral aspects of experience." (Dewey, 1937, p.44) By continuity he means that whatever we are encountering in the environment, be it a new concept in math or manual skill, it should be related to the place, physical and mental, where that child is at. A connection can be seen with this idea and Vygotsky's zones of proximal development. A child cannot learn too far in front of its

own development. A fact understood without anything to connect it to becomes a solitary idea in the brain with perhaps a few tenuous connections. Perhaps some learning will take place but it would be as, Dewey says, by chance rather than by design. (p. 44)

What Dewey is talking about is what is so often absent from traditional classrooms today where schooldays and the curriculum are broken down into broken separate unrelated parts. Each teacher gets to teach a certain subject for a set number of minutes. The child then goes on to the next subject and so on throughout the day. At the classroom level, traditional education is based on learning details from textbooks which break information and ideas down into small packages. This method not only stifles a child's impulses to make connections and construct meaning but can actually lead to confusion. I know this because not only was I educated in this way but I have seen it happen with my own students. All too often I have been covering a topic or idea with children and have gone as far with the activity as seems educationally valuable. I then switch to another activity or topic and begin preparing another learning environment. Even if I have determined this new activity to be in line with student interests and linked to other experiences that they have had I can get into trouble. What happens is that the students want very strongly to relate what they have just learned to what they are currently learning. They often try to apply principles or ideas that they have just mastered to the new situation even if it completely unrelated. In short they desperately want the continuity that Dewey rightly regards as essential. As this continuity may not always be possible, I have learned that it is vital to prepare the students for the transition so they don't have to experience this cognitive dissonance. I can only imagine the waste of potential learning that a completely compartmentalized system of education entails. There is no question that learning takes place but it does so in spite of the educational method rather than because of it. Gibboney and Webb, (1998) in their book about the basic principles of effective teaching provide an excellent description of what should guide us in preparing an environment for learning:

Every great teacher selects problems for thoughtful and meaningful analysis that are within the experience of the learner at the start of the learning, related to the problems of everyday life, and require thought or reflection about the consequences of actions taken to solve the problem. (p. 101)

There are many important ideas packed into this principle. Some we have just considered. One that we haven't considered yet is the spiritual aspect of learning.

John Miller (Miller, Cassie & Drake, 1990) describes three different types of teaching methods: the transmission position, the transaction position, and the transformation position. The transmission position is characterized by the transmitting of facts, skills and values to the students. The student is considered to be mainly a passive receptor of knowledge. He links this to a view of the universe in which reality is seen to consist of separate, isolated building blocks. (p. 3) This is the method seen traditionally in our schools to this point. The transaction position is linked to the scientific method views the student as an active participant in the curriculum. The main focuses are on problem solving, and the application of knowledge in social contexts, and the development of cognitive skills within the academic setting. The transformation position focuses on personal and social change and a connection the environment as paramount. This is the holistic position that emphasizes the interconnectedness of everything and the spiritual element of learning. (pp. 4-5) As Gibboney and Webb (1998, p. 101) maintained that it is not enough for students to simply have experiences, they need to reflect upon them to make them truly significant. Reflection is a vital component of spiritual being and learning. From a transformation point of view this reflection would deal not only with self reflection, but with the relation between the individual and the society. This was precisely the method promoted by Dewey and the social reconstructionists. (See page 57) We can see that Dewey's theory of the paramount importance of experience, with perhaps a greater and more intentional emphasis on the emotional and reflective elements of experience, will bring us a holistic method for educating our children. This method is completely supported by current brain research and traditional Eastern aesthetic science.

The Roles of the Teacher and Students in Experiential Learning

This entire discussion begs the question: What are the roles of the teacher and the student in this school that will put experiences in education at the forefront of the learning process? Americans have a hard time with the concept of a master. We emphasize freedom so much that the idea of subjecting our will to that of another is quite alien to us. Of course the fact that we do this every day with regard to obeying laws or professors or our boss seems to elude us. Somehow the fact that these people are merely representatives of our government or institutions that we choose to attend allows us to delude ourselves into thinking that they are not masters over us. When I lived in Japan and studied the martial art Aikido at a traditional dojo I learned that in one sense we are right but in the ultimate sense we are fundamentally wrong, in the sense that nobody is your master until you psychologically make them so. Most Americans remain masterless, although they live in a condition of mental bondage to the rules and regulations of the institutions they have "chosen" to be part of. However to think that this gives one freedom is far from true. I learned that by submitting myself to the will of a wiser and more experienced master I could develop true freedom. I still had to learn the moves and techniques of Aikido but I had a guide who helped me experience those movements, thoughts and sensations that led to true understanding. Without that guide I may have figured out those things but it would have taken a lifetime if I had succeeded at all. By surrendering my will I gained the freedom to experience the world in a way most efficacious for learning. When the class ended I was then freer to exist as I wanted to in the world having grown from the experience. My master did not ask me to learn Aikido he simply took me where I wanted to go. He took my drives and desires and guided me on how to best use them. In the process he showed me the importance of self discipline, taught me how to be more aware of my surroundings, and helped me realize why I wanted to learn Aikido. He did all of this without the two of us being able to communicate verbally because we didn't speak each other's language. Incidentally, one of the secrets of Aikido is to move energy where it wants to go. If we consider the Neo-Humanistic view of a child as wanting to gain an understanding of the infinite, then it is the role of the teacher to act as a guide to help the child along the path which it wishes to tread.

Now let us look at traditional elementary education. The children are told what to do and how to do it. They are presented with the facts that they need to know and the vocabulary that is important to learn. If they do this then they will be considered educated. Advocates of "Core Knowledge", which is so popular these days with its "Everything your x grader needs to know" (Hirsch, 1996) series have recently claimed that they are moving more toward a transactional method of teaching. They are claiming that this base of knowledge is necessary in order for learners to construct meaning on their own. While there might be some validity to their argument of building a wise experiential base the idea that this will promote free thinkers is dubious. Who is determining what they should learn? Who is determining what buildings, be they physical or mental, our children should build with the blocks we prepare for them? Who decides how we know whether the student has "learned enough?" When the decisions about curriculum are entirely decided externally to the child and the measurement of learning and educational success is also determined externally then there is little of the child in the learning process. As we have seen from our study of Dewey, for an experience to be valid it must come from the impulses of the child. When somebody else is determining what is important, learning is impeded. Even if the child can remember enough to pass tests there is little chance that the learning went beyond a superficial level. Does Dewey then advocate an entirely child led curriculum? No and neither do I. In fact he was rather horrified that his original ideas were taken by some to totally reject external direction and to rely on the child for absolute guidance. (Dewey, 1938) He felt the need to write his book Experience and Education in response to those that took his ideas too far.

When external authority is rejected, it does not follow that all authority should be rejected, but rather there is a need to search for a more effective source of authority. Because the older education imposed the knowledge, methods and rules of conduct of the mature person on the young, it does not follow, except in the case of an extreme *Either-Or* philosophy, that the knowledge and skill of the mature person has no directive value for the experience of the immature. (p. 20)

Dewey explains that through the interaction of the student with the teacher more effective guidance will occur. Let us look back at my Aikido teacher. He took what I brought him and from his own experience and wisdom guided me to understanding. Many of the things that he taught me I didn't even know I wanted to learn. The opposite of this can also be true. Some things that the child may learn or be driven to learn will not be beneficial for them in the long run. Therefore it would not be wise to simply allow children to pursue their own interests completely unguided by more mature people. Some experiences can be seen as negative. For example, when a child has an experience of pleasure after following a core impulse without regard for judgement or reflection then a negative behavior is reinforced. It is natural for children to look short term. Most lack the wisdom to appreciate the path their life will take them down. It becomes incumbent on the teacher then to take the longer view. To anticipate events and experiences that may occur to a particular child as time goes by and to provide experiences are connected to something the child already has experienced and that will provide the child with the knowledge and habits to continue to grow throughout their life. The teacher then needs to structure the environment of the children and guide their experiences in such a way that allows for their considered impulses to drive their actions in positive directions. There should be little surprise then that we look to the teacher to be a master. Not a master in the sense that they command the bodies and minds of their students but a master in that they can observe their students and take appropriate action to guide their education experience in the most effective way possible. The role of the teacher therefore is extremely critical in student centered experiential learning. They must not only help children understand what is in the world around them but they must actively strive to understand the needs of their charges. They must strive to be masters of life because this is what their students are interested in. Not only that but they must be masters that children want to interact with. This is a tall order for anyone but it is an exciting possibility.

I have spoken of the need for the children to have an internal approach to growth that is balanced by their need to take an active role in society. The first five principles that I have discussed have dealt with the view of the individual child and its development. The next five principles will be more concerned with how the child will be guided to interact with its environment and how that environment will be structured. These internal and external aspects are, of course, completely interconnected. Just as they are in individual beings.

Chapter 3

Principles 6 -10: The Child and Society

Principle 6: Social Equity will be emphasized in the school.

An essential part of holistic education is that it sees the education system as a major component for the betterment of society. This is hardly a new idea but it is once again different from the approach traditionally taken in education which seeks to prepare children to take their place in society rather than to mold it. It is a brave and revolutionary step to actively try and create a new generation of moral thinkers who will then become the primary forces for change and progress in our society. Knowledge is not to be gained for its own sake but for the betterment of the individual and society. For this it needs to be applied to the world around it in a socially responsible way. Neo-Humanism sees that there is a great need for societal change and that the primary elements of that change in the future are the youth of today. Sarkar makes this point with his usual eloquence:

Our world needs a great change in order to move forward and progress. A new order, a new wave, will have to take the place of the old to remedy all the physical, social, intellectual and spiritual ills of the world. As the vanguard of this new movement, the youth are indispensable. It is the youth, and the youth only, who have the vigor to bring about the necessary change. It is the youth who have the resilience to change and adapt and implement the vision of a new society. Without this vision, without the youth, the world will continue in the

morass of suffering, injustice and exploitation that is our present social condition. It is the youth of the world only who can help bring about the new world order and the vision of a new humanity. (Sarkar in Brim 2001)

The world is not a static place, it is forever changing and wherever we look there are different problems and concerns. The issues that a school needs to address therefore will vary according to time and place. We just finished briefly considering the role of teachers in a student led education. Recall that part of that role is to take a long term view of the potential future of the children and consider what experiences will be best for them to have. Now one can see how it would be easy here to promote whatever social agenda one desires in the minds of youth. Indeed examples of this can be seen around the world. Indeed one would be hard pressed to find a state that does not actively instill a strong sense of nationalism in its children. I have lived in five countries around the world and have not found one which does not do so. This includes Denmark which was by far the least nationalistic of the group. Every country seeks promote a social agenda that supports its prevailing beliefs and customs. In a sense NeoHumanistic education is no different except that it promotes universalism and a holistic view of existence. People who are fundamentally against these concepts probably will look at such an education and call it dogmatic. This however is a specious argument. Dogma is something that is limiting to the mind and accepted without deep thought and reflection. Neo-humanism holds that as people are freed from the bondage of limited thinking they will be able to experience universal love and determine its truth for themselves. Anyone who has spent time around young children has seen the love they have for everything until they are given a reason not to do so.

What then are the ills that create this "morass of suffering" in our current society? The imbalance between the sexes in this country and around the world is a major factor in the imbalance of human society. Issues such as racism, and the gross disparity between the rich and poor in this country and globally also need to be directly addressed. The School will seek to engender a sense of social responsibility at the local, national and global level. Paulo Freire (1992) writes movingly about the pervasive sense of learned helplessness amongst the poor of Brazil in his book The Pedagogy of Hope. He describes that although the people knew that they were poor and badly mistreated their minds had become so accustomed to the fact that they could not see how their actions contributed to their own exploitation. In many ways this is the case in the United States today. Perversely it is not poverty that has enslaved the minds of Americans but material affluence. Our relative material success and social gains have led us to believe that we are a shining beacon to the world around us in terms of how a people should construct a society. The reality is quite different. We don't see our own chains that cause us to work so many hours a week, that have so many children returning home to empty houses because both parents work, that have us believe that material goods can somehow alleviate our psychic pain. We have allowed ourselves to be blinded by our prosperity. We, individually, are definitely aware that all is not perfect in our country but the general feeling is that we are an extremely just and morally advanced society and that our problems are insignificant compared to our greatness. Our relative comfort and fear of losing that comfort has allowed us to be blinded to the suffering and injustice in our own country and that which we contribute to around the world. The power elite in this country who jointly control our economic, political and social power through huge corporate multinationals, the enormous influence of money in politics and their control of the mass media attempt to determine who, what, and how we believe. There are a few narrow sentiments that are utilized and inculcated in us by the people in power to maintain this situation. Sarkar (1982) labeled these sentiments, geo-sentiment and socio-sentiment.

Geo-sentiment is feeling for one's country or of a particular place. Now this is not in and of itself a bad thing but when we start basing actions on those feelings rather than on rational and moral reasoning we can do great harm to others. The carnage of World War II provides a poignant example of the danger of nationalistic thinking. Socio-sentiment is love for one's society or group and its values. Once again there is nothing particularly dangerous in that until that love blinds rational and moral thought and brings people to take actions for their own good and at the expense of other people who don't happen to be part of that group. The long history of racism in this country provides a sobering example. I have personally known many individuals who I consider to be extremely moral in most areas of their life but are totally racist.

One powerful way that these sentiments are shaped is through what and how we are taught in school. One need only make a quick perusal of Howard Zinn's A People's History of the United States(1995) to find a vastly different picture of American history than was presented in public school. By shifting the perspective from that of the power elite to that of the people we can gain a very different view of social justice in our country.

Another way socio-sentiment is inculcated in society is through the messages given out by our politicians and media. The recent crisis precipitated by the tragic events of Sept. 11th has provided a chilling example of this type of thinking. Immediately following the attacks on the World Trade Center, revenge against anybody who dared attack the U.S. was immediately called for. We heard that we were going to war against terrorism. Before too long we were dropping bombs on Afghanistan and inevitably innocent civilians were killed. The word from our leaders was that we were at war and that anybody who did not support that war was un-American and an enemy. Numerous people both in and out of this country pleaded with the American people and our leaders to consider the long term reasons behind these terrorist attacks and to use this tragedy as a call to examine American economic and foreign policy. People have brought up the incredible suffering that we have caused and abetted around the world. These voices are either stifled or simply drown out in the sea of nationalist rhetoric. The attacks are painted as an attack on freedom and our way of life. We have determined to do anything possible to root out the perpetrators. What we haven't done is to become determined to root out the causes of the hatred. To do so would involve a rational look at our society and its actions around the world. To be sure we are not the only country or group to use geo and socio-sentiment to do as we please in the world.

These sentiments are used around the globe by large and small communities and groups to justify selfish actions. Therefore it cannot be the goal of a school to promote one group or society over another. It is a vital principle of the school however to take an active role in preparing children to combat such narrow-minded thinking. How can such a serious undertaking be addressed in an elementary school? By stressing universal values, such as contentment and love for all, by teaching about various cultures of the world, and by helping children to find and consider diverse and contradictory points of view we can help keep them free from dogmatically accepting even their own societies' dictums. It should be clear that our school does not plan to teach against our country and its values, rather it will teach for all countries and for positive universal values. Let us look at three of the main problems that plague our country today that I feel need to be actively and consciously addressed throughout my proposed school.

Addressing Inequity

To be sure the United States is an impressive country both economically and in the quality of our dynamism toward life. Compared to most areas of the world we seem to have impressive amounts of freedom and room for growth. But as we talked about before, is this true freedom? Does it range across our entire society or is it just the elite few? What about the millions who are poor and illiterate, not to mention the billions around the globe who suffer to feed the western economic machine? Is our country so advanced or do we simply think we are? I have had the blessing of having lived overseas for ten of the thirty seven years of my life. I have lived in Japan where the ratio between richest 1% and poorest 1% of the population is 4 to 1 compared to over 200 to 1 and climbing in our country. (Brown, & Flavin, 1999) I have lived in Nicaragua and seen a level of poverty unimaginable in this country, where living in a home with a dirt floor with walls made of scrap metal without access to clean water is the norm. Yet the country is rich in natural resources. The money goes to the ruling elite (put into power and maintained by U.S. interests) of that country and mainly into the coffers of large multinational corporations primarily based in the U.S. My experiences do not make these facts any different but they do make them very real to me. However few people in this country are interested in listening to such ideas let alone considering changing them. Their minds have been captured by the dogmatic belief that we are the greatest and most moral country in the world. This belief is fed daily by our politicians and media and is so ingrained in our popular psyche that anybody who speaks against it is viewed with suspicion. People who are enmeshed in socio-sentiment find it almost impossible to be faced with such a reality. Short term gain and pleasure are promoted as good things for us and for our country. Investing in companies with little or no concern for their values or practices has become commonplace in a country where few have time to read to their

children let alone consider the morals of companies on the stock market. However, more and more the government puts pressure on people to become part of our capitalist monster. Once we are in the belly of the beast it is virtually inconceivable that we would then want to hurt ourselves to help faceless people on the other side of the globe. Even if for a moment people do accept that it would be better that we change they immediately feel a sense of helplessness in trying to bring about that change. So many people have said to me, "you may be right but what can we do?"

An important part of that answer for me lies in elementary school. It is exactly the faces of those people suffering in our own society and around that we have to make our children aware of. This is not to say that we are going to push horrible images and facts in front of 5 year olds and say "look how horrible." Rather we are going to help children to see that there is always more than one way to look at any situation, to see that everything they are told or observe may not be exactly as it seems. We want our children to understand that they need to always use their own minds and moral considerations when they consider any situation. The morals and values and way of thinking that we develop as children will have a more profound effect on our characters than anything else in our lives. What we are exposed to in elementary school therefore is of vital importance for the rest of the world. If our lessons in school focus on the triumph of materialism and the great gains that it has helped us achieve then that is the message that children will receive. The underlying message is that we are American and it is our right as the leader of the free world to live as we do. This nationalistic feeling is drummed into children from an early age and it gives us the ability to gain acquiescence from our population for any number of immoral acts. This acceptance often takes the form of simply not paying attention. The same message is carried over to the question of social class in this country. The "haves" justify their disproportionate share of our society's wealth by saying that it is the American way and that the "have-nots" are un-American if they protest against it. Our mainstream history books and lessons don't mention the numerous protests and sacrifices that our ancestors made in order to try and win a more egalitarian way of life in this country. Instead they glorify America's actions abroad and at home and leave no room for consideration of the values that will govern their lives as their minds become trapped in the dogma of nationalism. Unless these presumptions are consciously challenged in our schools then our students will enter the world with these misguided beliefs as well. This is especially true because they will clearly be exposed to the mainstream thinking outside of school, from friends and relatives, through T.V., and advertising. The school may well be the only place that these assumptions are challenged. Thus we have a responsibility as educators of young children to see that our charges have the opportunity to challenge these beliefs and to see a more well rounded picture of the world and this country. We need to help them get a more global perspective on the historical and current actions of their nation.

Addressing Racism

My 5th graders seem to provide me with a microcosm of our society. Their views often mirror those evident amongst a large majority of the population on a variety of issues. Since they are greatly influenced by our society this is perhaps not surprising. Unfortunately I feel that the comparison that is more appropriate to make is that the prevailing views of our society often seem to mirror those of ten year olds. Opinions are based on short term narrow minded thinking ruled by desires, needs and fears as opposed to serious in depth observation and the use of moral judgement. It is not that people lack the ability to do so, it is just that their minds have been swayed by social programming to not bother considering the ultimate consequences of their actions. (Goodman, 1992, p.15) It is simply not part of our culture to deeply question. Thus many people are easily swayed by socio-sentiment. Most 5th graders lack the knowledge and ability and experience to make an unaided judgement about an issue so they rely on what others tell them. I am shown a powerful example of this every year when we study immigration policy in this country. We study a quote from Henry Cabot Lodge a senator from Massachusetts in 1896. Lodge says: "If a lower race mixes with a higher race enough times the lower race will win out. We must not let this happen in America." Taken together with fears of not enough jobs and rising crime this argument proves quite persuasive to most 5th graders. They understand and support Lodge's desire to keep out the lower races which threaten their society and security. Of course when I ask them to consider who those lower races might be and what makes them lower, a whole different dynamic overcomes the class. We are

blessed to have an extremely multicultural class with an even mix of minorities and European "whites". A fair percentage of our parents speak English as a foreign language and some not at all. Our immigration projects have revealed that a majority of our ancestors couldn't speak English on their arrival in the United States. When it was a nameless and faceless "other" that the children were being asked to exclude from the country they had a majority in favor of Lodge's racist comment. When asked to look around the class and choose whom to exclude the injustice of his remarks became evident. Of course racism goes far beyond immigration policy. Remarks like Lodge's although now too dangerous to make publicly are still common in our country. There is a great fear amongst the majority white population that the growing percentage of minorities in this country threatens our fabric of life.

Racism against African-Americans is still rife and their mistreatment has become institutionalized. Reading Jonathan Kozol's Savage Inequalities (1991) gives us a disturbing view of the way our education system is designed so that it perpetuates the marginalization of many minorities in the inner cities. The message sent to these children is clear: "you are not as valuable as others in this country". The best that can be said is that the U.S. as a whole is accepting of minorities living in this country. Our goal however, is less to embrace their rich cultural heritage and become a truly multicultural nation and more to homogenize them and have them adapt our values and norms. This, once again, is the function of the mind narrowing socio-sentiment and the dominant culture's attempt to stay dominant even in the face of great diversity. In her book, Justice and the Politics of Difference (1990), Iris Young has identified five factors of oppression of faced by dominated groups in society. "... exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence". By cultural imperialism Young means that those in power render the oppressed people invisible by stereotyping them and labeling them as deviant or different. (Henkin, 1998, p.17) Henkin goes on to point out that people of color and women in the United States both suffer from all five forms of oppression. (p.18)

From an educational standpoint teaching social equity is not about specifically promoting specific cultures in the classroom. It is about honoring all cultures and allowing the children to experience them. (p.18) We can help our children to see the similarities between people rather than the differences. Additionally we can help our children reflect upon the beliefs that have already been inculcated into them by society or their parents. We can help them look at the facts about immigrants in this country rather than be ruled by fear. Elementary school children actually have an advantage over adults. They are still relatively free from the burdens of adulthood; their minds are still free. It is the role of the school to help keep them that way.

Addressing Sexism

We have a belief in this country that women have gained a great deal of equality. This may be true however we have a long way to go. While we espouse equal rights for women they still face a gross inequities in our country and around the world. Wages are still different for the same jobs in this country. Comparatively few women hold positions of real power and we have never had a female president. Even a cursory view of how women are portrayed in the media shows the dominant view held and perpetuated in this country. John Berger, in his book Ways of Seeing (1977) says men define themselves by their actions and the power that they have. Women define themselves by how they are viewed by others. They are generally viewed as passive and considered according to what they can do for men. Berger shows that the history of Western art and visual images have continually reinforced this stereotype. This is cultural imperialism as described by Young (1990) in the last section. What is more disturbing is that this mindset is also common in many women. As Freire (1992) found among the poor of Brazil, women have been repressed for so long they see this condition as normal. Although the feminist movement in this country has made great progress over the past thirty years, the effects of thousands of years of male dominance in most parts of the world are not so easily dismissed. The United Nations reported that discrimination against women is a major problem around the world: "Gender-based violence against women crosses all cultural, religious, and regional boundaries and is a major problem in every country in which it has been studied." (Henkin, 1998, p. 38) Although women's rights are now accepted at least outwardly in this country sexism still persists.

Roxanne Henkin (1998) traces these problems back to elementary school classrooms. She explains that when teachers discriminate against girls it teaches discrimination against women and this leads to violence against women and girls. It has been shown that boys are more often called than girls in a normal classroom. They have a tendency to demand and get more of the teacher's attention. Henkin believes that this is at least partly due to normal male and female patterns of communication. (p.31) Men are more oriented toward doing and achieving and women are more oriented toward building community. In a busy noisy classroom the boys are much more likely to interject or yell for the teacher to call on them. Girls with something to say are often overlooked in the fray. (p. 27)

Social conditioning can even be more insidious. Although I abhor the objectification of women I am painfully aware that I have imbibed the message for so long that it is inside of me and can come out in seemingly innocent ways. As a teacher who loves my students, I often try and find ways to help them feel good about themselves. One way I do this is to be friendly and pay them compliments. It is perfectly natural to do this and also naturally I compliment them on things that are important to them. The ten year old girls in my class are already very conscious about the clothes they wear and how they look. I often find myself complimenting them for the nice colors they wear. Part of me says "so what, that's natural"; another part screams that I am reinforcing a stereotype that they have already unconsciously accepted. By dressing nicely they get attention and approval. The fact is I do like the colorful clothes they wear and would compliment a boy as well. However boys don't normally care what kind of clothes they are wearing. Society has not taught them that how they dress is that important. For the girls I am reinforcing a message that is subliminal and powerful. To compensate I try to hold my tongue about the clothes and find ways to compliment them on areas of their lives that will reinforce positive values. I compliment them on many other aspects of their work and personality. This is a level of awareness that I believe needs to run through every aspect of a school.

Although the condition of women in this country is not equal, it is better than in many places around the world where women are still treated as property of men and endure terrible hardship every day. P.R. Sarkar (1994) relates the genders to two wings of a bird. He notes that society has been trying to fly with one wing for too long and that if we hope to make any real progress we will need to awaken and liberate women from their exploitation. (p.139) Part of our educational agenda will be to constantly provide experiences for all children to examine and combat stereotypes before they become too deeply rooted in their psyches. As with combating the cult of materialism in this country, this needs to be a constant battle because the sexist message is insidious and pervasive in our culture.

Eisler's Partnership Model

Riane Eisler (2000) has developed a theory of how to educate our children to overcome this and other problems of social inequality. She has espoused a *partnership model* of education as opposed to the *dominator model* that we currently use. Both models recognize differences in people and genders. Instead of viewing these differences as a means of reason for superiority or inferiority as we do now, the partnership model sees differences as a means for growth and cooperation. Eisler shows that the partnership model has existed in previous civilizations and can be viewed in the animal kingdom especially among primates who are closest to humans along the evolutionary chain. Eisler makes a powerful argument that by teaching and modeling the partnership model in schools we will naturally engender a more inclusive and balanced view of the world in our children. The inequality caused by the dominator model can be seen in many ways: Men dominate women. Economically rich countries dominate poorer and less technologically advanced ones. Dominant races perpetuate attitudes against minorities.

Eisler provides a wealth of information and resources about how to help children see that the dominator model is not the only way that we can view the relations between people, animals and the natural world. She helps us see that our education has led us to believe that this model is natural and therefore somehow the imbalances in the world are natural. It is okay and natural that some people are very rich and others are very poor. It is okay and natural for us to compete and for the competitor to get the spoils. It is okay and natural for men to dominate

women, they are stronger and more intelligent and women need protecting. These sorts of statements raise howls of protest from my fifth graders yet would hardly raise an eyebrow amongst large segments of the population. My fifth graders have developed a keen sense of social justice and they are ready to defend and debate it because they feel passionately about it. Most of them have been in the school, which fosters community and cooperation, since kindergarten. We can see a clear difference between these children and those who transfer into the 5th grade from other schools. The new children have a period of adjustment to make as they get used to the new model. For most it is a welcome change. For some you can see that assumptions of reality that they had formed in their lives get strongly challenged. The dominator mentality runs deep.

Eisler states that to develop the partnership model its ideals must run through the entire school. These include: valuing teacher and student knowledge and experience, integrating learning and teaching, gender balancing, leadership and curriculum, utilizing multiculturalism, emphasizing the interconnectedness of people with nature, and emphasizing caring, empathy, and mutual responsibility. (p. 23) As we can see these values are included and supported by a holistic approach to education. Eisler offers many suggestions and resources for implementing them in a school and we shall consider them in the second half of this thesis. Many of her values are also evidenced in the next two principles.

Principle 7: The school prepares students to be an active part of a democracy

Cooperation rather than competition will be the primary focus of the school. Additionally skills and habits important for the child to take a dynamic part in a democratic society will also be fostered. On the outside this statement is no different from that which any educator in this country would make. A main purpose of our education system is to prepare our students to live in our society. The difference lies in our vision of community and democracy and what it means to take an active role in it. Before I consider the ideas of other thinkers I would once again like to draw from my own experience. My mother was actively involved in the Nuclear Freeze movement when I was a child. I used to enjoy accompanying her to rallies and protests. As I grew this habit of protest led me into various fights and causes. I came to value debate and felt that it was my responsibility as a citizen of our country to learn about issues and stand up for what I believed in. In college this took the form of protesting U.S. involvement in Nicaragua in 1986. While I was prepared for people being belligerent in the face of our anti-government protests I was a little surprised at the vehemence with which people labeled us communists and anti-American and told us to go back home to the Soviet Union. My fellow college students dumbfounded me with their strongly held belief that being an American meant supporting our government. Being a political scientist I felt that it was clear that being a member of a democracy meant actively voicing one's opinion and trying to influence our country to be moral and just. It started to become very clear to me that democracy as understood by the majority of my fellow students and people of the United States meant something quite different. It seemed to me that the difference was that people who thought like I did considered democracy to be a responsibility. It was a form of government and way of life that necessitated and demanded considered participation by its members. Others seemed to consider democracy to be a right guaranteed by the government. Their responsibility was limited to voting for whomever they saw fit to make laws. Other than that they should be productive citizens and serve by being part of the military or economic system of our country. Hence I found an inherent dichotomy in our thinking.

It seems that I am not alone in these thoughts. The chart (Kesson, Koliba and Paxton, 2001) below divides differing concepts of democracy into two different camps. The ideas about democracy on the left side of the chart correspond to what I see as the dominant approach taken in our society today. The individual is minimally involved in the society and is free to pursue her/his own life, this is classic American individualism. The concepts on the right side represent a more communal approach to governance where individuals have not only the right but the responsibility and duty to take an active role in their society. I believe that it is this approach that we need to follow in our school.

<p style="text-align: center;">Private Democracy</p> <p>A tradition stemming from the position of John Locke and Later James Madison.</p> <p>Emphasizes property rights and "Possessive individualism" (Sehr, 1997)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Public democracy</p> <p>A minority strand in American democratic thought associated with Thomas Jefferson.</p> <p>Emphasizes an engaged public involved in the affairs of government. (Sehr, 1997)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Procedural democracy</p> <p>Emphasizes the basic principles usually taught in civics classes: majority rule, due process etc.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Deliberative democracy</p> <p>Emphasizes free inquiry and debate over issues, aims at consensus</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Formal democracy</p> <p>Emphasizes voting, and participation in government through elected representatives</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Deep democracy</p> <p>Emphasizes democracy as a way of life characterized by empathy, equity, commitment, and connection. (Green 1999)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Weak democracy</p> <p>Citizens as consumers of government services, voters, and passive watchdogs to whom representatives are minimally accountable</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Strong democracy</p> <p>Citizens as active, responsible engaged members of groups and communities who participate in public affairs (Barber, 1998)</p>

John Dewey felt that our schools played a vital role in preparing children to take such an active role in society. As we have seen Dewey was against the single minded pursuit of desires without taking recourse to moral reasoning. He found that the traditional education system, which for the most part is still in place today, did not prepare its students to take an active role in society:

In the schoolroom the motive and cement of social organization are alike wanting. Upon the ethical side, the tragic weakness of the present school is that it endeavors to prepare future members of the social order in a medium in which the conditions of social spirit are eminently wanting. (Dewey, 1990, p.15)

Jesse Goodman (1992) takes this idea further and contends that our school system is set up to promote individualism in our people. This individualism is not the state of the individual being free to follow her/his own growth and conscience but rather is a condition in which the individual is free to gain material and social growth without consideration for others or the running of government. Therefore traditionally, not only does our society not prepare people to take part in what Goodman calls "critical democracy" but it emphasizes exactly the opposite idea. The only individuals who are free to be creative and to exercise their true individuality are those who climb to the top of the corporate ladder. Everybody else contributes to their success and uses their minds and abilities to further our economic system. Science, art, music, the full array of human potentials are subjugated to the growth and prosperity of economy. According to Goodman, corporate society promotes the idea that not only is economic individualism (the encouragement of competition, specialization, and the division of labor) good for society in general because it increases the production of goods, but that it also reflects our

natural evolution as a species. (p. 15) Thus Goodman points out that our society has created a definition of individualism that justifies inequity in the name of advancement of the species. This advancement is based on a competitive model and is supposedly rooted in Darwinian science. The main beneficiaries of this system and ideology are white middle and upper class males; they are the dominators. If you don't happen to be in this class then you face a steep struggle to enjoy even the limited freedom this structure offers. You are taught to accept this as what is natural in the world. As we noted in the discussion of the last principle this perception of the dominator model has been challenged on a scientific, philosophical and spiritual level.

The primary element that is missing from the dominator model is the idea of building community. Dewey(1992), Eisler(2000), Goodman (1992), Kohn(1996) and a host of other educators have pointed out that we need to focus on building communities where individuals will be able to prosper within a society that aims for the growth of all rather than a few. Until then we will not be able to move beyond our current condition. Goodman lists the labor movements of the thirties, civil rights movement, the peace movement and the feminist movement as examples when we have moved as a society to broaden the freedom of all members of our society. He notes that it is important to realize that although we have a dominant ethos of economic individualism we also have other elements in our society that can support communal concepts and activities. Schools must play a pivotal role in this activity:

One of the most important institutions within an industrialized society is the school. All citizens spend a considerable amount of their childhood inside school buildings. Schools teach children about society through subjects such as social studies, science and literature. However, the form and structure of the school also teach children about societal values. (Goodman, 1992, p. 22)

The structures and practices in the school need to model and allow for the experience of cooperative social living. Children need to be able to develop the skills and habits that will allow them to function in such a way. If we look back at the right side of the chart detailing active democratic characteristics we can get an idea of what we could focus on in schools. Students would need to be engaged in the running of the school. Emphasis would be on free inquiry and debate over issues. The aim would be consensus rather than majority rule or might makes right. Democracy would inform how the students interact as opposed to simply being how they were governed. This means that we would naturally think collectively in an empathetic manner looking for connections and common ground as opposed to individual gain. It would be understood that a commitment to each other was the strongest possible commitment to individual growth.

Principle 8: Cultivation of a sense of deep ecology is essential

Emphasis will be put on helping the students experience their interconnectedness with the natural world and their place in that world. Just as students need to experience active democratic principles in operation if they are going to be able to become dynamic citizens of a democracy they need to experience their connection to the natural world if they are going to include it in their holistic view of existence. We have seen that holistic education includes an emphasis on developing universal love for all things animate and inanimate. This love is not going to be developed by learning about ecology in the classroom. What is needed is a shift in whole we consider the world. Deep ecology (Naess, 1998) means deep questioning about humankind's place in the world. Naess believes that until we begin to identify with the non-human we will continue on our course of environmental and self destruction.

If we consider the world around us today we can see the destruction caused by man's indomitable march of technological and physical progress. We have learned to control or simply overwhelm our natural world through our technology. Unfortunately this has also led to the poisoning of our environment, the greenhouse effect, the hole in the ozone layer and the permanent annihilation of many plant and animal species. Not only do are planet and these species have an intrinsic worth of their own but many scientists consider them to be they are vital for our continued existence and evolution. The question becomes, how can we halt the slide of environmental destruction and inculcate a greater sense of connectedness with the world around us?

The increasing level of environmental problems in the world has spurred the countries of the world to try and take global action. The United States, while boasting of our independent measures has been the largest hold out at global conferences to curb environmental degradation. We continue to use a disproportionate percentage of the world's energy and resources and refuse to consider the price we are extracting from the world to do so. Even if we decide as a nation to curb our excesses the global capitalist economic system fuels economic destruction. Lester Brown and Charles Flavin (1999) in their Worldwatch Institute's report on a sustainable society put the problem this way:

We live in a world that has an obsessive preoccupation with the present. Focussed on quarterly profit and loss statements, we are behaving as though we had no children. In short we have lost our sense of responsibility to future generations. (p. 21)

Once again we can see that it is a philosophy of competition over cooperation that is creating our problems. The dominator in this model is humankind and the dominated is the earth and all that live on her. To move beyond this situation we need to develop a new way of looking at the world and ourselves. Deep ecologist Dave Berry (2000) explains that the problem is rooted in the global economic system:

The industrial entrepreneur is in possession of the natural resources of the planet, either directly by corporate control, or indirectly through government subservience to corporate enterprise. (p. 12)

Given the collusion of government and industry, it seems clear that we cannot expect change to come from the top of the political structure.

David Roodman, (1999) writing about the process of building a sustainable society, notes that the greatest force we have at this time to halt environmental degradation is people power. People who protest to their governments and refuse to accept environmental abuse for the sake of industry. The most effective way they do this is through NGOs or Non Governmental Agencies. The strongest tool that these agencies use is one of education. Roodman quotes Orson Welles to explain:

The sort of education that will save us from catastrophe is not just a matter of disseminating information, for the planet is now awash in information. The education needed, rather, is the sharing of wisdom. Our knowledge of the natural world has raced far ahead of our wisdom in using it. As a result we are razing our forests, siphoning off our rivers, grinding down our mountains, paving our plains, modifying our climate, polluting our air, and tainting our blood. We are producing in other words, a world none of us wants."(Wells in Roodman, 2001, p.187)

These ideas are mirrored in the Neo-Humanist philosophy. Sarkar (1998) explains that human technology had outstripped our spiritual growth. Therefore we lack the wisdom to use it wisely. Additionally Neo-Humanism is defined for the love of all aspects, animate and inanimate, of the universe.

The solution cannot lie simply in what we teach our children at school. It is not only what they are taught but also how they are taught, that sends the most powerful message. If we continue to teach in such a way that everything is presented as disconnected than that is the message our children will get. Additionally they will not be able to grasp or appreciate the interconnectedness of life. Capra (1998) makes the case for a holistic approach toward teaching about the natural world:

All natural systems are wholes whose specific structures arise from the interactions and interdependence of their parts. Systemic properties are destroyed when a system is dissected, either physically or theoretically, into isolated elements. (p.23)

Therefore our school needs to ensure the study of nature as a whole with attention being paid to its interconnections and intricacies. More importantly we need to encourage and guide children to experience their

world. If they can see that through their actions they can care for it and affect it in a positive way, then we will have started to teach ecological literacy.

Children and adults need to experience our connection to the earth. There are plenty of examples in human history and in the natural world of the positive effects of cooperating with nature as opposed to abusing it. (Eisler, 2000) Our modern industrial society has pushed us away from that connection it will take a conscious and sustained effort to get back to the wisdom we once had. These connections need to be much more than theoretical as we have seen in our exploration of true education. Dolores Lachapelle (2000) maintains that children need to form "intricate conscious relationships with their place". (p. 57) She suggests that one way to do this is through rituals connected to the patterns and flow of the area where they live. Children need to learn the history not only of the people and the land, but also of the land itself. As Dewey notes experience is about meaningful interactions that can be linked to previous experiences. (Dewey, 1938, p. 26) Dewey however concentrates mostly on the individual and social utility of the environment and doesn't consider its spiritual importance in our lives. As children live in a place and learn about it, as they experience its rhythms and see how they intertwine with their own, they will develop that deep sense of ecology. If they can experience the sacredness of one space they can experience the sacredness of all spaces. This sense is one that they will take with them into the world.

Principle 9: Holistic growth of the staff, parents and the community is important:

Teachers

Our children do not and can not learn in isolation. The example that we set for them as staff and parents plays a vital if not the most vital role in their education. Similarly, but not usually as powerfully for young children, the community which surrounds them will also have significant influence. If our goal as a school is to promote the all around growth of our students than it is also important that we promote it for all aspects of the school community. If we fail to do this then the message that is sent to the children is that it is important for you but not for us. This type of message while it might be very subtle would undermine the goal of the school.

The teachers at any school play are the most critical role in the education of the children. I have visited many schools and this is the comment made by every director or principal that I have talked to. It seems to be especially true of small alternative private schools such as the one that I am planning on opening. Holistic schools purposefully promote close loving relations between the teacher and the students. Their directors agree that no matter what is taught or the method used in teaching it, the most important element is that of the teachers. Students watch their teachers very carefully and observe the congruence between their actions and their words. If there is a lack of congruity then the teacher will not be effective in communicating the more subtle aspects of education because the students will not trust them at a deep level. They may listen to them and be able to benefit from their guidance and understanding but at a spiritual level the teacher will be ineffective. The role set for a teacher in this education system is a very challenging one. Not only must they carefully observe the children, but they must also seek to understand their hidden drives, talents and aspirations. This is a tall order for anyone. To be able to understand children and their learning teachers need to be learning themselves. They need to be experiencing holistic education to truly be able to help children experience it themselves. I feel that my experience as a Goddard student has allowed me to see how the previous statement, which I believed to be true, is definitely true. It is the fact that my experiences at Goddard have led me to a deep understanding of what it is like to guide your own learning and to experience aspects of myself that I have never imagined before. If I had not had this experience with this style of education then I wouldn't really know what it would feel like to my students. Having said this I am aware that I need to keep learning and have new and different experiences so that I will become even more fit to be a teacher and I will be a model for lifelong learning. The teacher also needs to take an active part in the running of the school if she/he is going to set an example of democratic and community living.

Parents

While it may be too much to expect parents to adopt a whole new lifestyle in order to match the educational principles of their child's school, it is important that the parents also have some exposure and experience in holistic education. It is a clear fact that children learn primarily from their parents at a very young age:

Children between the ages of fifteen months and four years gain a functional sense of objects and people and categorize and name them. The language modeling of the caretakers plays a vital part in the learning for the child, and movement facilitates the expression of that learning. (Hannaford, 1995, p.91)

As the child grows the role of the parent or caretaker is no less important. "Parents, teachers and caregivers who wish to ensure the proper development of all of their children's communication skills, need to engage them in full, conscious dialogue." (p.93) Here Hannaford is focusing on parental involvement with children to help them realize their full growth in terms of communication. We can also understand that parental modeling and involvement will greatly influence the spiritual growth of a child as well. Nurturing a spiritual outlook on life based on love and trust and compassion for a child reaps enormous benefits. The great majority of the time I can gauge the spiritual outlook of parents based upon their children's view of the world. Children of parents who are extremely caught up in the material, fast paced world generally have a much harder time experiencing the spiritual aspects of life.

As the child grows older, the school will take a larger role in her/his education. However, the parents' actions will always have a tremendous impact on the child. Therefore it is essential that an effort be made to work with parents to ensure that the messages their children receive from them are congruent those they receive at school. Additionally almost every school that I visited cited a good relationship with the parents of their pupils as vital to their success. Parents are an invaluable resource not only for reinforcing messages but also for bringing skills and ideas and actions for their children to learn from. Parents have the great advantage of already having a strong, loving bond with their children. By participating actively in the learning process they reinforce the ideas of the school. Also if an effort is made to help parents experience what their children experience at school in terms of holistic growth than they will be much more able to support them and grow with them. At the very least parents should be active in the life of the school by being with the children and the teachers in a community of learners. Roland Barth (1990) describes it this way:

... a place where all participants - teachers, principals, parents and students - engage in learning and teaching. School is not a place for important people who do not need to learn and unimportant people who do. Instead school is a place where students discover and adults rediscover the joys, difficulties and the satisfactions of learning. (p. 43)

Barth's vision is particularly appropriate for holistic schools although he was talking about all schools and especially public ones. Our message to the children is that learning is something that happens throughout life and that they have important things to teach the adults as well as things to learn from them. A sustained and sincere effort should be made to work together to create a dynamic school that responds to the needs and understanding of its parents. At the same time we need to help our parents gain a greater understanding of their children and their individual process of growth.

Community

Parents and teachers have always played major roles in the education of children. To expect them to grow holistically along with their child can be seen as a logical part of the holistic paradigm. The inclusion of the community around the school may not seem as evidently important. However if we consider that schools are normally cut off from the rest of society and the community that surrounds them we can see that this must change if we are to truly strive for a holistic focus. We need to take Barth's idea of a community of learners and extend it to as wide a community as possible. As the children interact with their environment so they can interact with their school's community. It is clear that no institution can exist in isolation from rest of society. We are interconnected through roads, water, electricity, shared air, employment, commerce, responsibilities,

hopes, dreams and in a host of other ways. If we pretend that we can separate ourselves from our community we deny our vital principle of interconnectedness.

To extend our community beyond our property is to acknowledge that we have a lot to learn from those around us and that we have something to teach them. Children can positively interact with a surrounding community through service projects. In this way we can give back to the area and people whom we share so much with. At the same time this interaction will allow us to bring the joy and compassion nurtured in our school to those around us. We will be experiencing our educational philosophy beyond the artificial confines of the school. James Moffet (1994) put forth a stunning and far-reaching blueprint for a school without walls in his book, The Universal Schoolhouse:

The only solution consists of making the most inclusive system of all the framework for education. If you think of successively more comprehensive contexts for the learner, spanning from the personal to transpersonal, they range from the system of an individual mind to that of society and on through that of all nature - that is from consciousness through culture to cosmos, the biggest whole of all. (p. xiii)

While I do not think our society is at a point where we can leap to Moffet's all encompassing vision, I do think he makes an important point. If the nature of our school is fundamentally that of an island in the sea of world then we cut ourselves off from actually being part of that world. I am reminded of one of the basic tenets of Neo-Humanism that has become an important theme in our consideration of the school. That is the idea of a subjective approach with objective adjustment. Our school cannot thrive in isolation. We cannot simply pretend that the rest of the world and especially the society in which our children will most likely spend an important part of their lives corresponds to the environment set up in the school. We need to allow the children to experience their learning in as wide and real and environment as possible. Since working for social change is a fundamental aspect of the school it is vital that we are actively involved with our community physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Principle 10: The internal message of the school should be matched by its policies and practices

Our beliefs and principles should be mirrored in all aspects of the school from its architecture to its methods and curriculum. This tenth point is in one sense the foremost in importance. None of the aforementioned principles hold any value if they are not truly internalized in the school. It is clear that the school may not initially be able to implement them all perfectly from its inception but there needs to be a clear intention and movement in that direction. We live in a time when the truth is too often distorted by rhetoric, sound bites, and spin. As a society we have grown accustomed to looking at the surface and not wanting to or not being able to go beyond it. Even if we have the desire to truly understand a matter or another person or even ourselves it is hard to get inside past images and conceptualizations.

In this country we live in a largely externalized world where image is too often more important than substance. Children become used to this at an early age. For the past three years I have asked my 5th graders whether they think adults always mean what they say. It saddens me that over 90% felt that adults routinely hid the truth. A similar number understood that politicians are all liars. They also show a keen understanding that it is how things are perceived that is given importance rather what they truly are. The message is evidently loud and clear at age ten. My students were quite insightful about comments politicians made during the elections, especially when they saw them promising one thing to one group and something quite different to another. In college I studied about the Spanish Anarchists. While they fought for their freedom they carefully lived the way they imagined they would if they gained it. This caused them many hardships but they felt it was worthwhile, indeed necessary. The same goes for individuals, a school, or any institution; if it is going to have true strength than the inside needs to match the outside, there needs to be integrity. I have found that children have an extremely sensitive sense of integrity. If they find that a person has it, they are likely to want to learn from that person and follow their example. If they find that they do not, they may follow that person superficially, especially if tricked or coerced, through punishment or reward, but they will not internalize their learning. Thus a school can

purport to teach a child something or a certain way but they are doomed to failure unless they are consistent in that message throughout the school. P.R. Sarkar has spoken of three types of people. Those who say one thing and do another. Those who say one thing and sometimes do it but sometimes do not, and those who do what they say and what they believe. These people have balance in their internal and external lives. It is they who can achieve great things. (Sarkar, 1998, p.260) I believe the same holds true for a school. It does us little good to create a beautiful shell if we do not strive to match our expectations to reality. There will undoubtedly be obstacles that stand in the way of this goal but our intention must be to always strive for it. The following sections will therefore be an examination of what a school that followed the above principles would look like.

Chapter 4

Designing the Space

The design of the school will say a lot to the people who go there. The design and materials found in the school should be consistent with our philosophy. The design covers many aspects: the architecture, grounds, layout of the school and classrooms, shapes, colors and much more. The goal will be to create a harmonious joyful atmosphere that fosters relationships among the entire school community as well as the natural environment. The school should be a sacred space where the love of learning and living is exalted.

Architecture

When I worked at a country park in England we had a small visitors center and park office hidden among 640 acres of wild hilly seaside land. One day a group of rather loud tourists barged in. One of them blustered, "Well we finally found this place, you might as well put it on the moon it's so blended in with the surroundings!" Precisely so, I thought. It seems unlikely that we will be able to hide an entire elementary school even in hilly rural North Carolina but that doesn't mean we can't try and build it so it fits into the surroundings rather than takes them over. Part of this fitting in will include being careful of old trees and respecting the land whenever possible. Another aspect will be to try and limit the environmental degradation that a building and necessary roads will cause. The building will include both passive and active solar energy to be energy efficient. It will be accessible to all people internally and externally. I have visited many schools to consider their physical layout. I have been impressed by the use of windows, skylights in the Waldorf schools in Garden City and Spring Valley N.Y.; they utilize the natural light wonderfully. I envisage a school where exterior window space is maximized and interior space is marked by windows and an interior open courtyard. This would allow for more natural light and beauty to surround the children. Steiner was very aware of the effect of the environment on people's psyche and souls. He emphasized aesthetics and use of light in his schools. The design of the classrooms alone can raise one's spirits and vision. High ceilings with design lines that draw one upward will have a subtle effect on the school community. Whenever possible I also feel that circular or octagonal rooms should be utilized. I draw this idea from one of the last great medicine men of the Lakota Sioux Indians, Black Elk. In his autobiography Black Elk Speaks, (1932) the author tells of when he left his people to travel among the lands of his conquerors so he might learn of their culture as it seemed destined to eclipse that of his own people. After travelling for some time Black Elk returned saddened to his people and said that the two cultures were so different. He found that the culture of the conquerors involved rectangles while the culture of his people was circular. He found this in the buildings and their way of life. When I presented this tale to my 5th graders with no other introduction, they intuitively knew what he meant. They said that circles spoke of continuity and cycles while rectangles dealt with confinement and limits. They spoke of inclusion vs. exclusion, of warmth vs. coldness, of softness vs. hardness, of wholeness. The wisdom of Black Elk and these children seems clear. Circles correspond to our holistic vision of our selves and of education. Unfortunately it is more expensive to build using circles but octagons offer a potential compromise. No matter what we do all aspects of the building should be aesthetically pleasing as possible.

Exterior Design

The Waldorf schools I have visited also took great care of the grounds around the building. There were gardens and pathways and places to sit alone or together to enjoy the natural surroundings. Their spaces emphasize and allow for the connection to and enjoyment of nature. In our case I would like many of these gardens, both decorative and/or for food to be available to the students to design and grow. Thus they will not only gain a valuable experience but they can have a say in and responsibility for the creation of their own environment. We will see this principle applied to classrooms as well. The Bellwether school in Williston Vermont boasts a few wonderful ideas for outdoor space. They have a giant downed tree for the children to play on and explore. They also brought in some large boulders. Additionally they learned by accident that there is something greater than a sandbox, a sand mound. The mound, according to one of the school's founders allowed for greater freedom and creativity from the children. It struck me that both would be excellent to have, a controlled space inside the box and a more open tableau in the mound. We shall see this dichotomy throughout physical and ideological design of the school. In addition to open spaces to run in and for athletic games, we need to create spaces that spur on the imagination of the children. The Spring Hill School in Waitsfield Vermont had a boat and a small house. The Sunrise Montessori school in the same town included a trolley and a castle. None of these playthings were made from plastic. The importance of this distinction does not lie in a scientific reason promoting the "real" over plastic. As one of my closest friends has pointed out, plastic is real as well, it's simply fabricated reality. Technically I know he is right but intuitively and emotionally I believe he is wrong. The texture and feel of wood or stone is fundamentally different and more nurturing than that of plastic. Waldorf educators have gone so far as to ban it from their schools. I don't agree with this radical approach. Plastic does have some advantages in terms of flexibility and cost and variety of design, however our school will seek to keep a balance and opt for natural materials as often as possible. This will be true for the playground as well as inside of the school.

Interior Design

When I spoke to an architect about the design of the building, her first question was "How do you expect to teach the children"? By this she meant what style of classroom did we expect to have. The design of the rooms should be tailored to the teaching methodologies. Since these methodologies will vary somewhat by grade the classrooms will need some variety in their design. Another question that she asks considers the toxicity of the materials to be used and a consideration for future hygiene. She informed me that these factors are often overlooked in schools because of their higher cost and the difficulty of using them in construction. The most common example is wall to wall shag carpeting which is very nice for the children to play on but also traps many germs as well as being toxic. Such factors clearly need to be considered in the design and decoration of the school. When I asked my class how they would change the environment of our classroom each student produced a different set of ideas. Two themes were dominant however: it should be comfortable, and it should be fun. As a teacher I would add it should be thought provoking, aesthetically pleasing, and promote a feeling of freedom within security. I am sure my students want to feel secure but the idea didn't enter into their minds because they are so secure in the school where I teach. Similarly, they aren't shy about saying when something is ugly to them or when it is pleasing. Design will vary by class, age and teacher; it will be an ongoing process guided by the ideas mentioned above.

Kindergarten and 1st Grade

The kindergarten and first grade classrooms will be places where free play is still a dominant activity of the children. Teachers of children of this age seem to have a common list of characteristics that these younger children thrive on. First they like enclosed spaces where they can feel cozy and protected. Roni Donnefeld, a veteran master teacher at Warren public school in Vermont, showed me how she creates these spaces with shelves and bookcases. The kids feel enclosed and happy and the teacher can easily see over the dividers to monitor the children. Other favorite spaces in many classrooms were the loft and the cave like area underneath it. Roni also has a fifteen year accumulation of the giant and fantastical in her classroom. She explained that the children love things larger than life. There is a hollow paper mache tree in the middle of her room. A dragon

protrudes from a corner and a whole array of imagination supercharging creations fill the rest of the available wall space. Mixed in and among these creations were kids creations from the current class, from years gone by, as well as various explorations in progress. I was ready to go back to kindergarten if it meant that I could be in her classroom. It was like entering wonderland and that is exactly the feeling kids should have at the younger ages. Recall Hannaford's study of development that tells us that most kindergartners and 1st graders are taking in the world through the gestalt hemisphere of their brains. Image and emotion are important, as are movement and rhythm. (Hannaford, 1995, p. 82) Children are exploring their world through play and stories and their environment will set the mood that they embark upon these journeys with. Let it be one of wonder and excitement and joy. Additionally there should be areas where children can explore and experience different aspects of their world. There can be the wet corner, the painting place, the quiet place, the touching nook, and the hearing cranny. These can be varied and changed and influenced by the children's desires and interests. In addition to these generalized experiential areas there needs to be a place for group movement activities and whole class lessons. There will be tables for small groups of children as well as places for pairs and individuals to work.

Two through Six

The change in the design and focus of classes will be gradual and the separation at grade two does not mean that I feel there is a major shift at this age. As the children progress through the grades, they will move away from a large amount of free play to more focused activities. This idea will be more fully developed when I consider teaching methodology. This change in focus will be reflected in the design of the school. The classrooms of the older children will continue to have resource and exploration areas. These will change according to the grade and the activities and experiences most suitable for various ages. Whereas younger children need to have a great variety of physical objects to explore and utilize, older children will need a great variety of resources to pull ideas from and to learn about their world. Computers will play an important role in this, as will books and video. Controlled access to the Internet is a great asset but it also presents challenges in the classroom. Another change is that quiet areas to work will become more important as the children begin to do more sustained activities that require less distraction. I have seen that some children thrive amidst chaos, especially younger ones who are so focussed on their play that the rest of the world doesn't exist. As the children mature, what is happening with their neighbor becomes more important and many find it hard to concentrate amidst the hurly-burly of an active classroom. Some thrive in a bustling energized environment others will need a more sedate controlled environment to work in. This can be accomplished by creating small study rooms off main classrooms.

The arrangement of tables in the classroom should accommodate the various type of teaching that will take place. Since there will be activities ranging from large group to small group to individual work there needs to be a variety of seating arrangements available. I am reminded of a bar I visited a few times in Japan. The tables were all small and curved in shape. Groups of people would join them together or break them apart depending on the desires of the groups and individuals. This idea can be incorporated into space and furniture design. I am also reminded of the story Dewey told when he went shopping for desks that would allow kids to do activities rather than passively receive information. He couldn't find them. (Dewey, 1990) Our classrooms need to be designed to facilitate individual learning styles as well as foster relationships. Flexibility will be of great importance.

Using the Space

Student work and input

Presentation of children's work and ideas should be prevalent throughout the school. Also areas where they can make changes to their environment and thus exercise control over their own lives will also be critical. As we try to foster critical free thinkers we need to give them the experience of that power. The process of decorating and designing their environment and coming to consensus and then living with their decisions will be a powerful

learning experience for the children. Their decisions need to be tempered by the teacher's wisdom but the message should be clear, "This is your space and you have the right and responsibility to affect it." Carry this message forward and change "space" to "environment" or "society" and we can see the roots of responsible world citizens growing. The rights that are granted come with responsibility and actions need to be tempered by judgement. This is another theme that will carry through the school. Consideration of how work will be presented in a school can constitute a major lesson in and of itself. The Waldorf schools that I visited evidenced their philosophy that a strong guiding hand is needed for young children. The result was beautifully organized and displayed material but little evidence of student involvement. While I would like to keep the aesthetic appeal I would aim at guiding the children through the experience and allowing them the final say. In so doing they may not come up with the most pleasing design or ideas to an adult but they will be creating their own environment. If they don't like it, then they can change it and thus their aesthetic sense will be authentic to them. Having said that the students will also benefit from following the teacher's suggestions at times. I have seen that this is rarely a problem, as the children will readily follow a teacher they respect. It is up to the teacher to resist imposing too many of her/his ideas on the students. The Sunrise School in Waitsfield Vermont based many of its ideas on the Reggio Emilia (Gandini, 1993) approach. One of the many aspects of the school that impressed me was that children's projects from previous years were still given space even though the school had extremely limited available space for such objects. The message to the current children was unmistakable. It said *"You are part of this school and what you do matters and will continue to matter when you leave."* This type of environment fosters creativity and passion. It empowers and emboldens children to find and express themselves.

Color

Another consideration for the decoration of the entire school will be the use of color. I have always been a great fan of color and I feel that it has a tremendous effect on people. Care will need to be taken in the use of color in the school. Steiner raised the question of color to a very high level and he developed an entire curriculum to introduce children to its various properties and effects. (Boos-Hamburger, 1976) While I do not intend to go as in depth into color as Steiner did, I feel that his focus is not misplaced. Steiner drew from the work of Goethe and then added his own spiritual perceptions to this work. Goethe recognized the importance of color and gave suggestions for how it should be used:

Experience teaches us that the individual colours induce particular moods ... In order to experience fully these important effects the eye should be entirely surrounded by one colour; we should be in a room of one colour, or look through a colored glass. We are then identified with the colour; it induces both eye and mind to be in unison with it. (Goethe in Boos-Hamburger, 1976, p.2)

The colors of rooms will vary according to their dominant use. Strong vibrant colors may not be appropriate for quiet study areas. Gentle relaxing colors may not be appropriate for active corners. The use of color in both cases will be a conscious one, with the understanding that it will have an effect on the children. Along a similar vein if the children want to design or decorate in such a way that will be detrimental to them then clearly there will need to be intervention. Their freedom is not *carte blanche*.

Materials

The materials provided for the children in the school will play an important role in defining their environment. In the younger grades, the materials will be especially important as the children explore their world primarily through direct interaction with their senses as opposed to abstractly through books and information. Even as they grow older however, the materials available to experience the world will play an important role in their education. They are aimed at discovery and experience as well as being fun and nourishing to the imagination. As we discussed in our consideration of the exterior design of the school we will concentrate on using natural materials whenever possible. Reggio Emilia schools (Gandini, 1993) try to have as many different types of materials available for children as possible. The idea is that children should not be limited to sculpting with clay or painting and other common art activities, their creativity and imagination should be stoked with as many

possibilities as can be supplied. In the schools based on this approach that I visited there were large huge stacks of wooden blocks and bins of shells and stones. By using natural materials we foster connection with the natural world rather than a distance that artificial materials exemplify. Waldorf schools exemplify this approach striving for and achieving a high level of aesthetics in their space and materials. Having said this I enjoyed watching a few ten year olds create an amazing 4 foot high plastic structure at the Bellwether school. They had been adding to it for days and at the end of their exploratory learning time could easily store it in a safe place to return to and modify at will. It also had its benefits. We will try to find a balance in our approach between not rejecting the artificial while honoring the natural. Montessori schools emphasize very specific materials for work on cognitive development and empirical experience. Both Waldorf and Montessori use a highly structured environment. (Miller, 1997, p. 98) Other schools emphasize having a great variety of information and materials available and allowing the children to decide. I believe that balance is once again the key to the discussion. The teacher can see which children would benefit from open exploration and which might be better helped by a more controlled environment. The materials made available to each would be different. Moreover the same child will undoubtedly benefit from experiencing both and having a say in which is more suitable to them. Once again flexibility is the byword.

Additional Rooms

To truly honor and promote the whole being means providing space and opportunity to do so. Central to the school should be an auditorium, preferably round or octagonal. Imagine wooden floors, a vaulted ceiling, and a stage; imagine a place for movement, performance, music and contemplation. It will be a sacred space in its celebration of the freedom of the mind body and soul to explore and expand to experience the joy of existence. This would be the physical center of the community where we would gather for meetings and sharing and whole school events.

Another such important community space would be the art center. Preferably it would be based on the idea of an atelier as put forth in the Reggio Emilia approach. This is a place where students and teachers of all ages share space to produce art in a variety of mediums. There would be an art expert available to work with the children and teachers in their creative endeavors. This mixing of the students is important for building community as well as for the sharing of ideas and passions. The Reggio approach aims at fostering relationships and the central art space plays an important role in the school. (Gandini, 1993)

Other spaces would also greatly enhance the school:

- Small study rooms for small group work and lessons have proven invaluable and in too short supply at the school I am currently at. Children enjoy being on their own in an unsupervised place; it is an opportunity to build mutual trust as well as self-discipline.
- A kitchen would be useful for practical reasons and so the children can experience food preparation in all of its aspects. As a whole, our culture has lost its connection with where our food comes from and the value of conscious eating and cooking. We hope to help children keep their strong links to the earth by allowing them to grow, prepare and eat their own food on occasion. Usually lunch will be brought from home.
- A library to support strong reading and research habits will also be important. It is not practical to expect that every classroom will be able to have a huge selection of research material. A school that thrives on student led learning needs to have as many resources as possible available to all of the students.
- A woodshop would allow not only for experience with woodworking but also a natural avenue for children to produce items for their community. The school will be located in a wooded area so materials from our own land will be available. Since we will aim at using natural materials, it would be excellent to allow the children to help create learning materials. Strict safety guidelines would be needed of course, however I have met one

kindergarten teacher who allows her children to hammer nails unsupervised. She said that good modeling coupled with a teaching of respect for the tools and themselves has led to no accidents in fifteen years.

- A small barn may also be a possibility, as the school will also be situated on a small goat farm. The children will be able to learn about the care and handling of animals through hands on experiences.

There are, of course, a myriad of other possibilities and all of these ideas are options that can be decided on by the whole school community in accordance to needs, desires and practical constraints.

Chapter 5

What teaching methods will be used and inform how the school is run?

A loving approach, coupled with reverence and compassion for all the students, is the single most important aspect of teaching. The teacher must strive to be a model of holistic learning and living for the children. Given this, any method they use will be effective even if it is not as good for the all around growth of the child as other methods may be. Without love and respect, even the most effective method will fail to reach the children.

Providing individualized instruction that is experientially based, calls for a variety of teaching methods and ideas. The approach must be as holistic as the aim of the school. This will include teaching styles, discipline policy, and assessment practices. This means that the methods used in the school should aim at the all around development of the students and foster a moral approach to life that prepares them to be dynamic members of a democratic society. These methods should foster a sense of community and empower individuals to be themselves within that community. No single approach will work with every child and it may well be that certain children will not thrive in the school I hope create. The children will be engaged in the active exploration for knowledge and understanding, ranging from play to academic research. They will learn through engagement with fellow students, the teachers, and the environment. They will grow through, introspection and observation, art and movement, and the production of projects and the presentation of ideas.

The guiding principle for considering teaching methods is our theory on child development. Recall that the main elements of this theory are that children make their own meaning, it cannot be given to them and that they are much more likely to pursue learning if it is something that is of interest to them. Also learning needs to be based on something the child has already understood or experienced. A child can use any and preferably many of its different areas of intelligence in order to construct meaning and make connections to other experiences. (Dewey, 1990) Finally learning is happening all the time physically, mentally and spiritually and the process of pursuing ideas and goals is where the learning will ultimately take place. In the language of John Miller (1990), the school will use transmission, transaction and transformation as approaches for teaching and learning. The ultimate aim will always be transformative but the process may well include all three approaches.

Student Centered, Teacher Generated:

My first exposure to teaching methodology as an aspiring teacher was through a CTEFLA (Cambridge Teaching English as a Foreign Language) course at the University of Wales. They taught us a simple method aimed at student involvement and maximizing learning potential. In light of my current studies, I can see how it can be used as an effective model for the teaching of any subject in a holistic way. The approach had three main components: presentation, practice and performance.

Presentation was the introduction of some aspect of language. The idea was to bring the idea to the forefront of the student's thinking. This should be done by drawing upon the student's current understanding and preferably

by getting the students to help develop it from that knowledge. This can be done through brainstorming or questioning. An example of this would be to get students to name colors that they knew as a way of introducing a lesson about colors. Alternatively the teacher could bring in many different colored objects which would draw upon the students understanding of color even if they didn't have language for it. Once the idea is brought forth then the teacher helps the student understand what is to be taught. This loosely corresponds to Miller's (1990) transmission approach where the teacher is passing on knowledge to the student.

This phase is then followed by the practice phase where students use the new knowledge they have gained and link it to previous experience through controlled activities designed by the teacher. These activities can be quite controlled such as fill in the blank type questions or more open such as writing a paragraph about a picture using the new language. This stage also often involved the students discovering the rule or associations of language on their own through controlled activities, an approach often used in the teaching of math. This loosely corresponds to Miller's transaction phase where the student interacts with the teacher and the knowledge until she/he can use it in a controlled environment.

Finally the students are asked to take the information learned and apply it to their own lives in a creative way. Thus they interact with the knowledge but make it their own. In language lessons this did not entail looking for personal or social change as it would in Miller's transformation model but I believe the analogy still holds. The performance part of the lesson was the internalization of the knowledge, showing that the student could put it to use independently of others expectations or guidance. The examples that I used would apply to the linguistic intelligence of the learner but the Cambridge method also recognized the importance of movement, music, space and relationships in teaching. We were encouraged to incorporate these into our lessons as much as possible.

This approach allowed for holistic teaching that was led by student's needs and experience level but was essentially teacher directed. The same approach can be taken in any classroom and I would argue is often needed in the case where the teacher determines that students need to be introduced to an idea or concept. While I believe that given adequate time, resources and guidance students will eventually lead themselves to what they need to know, our society is too complex to make this work in a school setting. I do believe that student led exploration is an extremely effective tool for growth and it will be incorporated in to the school. Methods such as using an integrated curriculum, electives and exploratory time will all be used and are explained in detail below. Perhaps children being home-schooled or tutored in a one on one environment would be able to cover a complete range of subjects in such a manner but I don't feel that this is a practical expectation in a school. In a classroom setting the teacher will need to introduce ideas and concepts to his/her students to ensure holistic development. This is especially true in our current society where the values and habits the children are surrounded with are often diametrically opposed to such development. Additionally, while the teacher can guide the students in their self directed planning, I believe it would be preferable for the her/him to not have to twist and bend the student's ideas and passions to ensure that they have a broad enough educational base.

It is not a disservice to introduce children to ideas and experiences that they may not have been exposed to. These lessons need not be out of the student's realm of experience; they may simply not have considered the connection. Also, I have observed that most students shy away from what they find difficult and therefore will not necessarily address areas of learning that will be beneficial to them. These may be specific subject areas or parts of their overall intelligence. Dislike or fear of something is not a valid reason to learn about it. The teacher will need to use her/his experience to determine its worth. I always ask my co-teacher to allow me to teach the kids who say they don't like math. By the end of the year I am less concerned about how much math they have learned than I am with how their attitude toward math is faring. If they have gotten over their hatred then they will be able to learn through any method, but if they are still stuck in the pit then I despair that they will ever learn anything. A loving supportive approach coupled with hard work and perseverance by the student can change how they perceive and approach any area of knowledge. This does not mean that the prepared lessons need to be other than holistic, on the contrary it is essential that they address the needs of the children on all levels as discussed in our theory of child development. While a teacher controlled methodology may well be

needed at times, a more student led approach will be preferable as it will more strongly reinforce the school's central message; what is inside the children is paramount. However, I believe that if the teacher and child have a relationship built on trust and love, then the students will accept that the teacher is doing what they feel is best for them without feeling a loss of self which is common in traditional teaching methods.

Curriculum Integration

Another method for teaching the children will be to observe where their interests and abilities lie and help them generate questions and activities that will foster their growth. This approach has been presented in various ways over the years. Dewey applied it to children learning practical life skills and pursuing the same interests that they have at home. More recently it has been exemplified by the movement for curriculum integration. One of the main proponents of this approach is James Beane. (1997) In his book Curriculum Integration, Beane describes a process where children create an interest through discussion of current issues or from another activity. The teacher then guides the children to develop a theme for study. Poignantly an example of this could be the theme of "conflict" arising out of a discussion or concern about terrorism such as the World Trade Center attack of Sept. 11th. Beane arrived at his model by observing and talking with teachers around the country who use a similar method. Teachers then design activities to help children integrate four kinds of knowledge around their theme. These are:

Personal Knowledge - addressing self-concerns and ways of knowing about self.

Social Knowledge - addressing social and world issues, from peer to global relationships, and ways of critically examining these.

Explanatory knowledge - content that names, describes, explains and interprets, including that involved in the discipline of knowledge as well as commonsense or "popular" knowledge.

Technical Knowledge -ways of investigating, communicating, analyzing and expressing, including many of the skills already promoted in schools.

Finally democratic values, respect for human dignity and prizing of diversity are to be emphasized in all curricular experiences. (p. 49)

The student's role does not end with helping to generate the theme. Depending on their age, they take an active role in the planning of how these realms of knowledge will be addressed. Very young children can be given choices inside of preplanned activities whereas older ones can discuss amongst themselves and their teacher how best to address the issue. One way to do this is to have the students brainstorm questions about the theme. Once these questions have been determined the students and teacher can group them and decide on activities and projects relating to the theme. These will be oriented toward not only learning about what concerns the children but also toward them presenting their learning in a manner of their choosing. This could include art, drama, writing and or any other medium that the children choose. If the teacher feels that important elements or questions have been left out of the planning they can prompt their students or present them with need to consider such an aspect.

This approach clearly addresses many of the important themes of holistic learning. We can see that the relationship between the teacher and the students is not one of domination but cooperation. The students are empowered to formulate questions that are important to them. With the teacher acting as guide they can then work out a way to address those questions. This ensures that the knowledge the students are seeking is linked directly to their previous experience as they are generating the questions. The connection already exists and is relevant for them. The teacher can also consider what skills and techniques the students should be utilizing and learning and steer the students in that direction if necessary. The better the relationship between the teacher and the students the more effective this type of planning will be. Since it is a collaborative exercise the students will

be operating as a community as well. The very process of trying to decide upon a theme and then activities involves a tremendous amount of interaction and practice in democratic decision making. The students will be engaged in a process of partnership as opposed to the competition usually fostered in mainstream classrooms. Instead of competing to best display an understanding of what others deem important the students will be making the decisions about what is important and then working together to find the answers to their own questions. Thus not only are the students learning about the external world, but the process that they follow will necessarily involve a consideration of the self.

Close consideration of the curriculum integration approach will show that it is actually the same as traditional teaching in significant ways. Traditionally a topic or theme is chosen for study. Activities are then prepared to familiarize students with the necessary information and skills needed. Finally the students are called on to demonstrate their knowledge. The differences lie in the impetus for the activities; the decision of what is going to be done, and how knowledge will be demonstrated. While the students learn, they will be encouraged to consider how they can put this understanding into practice in their lives. An ideal education is one where learning is not only about taking in, but also utilizing knowledge.

Beane (1990) identifies several difficulties with this approach. One is that it takes great effort for a teacher to guide rather than control her/his students and to ensure that adequate resources are available for the children to pursue their goals. This will certainly be a challenge in a small school, but experience and resources will both grow over time. A second is that the children may be too whimsical in their approach and not be able to create a significant plan of study. I see two solutions to this. One is for the teacher to highlight a concern that is serious to the students as a starting place for the process. Secondly, if the children lack the maturity to carry out the process then the teacher will assume greater responsibility for planning, while involving the children however possible. It should be noted that this approach is in many ways parallel to the project approach used in Reggio Emilia kindergarten classes with great success. (Gandini, 1993) Another possible problem is that individual students may lack the drive or ability to make their ideas heard in a group setting. Once again it is up to the teacher to manage the situation and help that child discover her/his own interests and express them. This approach will be clearly challenging for teachers but it is also tremendously exciting and offers them a chance to be part of the learning community as opposed to dominating that community.

A successfully integrated curriculum clearly could cover all of the subject areas stressed in a more traditional classroom. However, I do not feel that it should not be used as the only method of instruction in the school. I feel that if it is solely relied on, the teacher will have to unduly bend the ideas and desires of the students to fit into their own educational concerns for the children. Time will also be given for other methods to be used to address group and individual needs of the learners. Although the integrative approach lends itself perfectly toward teaching towards what the students have an interest in and connection to, this can be done in other ways as well.

Individualized Explorations

Electives

The school I currently teach at, The Progressive School of Long Island, does not use the integrated approach to teaching. Instead the teachers mainly determine the curriculum with a little reference to what is expected by the state for children at their grade level. Teachers choose their own methods for teaching but an emphasis is put on meeting the individual needs of the students and aiming at holistic growth. One element that runs through all classes is that students are given time to pursue their own interests. The youngest children are given free exploratory time and as they get older they are encouraged to pick an area of interest and to focus on it. The older grades (4-6) create long term projects called electives. These range from studying about a topic of their choice and presenting it to the class, to running a school newspaper to teaching children in another grade. These electives usually last from four to ten weeks. The teacher guides the student by helping them define and refine their idea and by helping them overcome obstacles they encounter through the process. Electives are normally

individual or pair projects based on student choice, although this is not a hard and fast rule. When a group of eight 5th graders wanted to collaboratively create a school newspaper, they were allowed to, but they needed to show that each student would have an area of responsibility.

The emphasis in elective work is always on the student generating ideas and finding solutions or answers. Since they are doing work of their own choosing, they will often pursue it with greater interest and enthusiasm than they do assigned work. This is to be expected since the idea has come from the students' interests and experiences and they have an emotional connection to their work. At PSOLI, time is given for electives in two ways. Some is set aside each week in the schedule the teachers determine, and the students also can work on their electives when they finish their work in class. Also, independent work is given to the students on a regular basis and those who apply themselves can easily have time to work on their electives. Students who have trouble with their assigned work are also sometimes given elective time if they worked well. The teacher tries to balance the needs of the students. The element of freedom of choice is important in electives and in the completion of work. It helps the children gain self discipline. I have seen this approach help students to focus on their work so that they can get to their electives.

A potential criticism of this approach is that the choice of working hard can easily be seen as coercion to do work whether one finds the assignment relevant or not. Slower workers may also feel penalized because other students get more elective time. It would be clearly preferable to be designing activities that students would like to do as much as their electives and therefore they would not need incentive to do them. However, as we discussed in the *student centered teacher structured methods* section, this is not always possible. The reality of the classroom is that certain activities will appeal to some children and other activities will appeal to others. Students sometimes need to do work that is not of their choosing and they cannot always see that the end product is something good for them to experience. In such cases, the incentive of electives, or in the lower grades, free exploratory time is clearly preferable to the threat of a low grade or no recess.

Exploratory Time

The concept of free exploratory time does not need to be limited to the lower grades as it is at PSOLI. The free school movement is based upon the premise that children know what is best for them and given the freedom and support to pursue their own goals they will learn what they need to know. (Miller, 2000) While I don't believe that unbounded freedom is the best way to teach children all of the time, I think it has an important place in the learning process. Given a rich environment children of all ages and most adults for that matter will naturally explore it. We want to understand the world around us and the way we do that is by interacting with it. In addition to this, we have seen that for holistic teaching to work the teacher must observe the students and determine their strengths interests and needs. Observing free exploration provides an excellent opportunity to see the child in a natural state not overly effected by other's expectations.

Montessori schools use this approach and allow students to explore but they also have specific materials on hand so the children can work on specific skills and techniques. (Montessori, 1964) other schools such as those using Reggio Emilia approach provide less structure and allow the children to interact with a great variety of materials as they see fit. (Gandini, 1993) I observed an exploratory time at the Bellwether school, which they have every morning. I observed a mixed age class of 8 to 12 year olds. It seemed to mix the two approaches. There were toys available that would lead to cognitive skills development and at the same time a wide variety of less structured options were available to the children. Many of the students were working on existing projects ranging from drawing to construction, while others chose to read or play. Only one child seemed to have a hard time settling on an activity and the teacher gently pushed him toward focusing his energies. I felt that this idea could be very effective in a school using electives.

Exploratory time could be combined with an elective approach to be a strong tool for growth. Very young children could explore their world through a variety of materials, some purposefully designed and others freer. The teacher could guide children to certain materials if a real need was seen, but for the most part they would be

free. As the children got older, more demands would be made on them to use some of their exploratory time to pursue longer term projects of their own choosing. Children in the higher grades would maintain the right for free exploratory time while also having electives that they had designed and agreed completion dates for. The teacher's role would be to observe and aid in the planning and execution of electives. A child who wanted to do nothing could be encouraged, but they should not be forced to participate. Giving the students exploratory time reinforces the message that it is their interests that are important. The teacher will strive to create a rich environment that invites the students to explore their world. She/he can offer lessons to the students that they would be free to attend. The students could also request help from the teacher in areas where they feel they need it or that they want to learn more about.

The school then will use a variety of methods to help the children grow. An integrated curriculum will be augmented by teacher generated lessons and independent exploratory time. All of these methods are aimed at helping the children grow familiar with and get in the habit of using the inquiry cycle. This is a powerful tool which when it becomes a habit is the basis for sustained lifelong learning. Simply put, it involves following a simple process. Asking:

- What do I know? (previous experience)
- What do I want to know? (topic or idea that is pertinent to the learner)
- How can I find out about it? (design the process)

And when the exploration and experiential process is complete.

- What have I learned and understood? (self assessment)
- What do I want to know now? (beginning again)

If we can teach and empower students to follow this approach deeply and sincerely, then we will have succeeded in helping to create lifelong learners. If we can get them to follow it in consideration of their own self and its interconnection with the world, we will have succeeded in helping to create spiritual lifelong learners that could help change the world.

Assessment practices

In my observation, assessment is what causes the most fear and stress in schools. As we have seen, these are negative factors in the learning process. The vast majority of people that I know are terrified of having somebody assess them. When I was a head teacher in Japan, part of my responsibility was to observe other teacher's lessons and give them feedback to improve their teaching. I did everything I could to make this a positive experience for the teachers. I advised them when I was coming well in advance, I asked them what aspects of their teaching they thought I should focus on to best help them. I asked where they thought they were strong so I could appreciate and learn from them. I would position myself in their classroom wherever they wanted me and participate or not according to their desires. After the observation I would talk over the lesson with them and adjust my feedback according to their responses. Finally, I would give my feedback in the form of starting a discussion about their teaching practice. The bottom line however, was that eventually my report with numerical ratings of various aspects of their teaching, would be sent to our head office and it could affect their salary and their job. This fact led to great stress and severely undermined all of the positive possibilities of the process. I learned a lot from this process that I find equally applicable in the assessment of children.

1. Unless somebody wants to improve they will not be helped by any feedback.
2. When an assessment has importance beyond the learning process, as in grades, then the child will focus on the end result and not earnestly enter into a learning dialogue.

3. No matter how you couch it, "snapshot" pictures of a person's work will not be considered fair by that person. It is not possible to gauge skill or understanding from one instance or piece of work..
4. People have a hard time assessing themselves, and this is essentially a skill that needs to be learned and practiced.

The first and second points speak to the motivation of the child. According to Dewey (1990), children are motivated to learn by their desire to make sense of themselves and their world. Another powerful incentive in elementary school is to make their parents happy. (Kohlberg, 1972) Most parents will be happy if their children are happy and they can see that their child is growing and learning. Holistic education holds that children will be motivated when they are learning something that is related to their past experience and is relevant to them. We must consider therefore the role we want assessment to play in this process. Alfie Kohn (1996) believes that, "The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning". (p.190) I agree with him. Rather than structure assessment practice on telling a child how they did it should be focussed on helping them understand what they learned. We have seen that learning is not simply collecting unrelated facts. It is about making connections to relevant experiences and being able to use those connections to further understanding. (Caine & Caine, 1994)

Assessment then should help the child see whether they can do this. It entails drawing these connections from them or finding a way to help them answer the questions: What did I do? Why did I do it? What did I learn? And to facilitate further learning, What do I want to know or do now? Certainly one obvious way to do this is to ask them. Unfortunately students often lack the skill and awareness to search for deeper implications of their actions and their learning process. This is where the teacher and assessment become important. Grades do not help students understand the answer to those questions. Rather the teacher can observe the working and thinking process of the child as well as their results and give feedback to improve their skills and guide their understanding of what they have done.

The third point I made considers the process of assessment. It is not possible nor desirable to judge a child's understanding and learning on the basis of one test or a series of tests. For one thing, the artificiality and stress of tests, especially if they carry high stakes, is not a fair way to determine learning. Assessment must be done over time and in consideration of the observed growth of a child. Individual assignments or tests can be used as guidelines for gaining an understanding of the child and helping them see how their learning process is proceeding. Alfie Kohn (1996) lays down two guidelines for an ideal method of assessment:

The best system A) Bases assessment on an analysis of student learning over a period of time by a teacher who knows them well. B) Uses other educators to authenticate that analysis as a way of increasing our confidence in it. (p. 187)

(PSOW will be following a two teacher model, with significant interactions with other teachers as well, so Kohn's second point will be covered in the section on the structure of the school.)

Assessment over time will be accomplished in two ways at the school. First there will be an ongoing dialogue, both written and spoken, between the student and the teacher. This dialogue will be aimed at helping the student answer the questions we posed above. Secondly, the student and the teacher will decide which pieces of the student's work to keep in a portfolio. This will allow both to reflect on the growth process of the student.

This reflection is what is considered in the fourth point above. We have seen that the ultimate aim of NeoHumanist education is to help the child understand who they are and to feel their connection to the world. A large part of this approach is introversial. That is the answers to those questions must come from inside of the child. As they go through life they will be learning and growing. This growth includes gaining knowledge of facts and concepts but goes far beyond it. It is this idea that sets holistic education far apart from our current mainstream system. Consider this idea by Gibboney and Webb (1998):

One should not be intimidated by foolish talk about the measurability (often couched in the terms of accountability) of school outcomes - as in "if it can't be measured, we can't know if anything good is occurring". Friendship cannot be quantitatively assessed; nor can loyalty, or love, or self discipline, or ethical behavior, or initiative. Most of us, however' would call them "significant outcomes. (p. 66)

Teachers can help students consider these points, but ultimately the most important assessment comes from the students. Therefore to strengthen our assessment practice, we need to help children reflect on themselves and their process of learning. In this way, we can help guide them to a better understanding, which is our goal. Note that a major part of the inquiry cycle discussed at the end the teaching methods section is self assessment. To help students become proficient in this area, we need to help them learn how to reflect. It is worth remembering that the society that we live in encourages exactly the opposite habit. We teach our children to blindly accept what society says as true. (Goodman, 1992, p.19)

Helping children to become reflective learners is a process that starts in kindergarten and runs through the entire school. There a few main elements involved:

1. The teachers model reflection
2. The students are given a chance to reflect and their ideas are valued
3. The students are encouraged to ask questions

Children are constantly observing adults to make sense of their world. As a teacher, I have often been amazed by observations that my students share with me about myself. They point out that a particular smile means one thing during a lesson, (in this case "be careful I am about to try to rile you up so you really have to think") but during lunch it means something else. (I am amused by your actions but I don't want to admit it because they are not entirely appropriate.) They also notice the innumerable nonverbal signs and communications that I share with my co-teacher throughout the day. I have come to understand that children miss very little especially if you say one thing and do another. Therefore if we want to challenge our children to be reflective we have to be that way ourselves. This is especially true in our society where so much is given to us and we aren't encouraged to look beyond the surface.

It does us little good to model reflection and even encourage it in our students unless we show them that we value their ideas. Reggio Emilia oriented schools utilize a very simple tool to do this with younger children. They listen to what they say and they post significant reflections in the classroom. (Gandini, 1993) This serves a twofold purpose. First, it says very clearly to children that we are listening and interested in your ideas. Secondly, it gives the teachers and children a chance to see how their thinking has changed over the course of a lesson or project. This technique can be continued in the older grades. Others include: journal writing as an ongoing discourse with the self and/or the teacher, self portraits, discussion and any other activity that sends the children the message that their reflections are valued. I have found that the single most powerful tool to do this is to really listen to children, to be completely focussed on what they are saying and why they are saying it. Doing this requires teachers to move beyond an agenda of expecting ideas or results from children to truly trying to understand them. This reminds me of a line from my favorite prayer, The Prayer of St. Francis. "Oh Lord grant that I may never seek so much to be understood as to understand ..." If we can make this shift in our thinking, the children will get the message.

Finally, it is not enough to merely model and value reflection. We need to help children become skillful in questioning to develop their cognitive skills. Part of the way we do this is to use teaching methodologies that put an emphasis on student questions. Another is to ensure that we help student's experience and explore high level cognitive thinking. Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Skills gives an excellent guideline for considering what type of thinking we are expecting from our students. (Appendix 2) If our questions to them are simplistic and require simply knowledge or comprehension all of the time, then that is how they will naturally come to think. If we reinforce the importance of such thinking by utilizing high stakes standardized tests then we should hardly be surprised if children and teachers focus on those areas. However, if we move students beyond this and

work on application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation then we will be helping our students learn to be reflective. As they become reflective, they will also become meta-cognitive. That is, they will learn to observe the process of their own minds. This will allow students to become more creative and critical thinkers. (Null, 2001) This is also the base step on the road to self awareness. Therefore we could say that one vital role of assessment in the school is to aid in the process of developing reflective higher order thinking and meta-cognition. We will see more specifically how this process will be aided when we consider what we teach in chapter 7.

Our Approach to Discipline

Discipline is a major subject for many educators and administrators. Millions of dollars are made yearly on new methods and systems designed to get children to behave and do their work. The problem often is not that the children are not behaving but that the work they are being asked to do is not perceived by them to be the work that they want to be doing. Alfie Kohn (1996) goes into the concept of discipline more deeply, delving at the roots and aims of a disciplinary system and how it relates to what we are trying to achieve in the classroom. In Beyond Discipline he examines contemporary behavioral management strategies such as Cooperative Discipline, Assertive Discipline, and their ilk. Kohn finds that they do not substantially differ from traditional classroom management techniques in that they rely on rewards and punishments to modify student behavior. He shows that all of these methods continue to place the teacher at the head of the class in the authoritarian role and wielding the power and responsibility for maintaining order in the classroom. While the more modern techniques couch these interventions more positively, they are actually wolves of behavior modification in sheep's clothing. Kohn points to their core belief being that children's behavior naturally needs modifying and that children are inherently unable to control themselves. By contrast, Kohn argues that the question in the classroom should not be phrased as control versus chaos but rather what can we do to change our existing practices to focus on what children need. Kohn believes that children need self-determination, relatedness or a positive connection to others and competence. (pg. 9) He sees children's boredom and the fact that they are coerced into learning and behaving as the main causes for unrest and therefore conflict situations. Kohn accepts that children will have needs and impulses that sometimes cause them to act in a disruptive fashion but that these are not the primary causes for their actions. He takes an optimistic view of human nature and postulates that the creation of a trusting environment where children feel respected and empowered will be optimal not only for minimizing disruptive behavior but for maximizing learning. The overall method for achieving this will be to build an ideal as possible community in the classroom. Such a community would be centered around student choice, the teacher as a caring facilitator and model, and a commitment to working together.

If we consider the goals, principles, and methods that I have proposed for PSOW, we can see that we are aiming at exactly the type of atmosphere and model that Kohn is espousing. Our teaching methodologies seek to build upon children's strengths and interests. Our aim is to help the children learn values that will allow them to create a cooperative and just community that will benefit all not just the "winners". However, shifting our goals of discipline to the building of community and individual growth will not eliminate conflict in our school. It will greatly reduce it. I would argue that that eliminating conflict is an impossible goal and not one that should be pursued. I am sure that through draconian punishments and/or severe mental conditioning such a goal could be reached, but this would be completely antithetical to our desire of creating liberated minds. In fact, it is through the clash of values and needs that our students will best learn how to be members of a strong democracy. Conflicts therefore, should be seen as excellent teaching opportunities. I have rarely seen children focus on anything as intently as they do on conflict situations. They represent golden opportunities to facilitate growth. Recall Kohlberg's model of moral development (pg. 47) Children need help to progress along those stages. How we deal with each conflict situation depends not only on a child's actions but where they are developmentally. Our goal should never be to simply resolve the conflict and get on with our own agenda, rather it should be to use the opportunity to promote growth of the participants and provide a model for the other students.

Before we consider specifically how we should deal with a child in a conflict situation we should consider the causes of that situation. William Kriedler analyzes the various aspects of discipline problems very clearly in his

book Creative Conflict Resolution (1984). He considers there to be three main types of conflict in the classroom: Conflicts over resources, conflicts over needs, and conflicts over values. He also looks over the root causes of these conflicts. He sees them as a competitive atmosphere, an intolerant atmosphere, poor communication, inappropriate expression of emotion, lack of conflict resolution skills and the misuse of power by the teacher. He believes that conflict is inevitable in the classroom and that students and teachers can learn to deal with it creatively and constructively. To do so, teachers first need to understand their own values and needs before they can deal with those of others. How we define a problem, which is based on our understanding of that problem, is critical in finding a positive solution for all involved. Secondly we must seek to understand our students as individuals, to determine their needs and values, so we can choose appropriate strategies to help them.

Finally we can consider the situation at hand. It is especially important for teachers to follow this process if the conflict is between them and a student. In these cases great care needs to be taken to step back from the conflict and approach it with great self awareness. In all cases we need to be aware of two goals, growth for the whole class and growth of the individuals involved.

Conflict resolution should be carried out in such a way that the harmony of the class is restored and the community and its values are strengthened. In fact conflict resolutions often provide ideal teaching opportunities to consider values and needs in a relevant context. It gives the participants and the class (if appropriate) a chance to consider their values and see if they are consistent with other values that they and others hold. The possibility that both people can be right and that they have to try and find an equitable answer to a moral dilemma can be raised and practiced. The conflict can be an excellent source of discussion and reflection. As I said, children are often totally absorbed in their conflicts. By modeling reflective behavior and acceptance of other people's values, the children can be helped to see that their struggle is not so much about winning and losing but about finding common ground. This sort of conflict resolution takes time and the teacher needs to decide when it is appropriate to pursue such matters. It will sometimes be necessary to sacrifice other plans to pursue this important aspect of moral growth. Children are often upset after a conflict and may not be happy with a solution even if it is just. Over time that feeling will pass. However, if a conflict is not resolved in accordance to moral principles than those ideals will lose value in the eyes of all of the children.

The second goal deals with the individual's moral growth and is often more complex. We have examined how children can be seen to progress through various stages of moral development. (pg. 47) Our response to them needs to be based upon their developmental level. A child at the power stage who has few rules for herself/himself will not benefit from being asked to consider if what they did was right or wrong. However a child who would like to behave but lacks self discipline could greatly benefit from such an approach. Eric Jacobson the director at PSOLI stresses that we need to have a balanced approach to discipline.

The key to discipline is to apply a balance between external pressure and internal inspiration for the overall growth of the child. Internal pressure involves trying to change something in the child, to inspire them to change their behavior. External pressure is changing something in their environment which exerts some external pressure on the child and forces them to modify their behavior. (Jacobson, 2001)

Ways to apply internal guidance are through encouraging introspection and providing ideas for the child to consider. This can be done directly when dealing with a conflict situation. For example we might say to a child "Please consider what your actions meant to so and so, is that what you wanted to do?" If a child is developmentally at the stage where not hurting others is important to them then asking them to consider their actions can be very effective. The internal approach is also pursued outside of conflict situations. Activities such as art, class meetings, meditation, communication games, and service projects will all help children become more self aware. (Jacobson, 2001)

External pressure might include logical consequences, punishments or rewards. We utilize whatever is currently motivating the child to try and guide their actions in ways that will be beneficial for them and the whole class,

including the teacher. It is important to note that the use of these external behavior modification techniques must be undertaken with great care as to the messages that they send. It is very easy to move back into a coercive style relationship that we are seeking to avoid. The goal should be made clear to children that our aim is to do what is best for the whole community and the child at the same time. Their will must be considered and if at all possible, their consent gained. An example of this might be to tell a disruptive student that if they continue to interrupt a group lesson that they will not be allowed to participate. If this action is taken without any discussion then it is simply the teacher asserting her/his power and the meta-message is clear. "*Do as I say or else.*" However the teacher and the student could agree that the student's behavior is disruptive and not fair to her/his classmates and that the student has shown difficulties maintaining self control. In this case they might agree that not allowing the student to continue to participate is an equitable solution. The message to the student is quite different. "*I can see that you are having difficulties, perhaps a little psychological pressure will help.*" I have used this technique numerous times with students who really want to behave but have a hard time with self discipline. External pressure can be used for short term solutions, while longer term remedies must ultimately come from inside the child through growth of their will power and moral insight. Both approaches need to be used and balanced in the classroom.

We have now considered how we are going to teach in PSOW. Before examining what we are going to teach we will examine the structure of the school to see how it will encompass the school's principles and methods to be used.

Chapter 6

School Structure: People

The following ideas for the structure of the school are an amalgam of various types of schools and education systems that I have studied and visited. I have tried to draw especially upon the strengths of the Progressive School of Long Island, a NeoHumanist school, where I work but to also incorporate ideas from Waldorf education, and Reggio Emilia influenced schools. In so doing I am aware that by creating an amalgam of these systems I risk losing what makes each of them so effective. However, I believe that it is in keeping with the original tradition of each of these models to strive to continually experiment with fresh ideas to keep our education system strong. It could be pointed out that this is clearly not so of the current Waldorf education system which has become quite rigid in what it considers to be the correct approach. It has been argued however that this was not necessarily Steiner's original intent. (Miller, 2000, p.120) I have also had conversations with experienced Waldorf educators who told me that Steiner encouraged innovation and growth. NeoHumanist thinking stresses that we should never accept anything dogmatically and that we should always strive to rationally improve our systems. The Reggio Emilia advocates have even resisted writing down principles for their education system because they want to avoid it becoming dogmatic. With this giant caveat behind me, I will explain the proposed structure of the school.

Student Grouping

The school will aim to have classes of not more than twenty students. The students will be grouped roughly according to age level as in a traditional school system. The school will have one classroom for each grade and students will progress on a yearly basis. As assessment will be on a rolling process with each student being considered for how their learning is progressing there will not be tests or criteria for moving up grades. If the teachers, parents, and the student agreed that the student should stay back a grade, then that would be possible. The main reason that students would be grouped together is that they progress through their elementary years at roughly the same developmental rate. This allows teachers to structure group activities that are suitable for many students. This idea does not fly in the face of the important principle that all children develop at different

rates and need to be treated differently. This is, of course, still valid. However the children in a same age classroom are much more likely to be at developmentally similar levels than children in varied age classrooms. They will still benefit from the diversity in learning styles and abilities that will be found across the spectrum in their class. I have spoken to teachers who have taught in multiage classrooms, practically every one said that it was a challenge to prepare for such a developmentally varied class. Since the type of methodology we are planning on using is already taxing on a teacher I believe that additional stress due to multiage grouping would limit the teacher's ability to help her/his students. I do believe that it is good for the growth of a caring community in the school for students of different ages to interact with each other and we will see that the structure of the day and learning will provide for and promote multiage interaction.

Teachers

At PSOLI I teach in a two teacher classroom. We run the classroom cooperatively. We plan together, consult about students, provide feedback and a second point of view. We share responsibilities for the curriculum and for conferencing with the students. I have found this arrangement to be efficacious for a variety of reasons. First it is often the case that you will have a veteran teacher with a new or relatively inexperienced one. In this case the experienced teacher can act as a mentor and help the newer teacher grow. Additionally, new teachers often bring fresh ideas and energy into a classroom that the more experienced teachers can benefit from. Also, from the important perspective of the students it provides a model for two adults sharing responsibilities, resolving differences and sharing ideas for a common goal. It also allows the students to have a choice of teachers to work with or bring problems to. Additionally, where one teacher may not be able to help a student understand or work through an idea the other teacher can provide a fresh and different approach. This has often been of great benefit in our classroom. The two teacher model also fits well with the structure and principles of the school. Since an emphasis is put on individualized learning, this model allows for a large amount of individual learning time. When the students are working independently, there are two teachers for them to conference with or bounce ideas off. Also while one teacher may be engaged in a group lesson with some or most of the class, other students can have access to the second teacher. The system is also invaluable for the type of assessment we will have at the school. The teachers can compare notes and ideas and further remove personal bias from their assessment with a child. Also the student has a better chance of developing a close rapport with at least one of her/his teachers. This trusting relationship is critical in really being able to guide students. Finally the two teacher model allows the students to have a decent class size without having too large of a student/teacher ratio. The often small class size at private schools can be difficult for children because they have such a limited peer group. While this remains a concern it is alleviated somewhat by the ability to have twenty children in a class.

Teacher and Class Progression

Waldorf schools have the same teacher stay with a class for all eight years if possible. They do this so that the teacher can form a strong bond with the children and gain a deeper understanding of them as they progress. This understanding can be very helpful for helping the students develop all aspects of themselves. The teachers can gain a real insight into the child and vice versa. Waldorf graduates have told me their relationship with their teacher was the most important part of their education and that they have stayed friends long after leaving the school. However others have said that if you don't get along with your teacher you can be in a bad place in a small school. Additionally this system places an enormous burden on a teacher to be able to teach children at a great variety of developmental stages. Most teachers that I have observed and talked to prefer certain age groups and feel comfortable and happy teaching them. I feel that this is perhaps one reason that the Waldorf curriculum has become so standardized as it is very hard to customize lessons at so many different levels. For the individualized system we are going to use this would once again put undo stress on the teacher. Teachers who stay at one level gain experience in what generally is effective with children at that age. They can spend more time reflecting and revising rather than always needing to be preparing at a new level. Since the school will have a two teacher system the benefits of both methods can be gained. First one teacher will stay with the children for three years (1-3, 4-6: kindergarten teachers will not change.) and then cycle back to a new class.

The second teacher in the class will stay in that grade every year. This will allow for continuity in each class and the building of a deep relationship between the students and teacher. The rotating teacher will gain experience in different age groupings but not too wide a range. They will be prepared to become mentor teachers at those levels. The students will benefit from always having a new teacher each year as well as a continuing teacher most years. The potential problem of students not liking their continuing teacher is minimized by the fact that another teacher will be present in the class.

School Structure: Schedule

The normal day at the school will be run according to a preset schedule. This exists so different grades can participate in activities together and so special classes can be coordinated. Special classes include art, music, movement, drama and other similar classes that will be available to students but not necessarily taught by class teachers. Within this schedule the classes will have freedom to structure their time as they see fit. The day is structured to allow for flexibility in student and teacher planning and to foster a sense of community through group activities and a regulated amount of individual freedom.

Schedule

Time Activity Grouping

8:40 - 9:10 Collective Quiet Time (Whole School/Focus Class)

9:10 - 10:30 Explore/Elective Time (Whole School/Mixed)

10:30 - 10:45 Class Meeting ** (Individual Grades)

10:45 - 11:45 Lessons/Specials (Individual Grades/Mixed)

11:45 - 12:30 Jobs/Lunch (Individual Grades)

12:30 - 3:00 Lessons/Specials/Recess (Individual Grades/Mixed)

**There will be a 40 minute whole school assembly every Friday following Quiet Time

Collective Quiet Time - This time is based on the program at PSOLI and is aimed at starting each day in a peaceful balanced manner. This is a mandatory time for students and teachers to meet together to practice activities that will help them become more focused and introspective. These activities include: yoga postures to help the students maintain a flexible body and to promote physical balance internally and externally, singing uplifting songs to enhance collective harmony and to elevate our minds and values, quiet meditation to encourage and practice introspection, guided relaxations to help the children learn and experience relaxation techniques, guided visualizations to help the children learn to control and focus their minds and have internally based experiences, and other movement activities to help children realize the connection between their bodies and their minds.

It has been our experience at PSOLI that certain children have an extremely hard time at quiet time. Nobody is forced to participate but all are expected to be quiet. I believe it would be beneficial to have a separate Quiet Time for children who simply cannot stay still for that length of time. Children with ADD or ADHD would be a good example. They will be given a different version of Quiet Time more suited to their needs. This will include Brain Gym activities designed to help children with these problems. (Dennison, 1994) They will also join the whole school at least once a week on Fridays so they are not removed completely from the collective process.

Children who want to join the main group regularly will be allowed to if they can show that they will not be disruptive.

Explore/Elective Time- This will be a time for students to explore whatever they choose. In the younger grades this will be basically free time. As the children get older they will be expected to be engaged in some activity although not necessarily with a goal in mind. Teachers will observe the children and guide their interests if the children want them to. Students will also be allowed to visit and teach in other grades. We have seen at PSOLI that given the chance to do so, many students love to tutor or teach something they love to the younger students. For this reason the whole school has this exploration time simultaneously. Students will also be free to pursue their individual or group electives at this time.

This is the time when individual students can exercise the most control over their lives. Teachers will also conference with individual students during this time at least for one fifteen minute period each week. The student will work with the teacher to consider her/his progress on electives, discuss needs and observations, and make goals for future progress. The teachers will always try and be available for additional conferences, as the children need them.

Class Meeting- For the last few years in my classroom we have been having class meetings once a week. The students run the meetings and set the agenda, although the teachers often have an item for discussion. The teachers take decisions that are arrived at in the meeting under consideration and if feasible we adjust the classroom according to the students' needs and desires. These meetings are often unruly and frustrating at first because the children have a hard time controlling themselves. Over the course of the year, they get much better at it and usually by mid semester, can hold meetings without a teacher present. At PSOLI, these meetings are not normally held in the earlier grades so the children don't have much experience with them. However in a recent survey of my students, they indicated that the class meeting is one of their favorite parts of 5th grade because they get to have a say in what happens in the class and can discuss what they want to discuss. Although the meetings almost always run late and the children miss part of their recess, they are keenly interested in them. Many powerful elements for a school interested in critical democracy and community can be found in class meetings. They give the students a chance to air their opinions and concerns in a safe environment and see that these ideas are valued. This builds trust and openness amongst the students. Also, the children get a chance to truly participate in the democratic process and can experience how difficult but fulfilling it is to try and find common ground. One meeting early this year ended up focussing on the injustice of simple majority rule. The minority group, the girls in this case, forced this discussion which led to an intense examination of justice in the classroom and around the world. The point is that these meetings provide the students with a very real experience that they are passionately involved in creating and considering. The vital elements for learning are present.

Another important aspect of class meetings is that they allow for active community building. Meetings will be held every day in every class at the PSOW. By the time the children reach the older grades they will be quite experienced in the process. The 6/7th grade teacher at PSOLI this year noted that he taught a group of 2nd graders who held student controlled meetings weekly at his previous school; they had been having such meetings since kindergarten. At PSOW the children will be able to share any problems and concerns they have in the classroom. This will allow them to take responsibility for building community and to practice effective communication skills that are vital to build a strong group. I saw this powerfully modeled at the Bellwether school when I visited. One girl addressed an older boy about her concern that he hadn't given back a book she had lent him even though she had asked for it and he had said he would give it back. The boy listened politely, explained his reason, and said he would return the book right away. At this stage, the teacher pointed out a general lesson that could be learned by the whole class from this incident and the issue was over. The other children were able to experience real, effective, communication and conflict resolution. The teacher helped the children communicate their needs in a non-confrontative manner that led to a natural resolution that was acceptable to both sides.

The daily meetings will also give the children a chance to have input into their daily schedule and to voice concerns or desires to their teachers. This will serve two purposes. First it is important for the children to feel that they are active members of the community with power to effect what happens. Secondly it allows the teachers to explain what they are doing and why as opposed to simply imposing it on the children. There will undoubtedly be times when the teachers feel it is necessary to impose their judgment on the children but this should be the exception rather than the norm. If the children understand that they are respected, loved and listened to then they can accept such judgments more readily without losing their sense of empowerment. (Kohn, 1996, p.63) Additionally, students can discuss changes or concerns they have about the school as a whole and be ready to share at the school meeting.

**** Whole School Meeting** - Once a week the whole school will meet together to share experiences and concerns. The director of the school, teachers and students will have a chance to talk together. On a rotating basis each class will also have the opportunity to give a small presentation of their choosing. This is an important event to build the school community and allow the children to interact in a multiage environment.

Lessons/Specials - During these times the children will be involved in lessons and activities with their own class. They will also be participating in additional activities such as art, music, drama, Spanish class, woodworking etc. Some of these additional activities will be optional and others will be mandatory. The optional special classes will be mixed age and grouped roughly according to ability. For instance there might be a beginner and advanced woodworking class depending on interest and teacher availability. The teachers will plan their days around special class times. Lessons will consist of a variety of activities as explained in chapter 5 on methodology. The children might be doing independent work, small group work or receiving a lesson from a teacher. This will vary by class and teachers as they see fit for the good of the class. Some classes will be more student led than others. The emphasis will always be on trying to provide the most effective all around experiences for the child. The specifics of how this might work will be considered in more detail in the next chapter.

Jobs - The children all have different duties to perform in their classrooms each day. These duties rotate daily. They range from cleaning the classroom to delivering messages and handing out papers to a student mediator. This system which is used very effectively at PSOLI gives the children a sense of responsibility for their classroom. It further eliminates the idea that the classroom is something that is given to the individual students for their use. Rather, it builds the sense that they are part of a community and have rights and responsibilities in that community. Goodman (1992) notes that responsibilities play an important role in the development of the community at Harmony School. He extends the idea beyond taking care of the classroom and school to interpersonal relations. (p. 118) Taken together a discipline policy that promotes healthy relationships coupled with student responsibilities helps build a healthy collaborative community. This simple method gives the children a taste of what it is like to be responsible citizens. If children fail to do their duty to the community then they need to repay the community in some way. This often takes the form of extra duties to be performed during the child's free time. These punishments are set up by the community.

Lunch - Students are free during lunch which will be eaten in the classroom, although students may visit other classes to eat if they want to. Lunch is a great time for teachers to interact with their students on a social level and this will be encouraged at the school. Many teachers at PSOLI play games with their students and this provides valuable insight into their personality as we can often see different aspects of children during this time. Lunch is also a good time for relaxed conversation and getting beyond the teacher student divide. While it is, of course, our goal to always have the children be free and natural, this is not always possible. School is by its very nature a forced grouping of children and while we can make this beneficial and fun for them we can never remove that inherent truth. The children know this and accept it, however during their truly free time, their groupings and activities are totally natural. It is a good time to see how the interior of the child which, comes out in free play, matches the exterior, which we see in lessons and learning activities. A well adjusted child shows little difference.

Recess - Recess is another time when children can be observed and interacted with in a more natural setting. While this is a goal throughout the school day, some children behave quite differently when they feel that there are no expectations on their performance. Recess at the PSOW will generally have two classes mixed at the same time. The children will be grouped as follows: K; 1-2; 3-4; 5-6. The purpose behind this is to allow children to mix with the other grades and also have a larger peer group to interact with. Once again, a recurring problem in small schools that I have seen and heard about is the limited number of relationships that can be formed. By grouping the children at recess we can increase this number and allow for a greater variety of interactions which is normally possible at larger schools.

Events Outside of the Normal Schedule - The regular schedule will need to be adjusted when certain activities are planned. Teachers and students will have a large degree of discretion to ensure that other activities can be planned. Field trips will play an important role in the life of the school. As Moffet (1994) writes, the whole world lies outside of a school and we would be foolish not to use it in our education of children. If we are trying to help them have experiences that they can feel connected to, then what could be more obvious than using the world they live in? Whether this is visiting power plants, walking in the woods, talking with Native Americans, or getting to know the members of the surrounding community, the experience will be real for the students.

In addition to field trips service activities will also play an important role in the school. The most powerful way for students to learn lessons on values and community involvement is to actually be involved in them. Recall that NeoHumanist education places a high value on putting what we learn into action. (page 16) Designing and carrying out service projects is an excellent way on doing this. Service projects build the student's self esteem and give them an opportunity to make real positive change in their world. These projects can of course be done in and around the school as well.

Chapter 7

What Will Be Taught?

We have examined what methods we will use to educate children in our school and how we will go about doing so. What remains is to consider what will be taught or stressed in the classroom and out of it. As can be seen from the principles of the school and the methods we plan to use, our school will be quite different from a current mainstream school and at times contrary to the norms of our society. This is of course intentional, as the school is meant to be an important step in the creation of citizens who will change that society. The Progressive School of Weaverville (PSOW) will exist in a society that does not share its aims and values should not be forgotten. While it will have a distinctly nontraditional approach it will also consider that the children will most likely be joining the mainstream education system and society when they leave. Moreover our students will be part of that society as they are in our school. As Ron Miller (2000) notes: "... a culture educates far more thoroughly and definitively than do teachers in classrooms". (p. 26) The students cannot turn off this culture or the ideas and beliefs of their parents when they enter our school. Therefore it is both practical and I believe correct, to be aware of the expectations of that wider society and school system and to help prepare the children to be effective in those realms. This does not mean that we need to go against the principles that we have established. On the contrary many of these societal messages such as materialism, sexism, and racism, need to be actively combated. (Chapter 3) Other societal expectations, such as the state's learning standards, can be used as one of the guidelines for both students and teachers to consider while planning activities. We need not worry that because our methods are not currently orthodox in the mainstream, that our students will have a hard time joining the flow. The director of PSOLI and leading Waldorf educators have reported that their graduates do extremely well in traditional schools. We can be aware of societal expectations without conforming to them.

This will allow us to communicate more effectively with parents, the community, and other schools. To facilitate this discussion we should be able to consider our school in language and categories familiar to all. This is one reason to consider the curricula of the school by subject area. Another is that while we recognize that all subjects are interwoven in a complete curriculum, they can also be broken down at times to ensure a complete approach. How they are eventually covered in the classrooms will ultimately be up to the teachers. What follows are some ideas and approaches to various subject areas rather than specific curricular guidelines or rules. I expect that the curriculum of the school and each class will be a lively subject of discussion between teachers and students as we continually develop new ideas and techniques. What follows are a few guidelines that we can launch our discovery from. They come primarily from my teaching and listening at the PSOLI.

Literature

The director of PSOLI often describes literature as the hub of our educational curriculum and this will also be true of PSOWE. Literature acts as a springboard for ideas for further study as well as a focus point for discussion. This is especially true at the lower grade levels where stories play an important part in the children's lives. The stories will raise many questions in children's minds and will allow them to explore their inner and outer worlds. They allow them to use and run free with their imagination. While traditional education might focus on teaching reading skills and comprehension these take a back seat, although they are still important, to the enjoyment and enrichment that children can get from books. Kieran Egan (1996) points out that the value of imagination has been leached from our educational system by people focusing on "Logico-Mathematical" intelligence. He says, "Most research on children's story comprehension misses their imaginative qualities and focuses on the familiar range of 'graspable' logical skills". (p. 22)

Waldorf education emphasizes the use of myth to familiarize children with spiritual concepts and ideas that go far beyond simple skills. Stories that focus on the "big" questions that children have such as: "Why are we here?" and "Where did we come from?" Traditional education focuses on using literature to help children learn to read or learn the rules of society. By valuing skills and abilities over imagination and deep thinking we quickly devalue the spiritual nature of children. The meta-message is that these aspects of a child are not important and are a distraction. Piaget once said in reference to introspective questions: "One would like to rule out romancing with the same severity as those questions designed to please the questioner". (in Egan, 1996, p.22)

This approach is quite contrary to trying to get children to practice higher order reasoning and questioning. (Appendix 1) By getting children to deeply consider literature we show them that we value their questions and ideas. An approach used at all grade levels at PSOLI is called shared inquiry discussion (SID). (The Great Books Foundation, 1992, p.i) SID calls for students to consider what they read on three levels. First they consider what actually happened in the book, corresponding to Bloom's knowledge and comprehension levels. Next the children are asked to consider and explain why the characters did certain things or what the author might be trying to say in the book. This corresponds to Bloom's mid levels of cognitive skills such as analysis and application. Finally the student's are asked to compare the ideas in the book to their own lives and discuss whether they agree or disagree with the author and/or characters. The students are allowed to propose alternative solutions and endings. These activities move them towards imagination, reflection and other higher level cognitive skills such as evaluation and application.

Entire themes are often developed from literature and these can come from the students or the teachers. These themes are developed with the principles of the school in mind. The first grade at my school is currently being transformed into an undersea world as the children read stories about whales and other sea creatures. The teachers are using the theme to cover many other subject areas and to have the children experience and use all of their intelligences. Artwork covers the walls and giant sea creatures hang from the ceiling. The children are studying and moving to the rhythm of the sea as they learn about what creatures and plants live there and how they are connected to each other and to us. The children come up with new ideas daily about how they add to their classroom and what else they want to find out about.

As the students grow older literature can continue to be an important vehicle for them to consider values and ways of living. Excellent literature always raises serious questions and when carefully selected can provide the teacher with an effective means for getting students to examine their own beliefs and lives. As the children read they often get inspired by the character's actions in books and want to emulate them. When we read the book One Eyed Cat by Paula Fox the children became inspired to visit people in nursing homes because the book depicted the hard time some people can have there and how a visit from a young person can be so important. Books can also be the starting point for student generated integrated units. Well chosen books open the children's mind and imagination and raise difficult questions that the students want answers to.

The choice of literature in the classroom must be done with great care. My co-teacher's husband gives her a hard time for not including "classics" in our curriculum. He feels that we are denying our students their cultural heritage. His views are common ones and permeate mainstream thinking today. However by choosing supposed classics we can very easily be promoting the very values and ideas we are trying to move beyond. (Eisler, 1996, p.178) Literature gives us a chance for children to see people acting in cooperation with each and to see the effects of a dominator model of living. It allows us to present strong female or minority characters that challenge stereotypes and provide positive role models for the children. A good example of this would be The Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell. This book portrays a strong female character who overcomes great difficulties by using her mind. She also is forced to challenge and face the sexist taboos of her clan and see them for what they are. The book, which is based on a true story, provides a strong role model for young girls and helps challenge many of the sexist beliefs already being inculcated in the minds of the children.

I am not making a case here for not helping children learn to read by teaching them skills and strategies. For some children at PSOLI we have found that they need to work on phonics separately and that this did help them to become more complete readers. Some students benefited from intensive vocabulary work while others built a strong vocabulary on their own. Each child is different and needs a different approach. In general we will use a whole language teaching techniques (Routman, 1996) but we will not be limited to them. The emphasis at PSOW will be to help children enjoy literature and to see it as a source for wonderful ideas. This love of reading will then greatly facilitate the learning and teaching process. This stands in contrast to making reading a chore that we then try to encourage children to do despite the fact that it can be seen as work.

Social Studies

Traditionally Social Studies has been the study of historical events and famous people. History is chopped up into a fragmented series of events that led to the current day. Its study involves a lot of memorization and the swallowing of a certain perception of history, in our case that of the dominant European male and his conquest of the new world and the championing of freedom. In this way Social Studies is often used as a powerful way of maintaining the status quo and providing a historical basis and justification for the imbalances in our current society. By contrast Social Studies can be the study of how our past has linked to the present, of themes that have run through history to this day. Eisler (1996) suggests a more balanced approach, where the dominator model is seen side by side with the more cooperative themes in our history:

U.S. history is best understood from a less Eurocentric, more gender-balanced perspective focussing on the point-counterpoint of dominator and partnership elements. Illustrations of partnership can be found in the ideals of democracy expressed in the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the abolitionist and civil rights movements, the feminist and women's rights movements, and the movement for greater economic equity and environmental balance. (p. 166)

She goes on to look at the possibility of teaching our history from a multicultural perspective honoring the struggles and contributions of non-whites and females. The study of greatness is also very powerful for children who are looking for models for their thoughts and behaviors. We need to be careful to present not only different and varied figures of greatness such as women scientists and black abolitionists but a consideration of different kinds of greatness. The fact that thousands of virtually nameless people would give their lives to fight for

freedom is for me more worthy of study than the general's ideas who sent them into battle. Our study of history then needs to be carefully considered to present a model of the past that allows us to understand how we came to be where we are today and some of the struggles and different ideologies that have existed in our country and other countries. Even having done this, we have just begun to delve into the importance of Social Studies.

The study of history needs to go far beyond the accumulation of facts. History allows us to examine relations between people and value judgments that are made by them. We can examine our own values and beliefs and see how they are affected by and affect the world around us. The question that I have observed most often asked by children about history is "Why did they do that?" To answer this question I like to emphasize to main ideas in my Social Studies lessons. First, I make sure that the children can look at situations from multiple perspectives. Secondly I try to have them experience the situation for themselves. Children of all ages love stories and drama. As they act out parts of an historical event they can get a feel for what actually happened and why. What follows is an example of how to teach "living history" as one of my students likes to call it.

My 5th graders had many strong feelings about Hitler and the Holocaust. They were filled with the questions of "Why did Hitler do what he did?" and "How did the people let him do it?" Their passion about these questions was particularly intense because half of the class was Jewish and had strongly held views on the matter, although they lacked many details. To address their questions, I decided to set up an enactment based on a project I had heard of where a teacher had created a Nazi party in his class under a different name and let the children experience the power of the dominant group mentality. I didn't want to do anything quite so dramatic or potentially traumatic but I did want the students to gain some insight through experience of the forces that were at work during that time.

To do this I designed a game in which each of the students was randomly given a different color which identified their group. Some were red, some blue and some green. The colors represented the different groups in Germany in the 1930s. I secretly assigned one child to be Hitler and gained her cooperation for what was to come. Everybody knew her as Black. The students did not know what any of the colors represented. They understood that they started with a certain amount of money and that they could earn more by working depending on their color. They were also given the ability to vote for and leaders who would be able to make rules, levy taxes and provide work for a certain number of people. The Blues were allowed to run in leadership elections against Black. The children were told they would get a prize depending on how much money they had at the end of the game. If they had too little money, they would get an extra duty in the classroom. This was to provide them an incentive to get money and it represented the German people's struggles to stay alive and prosper after World War I. During the first election, black person got more votes by promising to take money from the rich Red group and to provide jobs for people. Once in office, she started to pass laws discriminating against the minority Red players. Also, anybody heard complaining about the government could be fined and those who caught her/him would be rewarded. This led to kids starting to denounce each other. Anybody who wanted to join Black's party would earn more money, be immune from certain rules and gain power over other children. In return, they promised to support their leader for life. The second election saw the return of Black to power through a combination of loyalty, fear and ineffective opposition. Stricter and more vicious rules were passed and although the children didn't like them few complained because they would be fined and/or mistreated. More children joined black and they started making up signs and songs to support their leader. By the third election Black had absolute power guaranteed for life by her loyal supporters. In the discussion that followed the children talked about their fears of black and their lack of action due to their desire to gain money and win the prize. They didn't like what was happening to the minority Reds but too many factors worked against the other the other colors supporting them.

When the children learned the roles they were playing historically they were mortified but showed a strong understanding of what moved people to act as they did. They could easily discuss their own feelings and motivations and make perceptive and sympathetic hypotheses about what happened in Germany. When we subsequently looked at Nazi Germany the children absorbed the material very quickly and showed powerful insight into cause of the war and people's actions in it. They talked and wrote about the conflict of needs and

values that people encountered. Time and time again I have seen this sort of interactive history grab childrens' imaginations and provide them with an exciting vehicle experience history and historical choice in a way that is powerfully connected to their lives. I have seen that when they are that involved then they can access their higher order thinking skills much more effectively; they can be truly critical and reflective.

This is just one example of how we can use social studies to make children more aware of themselves and the world around them. Children are naturally full of questions about their world, a large part of what we need to do is simply to support this activity and guide them to finding their own answers effectively and efficiently. To study society or social interactions, be they current or historical is naturally relevant to children. We need to insure that what we study grows from their existing understanding and that they have a chance to reflect on what they learn and make it part of who they are and how they act.

Writing

For many of my students writing is by far the hardest task they have to perform in life. I have struggled as a teacher to find ways to inspire them, to help them get past their fears and their blocks, and to put their great ideas on paper. It can be quite exhausting for all concerned. Each child has a different need, a different reason why writing is or isn't difficult. Many teachers I know struggle with how to help children write. The best answer I have found comes from Lucy Calkins (1983). She says: "Writing does not begin with deskwork but with lifework. ... Writing is more than living, writing is being conscious of living". (p. 4)

Calkins' first principle for writing is that we need to help our students observe, be present and reflect on their world. Support and encouragement need to be given to their joys and concerns, their questions, and their answers. As children gain a greater sense of self and that self's interconnectedness with the world, they will naturally want to share it, especially if that sharing is received lovingly and honored. We can see that the first critical step in writing then, is a spiritual one. This is in direct contrast to the traditional aim of teaching writing in schools. Dewey (1990) made this critique of such education a hundred years ago and it is still valid today. While he was referring to all education, I believe this idea is especially relevant when in regards to writing:

It is something which appeals for the most part to the intellectual aspect of our natures, our desire to learn, to accumulate information and to get control of the symbols of learning; not our impulses to make, to do, to create, to produce, whether in the form of utility or art. (p. 26)

. If children are continually expected to write what they are told then we send the very clear message that they need to pay attention and regurgitate other's ideas about the world and not what is important to them. Writing is reduced to its most basic level. However, if we follow Calkins' model, writing is raised to the level of art. Students are asked to and supported in their impulses to do, create, and produce. Students use writing not just to convey ideas but to create them. Calkins (1983) says: Writing is not a process of recording details but making significance of them. (p. 4) Therefore the teaching of writing goes far beyond technical skills and in fact needs to start with the art of helping children to live fully and to feel confident enough to share their experience of life. By being present to a child's ideas whether they are written or spoken or drawn we reinforce the child's self esteem and willingness to express herself/himself.

We can help children do this by helping them to observe their outer and inner worlds and honoring those observations. This does not need to be a complicated process. In kindergarten children can express what is of interest to them and why. Even if they can't write it, the teacher can and then display it for the child to see that their ideas are appreciated. (Gardini, 1993) They can also be encouraged to draw their ideas and then helped to label it. Children do not need to be forced to write. They can easily see that people around them use writing to convey ideas. Just as they develop a desire to speak and diligently pursue that activity thus they will develop a desire to write. (Calkins, 1983, p.14) If they see many examples of labeled pictures they get the idea that this is natural and they will want to do it. The teacher can guide the child without telling them what to write. From the

very beginning the writing comes from within the child. As children see that they are not judged on how or what they write they will not develop a fear of putting letters on paper.

As the children progress in their ability to write there are many other activities that they can do to practice. No matter what the children do, the emphasis will continue to be put on their ideas and experience of life rather than handwriting, spelling, or word choice. Of course instruction can be given in these areas but it should be secondary to the art of expression. Children will naturally want to make their writing neater and grammatically correct and can be supported in doing so without putting undo emphasis or pressure on those points. The wall outside the second grade classroom is covered with children's writing. There are hundreds of spelling and grammar mistakes but there are also hundreds of ideas and thousands of words. In fact the second graders often write more than some fifth graders in the same period of time. The question that needs to be asked is, why this is so?

I have found that there are a few common reasons why kids don't write in the upper elementary grades. The first is that they are uncomfortable with the physical aspect of actually forming the letters, especially cursive ones. This is the easiest problem to solve with help in handwriting or using the computer. A more common and harder to solve problem we find at PSOLI points to an important consideration about writing. As the children get older they start to feel more stress about grades. They have to take more tests and do more assignments where the teacher is expecting certain answers. Even in their free writing there is a consideration of what the other kids are doing. I have taught many bright children who can express themselves very clearly verbally but have a hard time writing. While it is true that everybody has different abilities and preferred means of expression it is equally true that many of these children become too paralyzed by anxiety to write. This can become a habit and even a mantra. "I can't write, I can't write" Once this happens it becomes a self fulfilling prophecy and it takes a lot of loving support to help the child. The other solution is to maintain the freedom we give to the younger children and be careful not to shift emphasis onto graded writing. It is important for children to begin to be critical of their writing as they get older but this can be done in supportive non-threatening ways.

One good technique to help students write is to have them do so for "real" reasons, not just to do an assignment. A student led integrated curriculum addresses this concern as hopefully the interest level will be high enough to motivate them to write well about their work. However other techniques should also be used to help them develop as writers. A notebook where the children can write their thoughts about the world can be a powerful tool for writing and reflection. Children should be given the opportunity to share these thoughts but not forced to do so. They can see that their ideas are valued and respected. Younger children will often write just a little in their books and include many pictures. As the children get older we can encourage but not force them to expand upon their ideas and increase their writing. (Calkins, 2001, p.109) Some other real reasons include: letters to each other, parents, newspapers, or whomever the child has come into contact with; posters or signs; lists; notes of what was learned or how something was done; songs; and any other reason relevant to the child. The most powerful writing experience we had in 5th grade so far this year came at the beach. We had spent the morning observing the seashore and getting lost in the beauty of the beach. After I had the children sit quietly alone for ten minutes I invited them to write a note to their surroundings if they wanted to. All of the responses were beautiful, one brought tears to my eyes:

Dear Ocean I am very impressed by your beauty and sparkles. It shines through me as it does to you. It doesn't matter what shape you are in, rough with your waves crashing, or gentle with only enough power to push foam to the surface. You are always taking me into your power. With magic only you possess, with your gentle glint on top. You always will have put this on me, thank you.

Your friend, Sydney

Sydney is a strong writer in our class but rarely finds a way of really expressing herself rather than writing what she thinks we want to hear. This assignment marked a leap for her in terms of a self realization that what is inside her is what is important. Her writing grew much stronger after this experience.

Once children are comfortable writing and interested in their work we can encourage them to grow as writers. For young writers the main emphasis is on getting them to include detail in their work. If the child is aware in life then they have plenty of material to compose detailed writing. The question becomes how to help them do this? Generally teachers do this by asking the child questions about what they have written, prompting for more information and feeling. The children can then expand their work. To do this for each child is a time consuming task and can be accomplished by peer work as or more effectively than by the teacher. As we teach the children how to conference with each other then we create a multitude of teachers in the classroom. Additionally the helpers feel good about themselves as real writers and this aids in their own work. The children learn to turn to each other for ideas and also slowly begin to ask themselves the questions before doing so. (Calkins, 1983, p.114) As children mature as writers they can form into writing groups to help each other. The process becomes very collaborative and the children can support each others emerging voice.

Teaching writing then should focus on helping our students appreciate life and gain the confidence and ability to express their experience. This does not mean that we ignore the skills that writers need to master. These skills can be taught directly in mini lessons if many children need to work on them or as part of individual conferences with children. As the children grow older, these skills can be introduced into the various formats and rules for different written work. The goal of the teacher will be to ensure that writing is always done for a purpose so the teaching of skills and techniques will have relevance beyond the fact that the teacher finds them important. If this is done then the children will also find them important and will be much more likely to learn them.

Science

In 1982 I entered Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute as a freshman seeking a degree in electrical engineering. The campus was quite ugly by most people's standards. The buildings were large rectangular monoliths of concrete and brick. There were few trees and fewer gardens. After being at the place for an hour my mother was moved to write me a seven page letter telling me that the place was going to destroy my soul and that I should leave it and become a teacher. Being thick headed, I stayed. I remember writing my mother and telling her that places and professions don't define people but that our relationships to the people around us and to the world were what mattered. It turns out we were right The only beautiful building on the campus was an old hewn rock chapel. It had been gutted and turned into the computer center. The soul of R.P.I. was a computer. The message was clear. We should not rely on values or reflection to guide our way rather we can expect to solve most of them with greater and more fantastic technology. No matter how many problems we create with it, our society clings to the belief that we can continue to abuse our world because we will always be able to create something new to solve the problem. At least this is the myth that our society perpetuates so we don't have to face the burden of paying the price for the abuse of our planet and each other over the past several hundred years. Scientists work for those who pay them and for the most part these are the controllers of the military industrial complex, who want our society to continue on its present course. Their thinking is dominated by short term profit and the maintenance of power. Science is seen as a way to dominate the earth and the people of the earth. We are taught that Darwin's survival of the fittest is the natural way of being physically and mentally. (Goodman, 1992, p.15) Therefore it is not only morally correct, but entirely natural that we have a system based on competition. Add on to this the predominant belief stemming from our Christian background which states that the earth and everything on it were put here for the use of man and we find the roots of current ecological problems as well. Traditionally then, science in our schools prepares us to become competitive members of a society organized by dominance over people and the natural world. This is not the model of science will should be taught and experienced in at PSOW.

When we talk about studying science in a holistic elementary school, we are talking about the study of the whole universe and everything that is in it. We study the inherent interconnectedness of humankind to the world. We are not disconnected owners of all that we survey but responsible partners in the community. As such we need to study communities to see how nature coexists. We will definitely find relationships based on dominance but we will also find those based on cooperation. Since as humans we can choose how to build our

society it is important to expose our children to both aspects of the natural world. Most television programs and popular depictions of what it means to be an animal are based on the concept of might makes right. The strong survive and perpetuate the species and the weak are eaten. Riane Eisler (1996) points out that this is not actually the case in many of the more evolved species of animals. There are numerous examples of strong collective life such as wolves, Bonobo chimpanzees, and bats. (p. 138) By focussing on these examples we can help create a very different image in children's minds of the natural world.

Perhaps more powerfully the study of the natural world at PSOW will take place in the natural world. It is too easy for children to be divorced from nature in our fast paced, computer and technologically based society. As children are given time to plant gardens and take care of animals they will naturally experience their connection to the earth. When the study of nature includes more time in it, rather than in books, the spiritual connection that we hope to nourish in children will occur naturally. Basing our science in the natural world will also provide for numerous real problems for the children to explore. As they do this we can ensure that respect for nature's uses and its inherent worth is engendered in children. Even in non-rural settings children can have powerful experiences with the natural world. Our class grew grass last year and then experimented on how the plant's growth would be affected by the energy the kids directed at different plants, They designed their own experiments. Some anthropomorphized one plant and ignored the other. Others experimented with exposing their plants to different types of music. Many students simply mentally sent positive or negative energy to their plants. Generally they could see that being positive had a beneficial effect on the plants, but the more important lesson was how they felt about being negative. Almost every child reported that they didn't like the feeling of being mean to the plants. When asked to compare this with how they exist normally in the world and how they treat trees and bushes the children learned a powerful lesson in awareness.

Technology is of course not inherently bad or based on short term thinking. When we consider technology in school, we can focus not only on its benefits but also its problems. We can see that it is how we put technology to use that determines how it effects us. We can also see that where we focus our attention determines how we think about solutions to our problems. When we study energy in 5th grade, we consider not only where we get our power from but also the long term and hidden costs of that power. The students study the link between energy and environmental degradation. We consider the effects of their choices in life upon the world and can see that to live consciously involves making choices between conflicting needs and values. This point was driven home very strongly to our students after they finished a day aboard a boat on Long Island Sound. The children were enthralled by the beauty of the water and all of the bounty and mystery of its inhabitants. They had a hard time balancing this with pollution from their cars which they didn't want to stop using, or from the factories that produced goods that they wanted to use. Science is also about putting knowledge to use wisely once it is gained. After a lesson on the costs of energy the children tried to put knowledge to use by recycling, conserving energy and trying to get others to do the same.

Another important consideration in science is how it is taught. In chapter 5 we considered the importance of the inquiry cycle in education. Science is a natural and powerful place where children of all ages can work through this cycle. It is a natural area for children to generate questions of how, what and why. The pursuit of these answers will lead them on their own journey. The teachers can simply act as guides and help draw out questions, encourage and aid reflection and suggest different avenues for discovery. Children get very excited by science because it draws upon so many of their natural desires that we have mentioned previously. It allows students to discover their world, to put that discovery into practice by trying to use that knowledge. This in turn generates new questions. Of course science does not exist in a vacuum and one subject that often goes hand and hand with it is math.

Math - A look at most math textbooks will reveal a subject completely divided into tiny "bite-size" concepts that are loosely related to those that come before and after in the text. The better ones that I have seen often provide ideas for activities or mini-projects to get the math a little bit away from pure thinking. The more savvy ones pretend to bring math into an integrated curriculum by putting in social studies or science or musical "links". What these normally entail are simple math questions phrased in the register of another subject. If we

consider this generously we could say that the text writers are moving in the direction addressing the interconnections between the subjects. However it seems more likely that they are pasting a bit too obvious politically correct patch over an outdated system of teaching math. While I believe that it is true that children need to be introduced to new math concepts and that they need to practice using math rules and formulae, these are only the two stages learning of a concept and not necessarily the ones that should come first. Many children have trouble with math because they see it as divorced from the real world. The concepts are too abstract for young children to make connections to. Therefore even if they understand how to do a certain problem, their learning is not linked strongly enough to the rest of their experience to become truly part of their thinking. The solution to this problem is to ensure that we teach math and give the children math experiences that they can easily connect to the rest of their life.

Integrating math into a curriculum will naturally meet this need. When children need to subtract to see how many new tomatoes have grown they are much more likely to connect to the process quickly. They are not simply being asked to solve a problem because the teacher is asking them to, rather they are solving it because they want to and the teacher can help them see more effective ways to do so. When children need to use scale to figure out how to build something they have designed they are linking many actions and passions in with the use of math. The next time they need to use scale they will be able to access their learning through more and stronger connections in their minds. The movie October Sky, a true story, provides a powerful example of what people can do when they are motivated by their own desires as opposed to somebody else's. In it Homer Wells, a decent but not generally considered brilliant high school student, teaches himself calculus and trigonometry because he needs to find out what happened to a rocket that he built. The story provides a powerful example of what children can learn if they are motivated to do so.

Even if a math concept is not brought up in the context of an integrated unit it can be taught in such a way that is meaningful to children. Due to its abstract nature math is often a subject that people "don't get". This can be very frustrating for children especially when they see their peers understanding something and they simply do not. It is the job of the teachers to present ideas and concepts in as many ways as necessary to help all children understand. Stories are two good ways to teach math. Kieran Egan (1986) presents some excellent ideas in his book Teaching as Story Telling. He shows how the difficult concept of place values can be introduced to children through a medium they find less daunting and more fun. He tells the children to imagine that a king needs to count his army that keeps moving about on a large plain. The children can be given a chance to come up with some ideas. Next the story teller relates how the king's wise counselor and five generals go about counting the troops by using five bowls and a pebble for each soldier. The children are thoroughly involved at this stage and really are concentrating on how they are going to accomplish their task so simply. They may again suggest some ideas and may even be able to finish the story. Finally the teacher explains how they place the pebbles in the bowls and each time a group of ten is reached in one bowl a pebble is put into the next one in line. (p. 81) The story serves two purposes. It allows the children to use their imagination in dealing with an abstract concept and provides a connection to something the children can relate to. Although most of the work is still taking place in their heads it is no longer disconnected or meaningless.

Many of my students enjoy using manipulatives and they seem to grasp concepts quite quickly when doing so. However I have noticed that they cannot always see the connection between such work and mathematical symbols or numbers. Avery Fisher, a PHD in Mathematics from Cornell, has been showing the teachers at PSOLI how to help children internalize those connections. He has shown us that puzzles and challenges often engage children, and adults, very quickly especially if they have something to model the problem with. After the problem has been solved or modeled the children are asked to write down and explain what they did. They usually need help learning to do this completely but once again we are building their awareness of the process that we know is vital for holistic learning. Once the children can articulate in their own thoughts and words what they did they have a better chance of being able to use that knowledge in the solving of similar but perhaps more abstract problems. The more connections the children can make with their knowledge the better able they will be to utilize it.

I am not advocating the disuse of textbooks. I believe that they offer good sources of examples for children to practice on. This practice however, comes after and not before the students are given a chance to discover and make sense of new ideas in math. The difference is clear when children from public school enter our class. Although they know all of the math tricks and short cuts to arrive at answers they have little understanding of why those tricks work or of what they are really doing. Not only does this make it more difficult for them to apply their knowledge but it also makes it difficult for them to build on those ideas to learn more complex concepts in math. A good example of this is the concept of PI. A student may be able to tell you the estimated value of PI and even be able to apply it to problems about circles but if she/he fails to grasp the concept of a mathematical constant then she/he is missing the essence and mystery that makes math such a powerful subject. I always look forward to the great Ah Ha!s when children spend a day measuring round objects and calculating the ratio between their radius and circumference. Seeing that this ratio is constant is almost always a mystical experience for them. Math is one of the purest ways of children being able to experience their ability to make sense of their world through thinking and reflection. The more we connect math to real world phenomena the more children can see that it is intertwined in their existence and not separate from it. Egan (1986) tells how crows know when a certain amount of people go in or out of a barn. They will stay put until all of the people who have entered have left. However once the number of people gets to five or six the crows lose track. (p. 78) This story shows clearly that counting occurs in nature as well and students who see this. This natural connection can be found throughout math and it is important for teachers to nurture that understanding within children. By divorcing math from nature we set it apart and make it something different or unnatural for children.

The Expressive Arts - Although this topic has been saved for last in many ways it should be first. The ultimate goal of life as seen from a NeoHumanist standpoint is to realize that all of creation is one and that the divine is within in all of us. The primary vehicles for this realization are joy and universal love. Our culture certainly espouses the pursuit of joy. The American Credo includes "the pursuit of happiness" as a central theme. We can see however that that happiness is generally predicated on short term immediate gratification of our needs and desires. This is not a blanket truth and many people in our society realize that true happiness comes from more enduring sources such as family, aesthetics, traditions and love. However our culture continually bombards our children with the belief that happiness is something to be received from virtually mindless entertainment such as television and video games, material possessions, and latest toy or collectible. Spiritual traditions from around the globe have taught us that this happiness is temporary and will not satisfy the inherent needs of our soul. Art can speak to children whether they are considering it or creating it. It allows them to be in touch with themselves and to develop and awareness of life.

The Waldorf school movement tells parents to not allow their children to watch television and to avoid video games. The result of this, however, is that often the children then crave those things which they are denied. The way to combat and overcome such desires and behavior is to replace them with activities which will be more deeply joyful and fulfilling. Dewey states that through art children find the means to construct meaning about the world and to express themselves, two of their most basic instincts. (Dewey, 1990, p. 26) Certainly speaking, reading, academic inquiry, and writing can fulfill this need for some children but it is through the expressive arts that young children seem to find the most joy. Cohen and Gainer write: Children's art is particularly expressive because facility in other means of creating and communicating is not yet developed". (1995, p.1) From a Neo-Humanistic standpoint when children are engaging in artistic creation they are accessing the higher levels of their minds and also learning about themselves. (page 31) While they create art and express themselves the children are themselves changed. Contrary to the traditional approach taken to the arts in most schools they will play an important role in the curriculum of the school. Cohen and Gainer (1995) present the idea very succinctly:

Art is usually taught in this country as something rather precious and esoteric, separate from education and from life. Rather than being separate we contend that art is an integral part of life and can act as cement, enriching and binding together the many aspects of the human experience. (Gainer and Cohen, p. 237)

This will be accomplished in two different ways. The children will be expected to use the arts in their pursuit and presentation of their learning. It can be used in all subjects in the curriculum and throughout their integrated studies. Additionally the study of various forms of art will be supported and encouraged through classes, electives and exploratory time.

Howard Gardner and his colleagues at Project Zero considered how art could be taught holistically in an elementary school. Some of their main points are considered here. First art for young children should consist of mostly production, be it musical, drawing, sculpting or any other artistic process the child is engaged in doing. Also, art should be taught by people with a deep knowledge of that medium. The teachers at the school can do this if they have the ability and if not they should also be active learners so they can assist in the children's progress as well as learn themselves. Gardner (1983) states that whenever possible art should be pursued in projects that take place over time. This will allow the students a chance for reflection and also to develop their techniques and ideas with the help of a teacher. (p.142) Eric Jacobson, the director of the PSOLI, expands on this idea to include the exhibition of a completed piece of work. He has found that the joy children get from people's recognition of their ideas and works deepens their self esteem and reinforces the deeper joy that children get from artistic expression. Following this idea Gardner and his colleagues find that assessment is crucial in the arts. Expressing oneself is a personal activity and involves great risk on the part of children. However they also are very interested in knowing if they are progressing. As with all assessment at the school the idea will be to enhance the child's learning and make them aware of their learning process. (p.143)

Recall the quote by Pestalozzi (page 5) in the beginning of this thesis. If it is our intention to help children become what is truly divine in their nature then we need to help them do so. We need to supply them with the opportunity to safely explore that nature and to experiment in sharing it with the world. This can be accomplished in all areas of study but perhaps most effectively at a young age through the arts. They offer perhaps the most powerful way for children to delve deeply into themselves and to express what they find.

Conclusion

When I started studying holistic education, I had no idea as to its extensive foundations nor to the breadth of ideas included in it. My perception was that Neo-Humanist education would be a completely new and radical way to start the important process of transforming our society and the world. My studies have led me to understand that Neo-Humanist education fits nicely into the new holistic paradigm that is emerging in the world and that the school can be part of that holistic movement. As it is by no means certain that such a holistic paradigm can successfully emerge amidst our mechanistic and atomistic culture, I feel that it will be a vital responsibility of the school to take an active role in that movement.

Ron Miller (1997) defines two main strands of thought that run through holistic education and still exist today. The first is that of focussing primarily on the personal development of the child. Holistically this has come to mean recognizing that people are multi-dimensional, that we have spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical facets to our beings that must be considered. The focus of these schools is to hem out the dogmatic influence of society and to develop methods that will allow for the maximum unfolding of what is naturally in the child. Thereafter that child will be expected to have a positive influence on society and specifically, in this country, to support critical democracy. The second main approach taken by holistic educators is to view the school as a dynamic instrument for social change. Students will be expected to take an active part in their own schooling and in the world. Just as the advocates of personal development do not neglect the world, the educators for social change do not neglect the holistic development of the child. The difference is one of emphasis.

Neo-Humanist education represents a synthesis of these two approaches. It holds that we cannot successfully have one without the other and that there needs to be a balance between the two. This balance can be seen

throughout my proposal for the Progressive School of Weaverville. The principles that will govern the school seek to ensure that a holistic view is taken of the children. We will seek to bring out that which is within the child and help the child utilize their potential in a positive moral way. The overwhelming spirit of the school will be to engender what I felt upon entering the Progressive School of Long Island, a feeling of love and a joy of learning and existence. This will be achieved by creating a cooperative community of learners that have an awareness of their own selves, their relationships to each other, and to the world. This awareness will be fostered by emphasizing a reflective approach in all areas of study and interactions. The teachers will seek to lovingly address the experiential needs of the children they are guiding while pursuing holistic growth themselves.

Neo-Humanist education is a part of the new holistic paradigm. It recognizes the interconnection of all aspects of the universe. Each individual is seen to be inherently reaching for the infinite, which is universal love. As they strive for this ultimate goal, it is the role of the school to free them from any limited thinking that society may try to impose upon them. At the same time, Neo-Humanism recognizes that spiritual growth is not possible without balance in the other aspects of existence. In our current society, this means taking an active role to create a more just, equitable society for people as well as the rest of the world. The best way to do this in our present situation is to prepare our children to take an active role in a critical democracy. The structure of the school will reflect this need at the individual level through methods of teaching that value the students ideas and supports their acting on those ideas. On a community level the school will seek to engender a sense of cooperation through study and action. Hence the school will have an individual approach which takes into consideration the societal conditions in which that individual exists.

My journey on a personal mirrors this approach as well. I started pursuing my masters as an individual seeking to become a better teacher and prepare myself to open a school. Since writing the introduction of this paper, my wife has become pregnant. I have barely begun to understand how this will change me but I have already gained a wider and perspective when I consider that my own child will be starting at my school the year after it opens. Would I want my child in this school? Will I be alienating her or him from society? Will we be able to accomplish half of what I have envisaged or will this simply be a theoretical shell over a long list of compromises? What happens if my child doesn't like the school? Will the teachers desire to use different methods and structures? For me the answer to these questions and fears is quite clear. It is not because of specific methodologies, physical facilities, theoretical viewpoints or specific activities that I think PSOW will provide an excellent education for my child and any child. It is because I believe in the basic principles of the school that know that this school will be a success. The principles define the process of how the school will help the children reach the goal of being active well rounded children with a spiritual approach to life. Having said this, I am excited to continue to study current brain research and the linkage between body, mind and spirit.

As I wrote this paper I had a growing sense that something was missing. About half way through I realized that it was my school community. I am keen to bring the ideas of this paper to other people, especially those who may be interested in being part of the school. This could be as a supporter, an advisor, a parent, a student or a teacher. As I stated in the last paragraph, nothing is set in stone except the principles of the school. How they are to be carried out remains to be seen. I look forward to: exploring how we can best teach spirituality to children, how we can educate them toward positive values without indoctrinating them, seeing how we can empower children to become who they are meant to be and not what I or anyone else thinks they should be.

Appendix 1

Ten principles of holistic education, endorsed by the participants at a 1991 GATE conference:

[I]. We assert that the primary – indeed the fundamental – purpose of education is to nourish the inherent possibilities of human development.

[II]. We call for each learner – young and old – to be recognized as unique and valuable...Each individual is inherently creative, has unique physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs and abilities, and possesses an unlimited capacity to learn.

[III]. We affirm what the most perceptive educators have argued for centuries: education is a matter of experience. Learning is an active, multisensory engagement between an individual and the world...

[IV]. We call for wholeness in the educational process, and for the transformation of educational institutions and policies required to attain this aim. Wholeness implies that each academic discipline provides merely a different perspective on the rich, complex, integrated phenomenon of life.

[V]. We hold... that educators ought to be facilitators of learning which is an organic, natural process and not a product that can be turned out on demand.

[VI]. We call for meaningful opportunities for real choice at every stage of the learning process.

[VII]. We call for a truly democratic model of education to empower all citizens to participate in meaningful ways in the life of the community and the planet.

[VIII]. We believe that each of us – whether we realize it or not – is a global citizen... We believe that it is time for education to nurture an appreciation for the magnificent diversity of human experience...

[IX]. We believe that education must spring organically from a profound reverence for life in all its forms. We must rekindle a relationship between the human and the natural world that is nurturing, not exploitive.

[X]. The most important, most valuable part of the person is his or her inner, subjective life – the self or the soul... We believe that education must nourish the healthy growth of the spiritual life, not do violence to it through constant evaluation and competition. (GATE, 1991).

Appendix 2

Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Skills

Category	Description	Trigger words	Questions
Knowledge	Recall facts and terms	Match, which, label, match, list, name	When did...? Where is...? What is...?

Comprehension	Translating to other words	Restate, show, explain, summarize	Which is the best answer? What statements show?
Application	Transfer knowledge in one situation to another	Demonstrate, cook, build, Solve, identify, choose, organize	How would you use? How would you show your understanding of? What would happen if?
Analysis	Examine and break information into parts	Analyze, compare, simplify, assume, distinguish	How is...related to ? What conclusions can you draw? What is the relationship between? What ideas justify?
Synthesis	Reform parts to make a new whole	Create, adapt, test, change, improve, design, theorize	Can you rearrange this...? Suppose you could change? How could you solve? Propose an alternative...

(Bloom, B., Englehart, M., Furst, E., Hill, W., & Krathwohl, D. 1956)

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James Beane gives a clear description of what it means to truly create an integrated curriculum in the classroom. He explains that this goes far beyond simply relating different subjects to each other in the course of a day or theme. An integrated curriculum for Beane entails actively involving students in every aspect of their learning from choosing what to study to assessing work that is done. Beane emphasizes the importance of empowering

children so they become active lifelong learners. He supports his premises with examples of how an integrated curriculum is already being used in a small number of schools around the country.

Eisler R. (2000). *Tomorrow's Children: A Blueprint for Partnership Education in the 21st Century*. Boulder Colorado: Westview Press.

Rianne Eisler presents a new paradigm to consider our society and education system. In her book she compares our traditional societal values of competition to the value of cooperation found in some ancient societies. She examines how our society and education system run according to a model of domination where one person or group exerts control over others. She contrasts this with a partnership model where people's actions are made with the good of all parties in mind. Eisler shows how not only what we teach but how we teach it reinforce the concept that competition is a natural part of our existence. She then goes on to show that there are actually many examples of cooperative behavior in both the animal kingdom and some human societies. Eisler considers each subject generally taught in schools and shows how they can be taught to reinforce the idea that cooperation is natural and good. She also provides extensive information for where educators can get additional material and information.

Egan, K. (1986). *Teaching as Storytelling: An Alternative Approach to Teaching and Curriculum in the Elementary School*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press

Kieran Egan provides us with a whole new way of teaching students. He shows how using stories not only will make learning more interesting for students but can also be a powerful tool in helping them grasp difficult concepts. Egan doesn't believe that young children cannot think abstractly. He gives a powerful argument for utilizing the great potential of children's imagination. Egan provides many practical suggestions using story telling technique in all subject areas and to develop higher order thinking skills.

Goodman, J. (1992). *Elementary Schooling for Critical Democracy*. Albany NY: SUNY Press.

Jesse Goodman provides an excellent synopsis of the cultural rules that govern our society and how these norms effect our education system. Goodman examines the historical roots of these rules and shows how our schools reinforces them at the expense of creating independent thinkers. He argues persuasively that we are free to exploit one another and to seek power but not to think or act outside the cultural norm. For Goodman elementary school is the place to start educating children to take an active role in a truly democratic system.

Goodman examines the practices of the Harmony school to show how an elementary school can be structured to promote the growth of active independent and productive members of society.

Hannaford, C. (1995). *Smart Moves: Why Learning is not all in Your Head*. Arlington VA: Great Ocean Publishers.

Carla Hannaford gives an excellent basic introduction into the structure and function of the brain in relation to learning. Hannaford explains why learning is not simply a mental exercise but is intertwined with our bodies and our emotions. She then examines how this functioning relates to how we should teach children. Although the model she uses relies on the hemispheric model of the brain, which is currently in dispute, many of the important ideas in the book are not dependent on that model.

Hannaford is specifically interested in involving movement in learning and in using Brain Gym exercises to help children become better learners. Brain Gym is a series of exercises developed by Paul Dennison to help children with learning disabilities. These exercises have been shown to be helpful for all children including children with ADD or ADHD.

Kohn, A. (1996). *Beyond Discipline: From Compliance to Community*. Alexandria VA: ASCD.

Alfie Kohn provides a powerful critique of behavior modification techniques in the classroom. He shows that no matter how you dress up these techniques they still amount to relying on adults in power forcing children to comply with their wishes. Kohn goes on to explore a different approach which entails forming a community of learners with the students. Behavior problems are eliminated not through reaction but through proaction. By using teaching techniques that empower the children and ensure that they are interested in what they are doing discipline ceases to be a central issue in the classroom. Additionally, Kohn's book shows us that the methods we use in a classroom and our actions in that classroom have a tremendous impact on our students. Our children learn our values and take messages from our actions and techniques as much as they do from the subjects we cover.

Kozol, J. (1992). *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*. NY: Harper Collins.

Jonathan Kozol provides a chilling expose of the horrific state of education in the poor areas of this country. His description of our public school system is enough to make one embarrassed to be part of this society. He shows how social equity is completely lacking in our system of funding for schools. He examines how the laws of our country and racism in society guarantee that the neediest children get the least support educationally. Kozol shows that without a dramatic overall in how we fund schools these children are doomed to continue in the cycle of poverty whereas those who come from privileged families are given the best educational opportunities. He provides examples of how various municipalities have tried to change funding rules to supply more money to the needy but were either voted down or circumvented by the actions of the well off.

Miller, R. (1990). *What are Schools For?: Holistic Education in American Culture*.

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Ron Miller provides a comprehensive historical review of holistic education in the United States and its European roots. He traces the important themes through history to provide a clear picture of what has come before and where the holistic education movement now stands. Miller also examines the fate of the various alternative school movements and notes possible reasons for their success or failure to significantly impact education in America. Miller's book raises important questions for anybody considering educational practices outside the traditional mold. Central to his book is the question of whether schools should operate in isolation from society or consciously seek to be catalysts for change.

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Moffet provides a bold model of an entirely different style of education. He examines the current state of our education system and finds it wanting. Moffet seeks to integrate schools into communities so they become more natural and practical for the students. Moffet also examines the role of spirituality in this country and shows how it is currently lacking in our education system. He proposes a school system that would incorporate all aspects of a child's development. Although Moffet's bold blueprint seems overly ambitious in our current society, he helps us consider important questions in the design of alternative school.

Sarkar P.R. (1998) *Discourses on NeoHumanist Education*. Calcutta India:

Ananda Marga Publications.

Neo-Humanism is a philosophy that was propounded by the late P.R. Sarkar in a series of talks and discourses the late 1900s. Neo-Humanism is a holistic approach to education which includes fostering love for all creation and a recognition of the inherent value of all of its aspects, be they animate or inanimate. This book contains a wide range of Sarkar's ideas and covers topics ranging from social justice to learning theory to a vision of where human society is heading. Sarkar's approach blends ideas from the mystical knowledge and synthetic approach of Austaunga yoga with a western analytical approach toward life. The result is a new vision for education and humanity.