Current research and theory in literacy reflects a significant shift in focus over earlier accounts, away from a focus on behaviorist perspectives and, instead, to a focus on both cognitive and social dimensions of literacy. The three authors here represented heartily support this shift but wish to call attention to a still neglected dimension of literacy variously referred to as the affective domain or feeling or emotion. Whatever way this dimension is referred to, it remains an area of human experience that is marginalized by the traditions of research and theory within which education is framed. The marginalization—and perhaps even complete silence—of research and theory on issues of feeling, affect or emotion in literacy reflects a much larger avoidance in the dominant traditions of western science, including social science, of issues that apparently resist objective, empirical or quantifiable study. The consequence of this avoidance is that issues of feeling/emotion/affect can become invisible in both research and, importantly, practice. Each of the papers from our Problems Court session takes up the relation between literacy and feeling/emotion/affect in a different way, yet all of the papers are concerned with the significance of the invisibility of or silence on this dimension for real students in real settings of schooling.

In the first paper, “The emotion/cognition relationship and literacy education,” Marilyn Eanet argues that literacy educators need to incorporate knowledge of social-
emotional learning and development into literacy education. She reports that her attention to this issue developed in response to stories told by exemplary first-year teachers about their feelings of inadequacy in the face of their students’ needs beyond the cognitive-academic realm, needs which stymied these new teachers’ attempts to teach. Despite the teachers’ self-perceptions, they had been nominated for a prestigious award for new teachers, so they were certainly seen as highly capable by educational experts. Eanet highlights research supporting the importance of emotion in teaching and learning from domains as diverse as the field of neuroimmunology and field-based studies of urban classrooms. Eanet’s discussion offers a number of sources that will have immediate application for teacher educators.

In the second paper, “Canaries in the literacy learning coalmine: Lessons about the affective dimensions of literacy instruction culled from darkness,” Ray Wolpow highlights a tendency of the educational system to focus on cognitive evaluation while neglecting children’s affective needs. Wolpow offers the case of a traumatized student with reading difficulties and an overburdened teacher as illustration of his theme. The student, emotionally disabled to the point of being unable to focus on the assessment activity is ultimately removed from the reading class according to what can be viewed as the instrumental rationality that frames educational bureaucratic thinking: she is (mis)diagnosed in a way which renders her “out of bounds” for placement in the literacy program category and her case is seen as an inefficient use of limited resources for the already-too-full and wait-listed classes of the reading teacher. While some may find Wolpow’s “holocaust analogy” farfetched, he is highlighting the way in which the instrumental rationality of institutional/bureaucratic dispassionate evaluative practice can
have profound potential for mis-recognizing those it seeks to evaluate. Indeed, important social theorists have identified related manifestations of instrumental rationality in bureaucratic settings to be responsible for seriously flawed diagnostic processes in mental institutions and even for the dehumanizing objectification that enabled the “final solution” as well (Bauman, 1989; Goffman, 1961). Wolpow proposes “the literacy of testimony and witness” as the missing ingredient in literacy practice that can address the realm of feeling and, thereby, provide a way of meeting the needs of the traumatized student.

In the third piece, “Literacy and feeling: Toward a new synthesis,” I develop a framework for understanding the absence of feeling/emotion/affect in Western educational thought and then apply this framework to teacher education and literacy requirements of programs. My discussion draws heavily on the work of feminist analyses of education, particularly Jane Roland Martin (1994). Martin shows that feeling and emotional development have long been assigned to the reproductive and private domain, and thus beyond the concerns of an education which seeks to prepare students for life and work in the public realm. My discussion illustrates the way that the cognitive trumps the affective in the process of teacher education by examining the case of a non-traditional teacher education student. The paper concludes by suggesting a revised scheme for conceptualizing education that would attempt an integration of currently separated dimensions of curriculum to unify the artificially separated realms of human experience.
The Emotional/Cognitive Relationship and Literacy

Marilyn Eanet

I believe that human development is complex and interactive, and that it is not useful to separate physical, emotional, social, and intellectual growth. We are all whole people – cognition is entwined with affect, and my mind (and yours) is embedded in spiritual, cultural, and psychological being. (Ayers, 1993, p. 62.)

Although we may indeed be “whole people,” in fact, we in education have traditionally separated cognition and effect, and been very clear about which of the two is our primary concern and responsibility. In this paper, I explore my own musings about the consequences of this and share some resources that may be helpful to others who are struggling with similar question. Two questions have guided my exploration: 1) Do we as literacy teachers and literacy teacher educators give adequate attention to the affective realm in our programs and courses? 2) What are some resources that might help us begin to reconceptualize the emotion/cognition relationship in ways that have practical implications for teachers?

I started thinking more about the ways we deal with affective issues in teacher education programs a couple of years ago when I had the honor to be a judge in the Sallie
Mae First Year Teacher Awards. In this competition, outstanding first year teachers were nominated by their school districts to compete to be the First Year Teacher of the Year for their state. I read about a hundred entries from four states representing different regions of the country and including districts of all varieties—rich, poor; small, large; rural to urban. As part of the application, the candidates were asked to write about what had been most surprising about their first year of teaching. Almost without exception, these outstanding first year teachers talked about how surprised they were at how needy their students were in areas outside the traditional cognitive, academic realm of knowledge and skill development. They found themselves having to deal with social and emotional issues rarely addressed in teacher education programs; they often found themselves stymied in doing what they felt they could do well for lack of ability to deal with a fuller range of students’ needs.

Considering these observations, along with recent concerns about school violence, with data indicating that 20 percent of all children ages 9–17 have diagnosable mental health disorders (Counseling Today, November 2000), and with multiple reports of anecdotal evidence from caring teachers who are frustrated in their work with children and youth, I began to reassess my beliefs about the “essentials” in literacy education. I wondered about ways my content and conduct in preservice and graduate literacy classes might be affecting my students’ abilities to deal with the kind of issues identified by the First Year Teacher candidates. Certainly, reading education literature contains some writing focused on affective concerns. For example, Strang (1969) combined her extensive knowledge of both literacy and guidance to provide an unusually balanced perspective given the state of knowledge in her time. Gentile and McMillan (1987) wrote
about the effects of stress on remedial readers in a way that was well-informed, thoughtful, and practitioner-oriented. Still, these and other examples I examined didn’t seem to address my larger concerns. Perhaps, I thought, one reason we in literacy education struggle so to meet expectations and standards is that we have not paid adequate attention to the role of the affective in learning and to the social-emotional needs of all students. Perhaps it was time to reframe the cognitive and affective connection.

There is a long and honorable tradition in Western education of separating emotion and cognition and of valuing the rational and the cognitive as the core and essence of the educational process (Panofsky, 2001). However, there have been number of developments in the late 20th century that have the potential for helping to construct a more holistic view of human learning. While a detailed account of each is far beyond the scope of this paper, let us briefly consider a few of the strands that might contribute to an integration of the cognitive and the affective in the life of schools.

**Integrative Strands**

Both cognitive and developmental psychologists are now taking into account the essential role of emotion in all human activity. One approach that I have found particularly helpful is the work of psychologist Robert Kegan who draws upon constructivism, developmentalism, and object-relations theory to provide a developmental model that incorporates emotion and cognition. He points out that composing meaning is both central and essential to being human: “…it is not that a person makes meaning, as much as that the activity of being a person is the activity of meaning-making…. The most fundamental thing we do with what happens to us is
organize it. We literally make sense.” (Kegan, 1982, p. 11.) What happens to us, i.e., our experience, always has both cognitive and emotional dimensions, and therefore, it follows that our most basic activity, meaning making, also always has both dimensions. Besides building on the work of Piaget, Perry, Kohlberg and others in articulating his most provocative and useful theory, Kegan must also be credited with wrestling with the issues of the effect of culture and gender on what is frequently called “ways of knowing” or styles of meaning making (Kegan, 1994.)

Two other areas of study that have potential for giving both support and substance to rebalancing the attention given to emotion and cognition in schooling are psychoneuroimmunology and neuropsychology. In the first area, consider the work of Candice Pert and her associates in advancing knowledge of the role of the neuropeptides and their receptors in body and brain. In discovering that the limbic system, strongly implicated in the experiencing and expressing of emotion, is also the part of the brain most rich in peptides and receptors, these researchers may well have taken an important step in uncovering the biochemical substrata of emotion (Pert, 1997).

Complementing this research is that reported by neuropsychologist Antonio R. Damasio (1994). Damasio supports the hypotheses that feelings have a powerful influence on reason, that the brain systems required for feeling are enmeshed with those needed for reason, and that both together are closely interwoven with the systems that regulate the body. While cautioning that this information about emotion should not in any way suggest that reason is less important than feelings, he does state that the research suggests that: “the strengthening of rationality probably requires that great consideration be given to the vulnerability of the world within.” (Damasio, 1994, p. 247.)
While considering possible implications of such research, it is important to make clear that clinical and laboratory studies of this kind do not inform us directly about appropriate educational practices. This is a point that even most of those who have helped popularize the idea of “brain-based” education have acknowledged (Jensen, 1998).

**Emotional Intelligence: A Synthesis**

Daniel Goleman, in *Emotional Intelligence: Why It can Matter More Than IQ* (1995), synthesizes research such as that cited above with behavioral research to make a strong case for the development of what he terms “emotional literacy.” He summarizes the significance of emotions in this way:

> To the degree that our emotions get in the way of or enhance our ability to think and plan, to pursue training for a distant goal, to solve problems, and the like, they define the limits of our capacity to use our innate mental abilities, and so determine how we do in life. And to the degree to which we are motivated by feelings of enthusiasm and pleasure in what we do—or even by an optimal degree of anxiety—they propel us to accomplishment. It is in this sense that emotional intelligence is a master aptitude, a capacity that profoundly affects all other abilities, either facilitating or interfering with them (Goleman, 1995, p. 80.)

Goleman’s definition of emotional intelligence includes five basic emotional and social competencies: self-awareness; self-regulation of emotion; motivation, self-monitoring, and performance; empathy and perspective-taking; and social skills in
The inclusions of self-regulation and self-monitoring suggest a relationship between some aspects of emotional intelligence and the constructs of metacognition and metacomprehension in literacy.

Much of the increasing interest in educational circles for an approach that includes appropriate attention to social and emotional issues is partially the result of multiple calls upon schools to resolve complex social problems related to values, safety, health, and violence. Goleman calls many of the campaigns designed to resolve some of these problems, such as “the war on drugs” or “the war on teen pregnancy,” mere crisis intervention.

In an effort to encourage a more comprehensive and proactive approach, Goleman has co-founded, along with Eileen Rockefeller Growald, The Collaborative to Advance Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) currently located at the Department of Psychology at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) serves as a unifying concept for various school-based prevention programs. Its stated purpose is “to encourage and support the creation of safe, caring learning environments that build social, cognitive, and emotional skills.” (Elias, M.J., Zins, J.E., Weissberg, R.P., Frey, K.S., Greenberg, M.T., Haynes, N.M., Kessler, R., Schwab-Stone, M.E., & Shriver, P. 1997, p. viii.) Among its projects are synthesizing literature relating SEL to physical health, academic outcomes, and educational outcomes; reviewing SEL programs, and educator preparation and resource development. While supportive of all effective SEL programs, CASEL is equally interested in the integration of social-emotional learning within the regular curriculum.
Although CASEL represents the major, coordinated effort in the area, there are many other programs and/or resources incorporating social and emotional learning that may be useful to literacy teachers and teacher educators. Among those I find most valuable are William W. Purkey’s work on Invitational Education (Purkey & Novak, 1996) and William Glasser’s work on Quality Schools (Glasser, 1990). In *Mindful Learning: Teaching Self-Discipline and Academic Achievement* (1997), David B. Strahan draws upon the work of Goleman, Purkey, Glasser, and other to explore strategies that successful teachers use to integrate caring for students as people with increasing their mastery of content. Another outstanding approach is that of the Responsive Classroom which was developed at the Northeast Foundation for Children. Ruth Sidney Charney’s *Teaching Children to Care: Management in the Responsive Classroom* (1991) is a well-written and very effective tool which colleagues and I have used in student teaching seminars.

A recent book synthesizing the work of national team of teacher researchers addressing literacy in multicultural classrooms (Freedman, Simons, Kalnin, Casareno, and The M-CLASS Teams, 1999) exemplifies the importance and applicability of social/emotional concerns in the literacy classroom. Both the individual studies and the research conclusions make it clear that caring, connecting, establishing trust and using literacy to gain perspective on painful and explosive issues are powerful components of achieving both student empowerment and high academic standards.
Closing Reflections

In attempting to reframe my understanding of the affective/cognitive connection and its relationship to literacy teaching, I have been struck by both the challenge and the opportunity our field provides to contribute to emotional literacy as we develop and support the more traditional literacies. Certainly, one major tool we have is the body of fine literature for children, youth, and adults that allows us opportunities to explore social/emotional in our classrooms issues at all levels – kindergarten through graduate school.

Yet, while “bibliotherapeutic” exploration may be helpful, it is not sufficient. As teacher educators, we need to find ways to equip teachers with greater knowledge and practical skills for dealing with social and emotional needs and encouraging social and emotional development -- for themselves, as well as their students. As Wolpow demonstrates in his case study (Wolpow, 2001), even well-intentioned and highly competent teachers can be limited in their ability to work appropriately with especially needy students.

In my own teaching, I am working to incorporate what I am learning about this topic in several ways. First, I am including related content and resources whenever appropriate, especially when addressing topics such as motivation and classroom organization and management. Secondly, I am striving to being more self-aware in order to increase the likelihood that I am modeling what I hope to teach about respect, empathy, and compassion. Also, when I struggle with issues such as equal opportunity versus standard keeping, I am more likely to share my thoughts with students than to hold them silently as the teacher’s prerogative.
I am convinced that most reading teachers and reading educators care deeply about their students’ learning and general well-being; emerging theory and research about the emotion/cognitive connection have the potential to provide us with better ways to actualize that concern. I believe that we as literacy educators have a responsibility to find ways to incorporate this knowledge into our content and practice.

References


Canaries in the Literacy Learning Coalmine: Lessons About the Affective Dimensions of Literacy Instruction Culled From The Darkness

Ray Wolpow

A Story from the Darkness

On April 11, 1945, American troops liberated the concentration camp at Buchenwald. Their war-toughened faces were transfixed by what they saw: thousands of starving, skeletal men crowded together into barracks fitted with wooden bunk beds stacked three or four on top of each other. Several people had to fit per level on plank beds that had neither mattresses nor blankets. Lice were everywhere and contributed to the spread of disease. The slightest of breath and shelter separating the prisoners from piles of skeletons stacked outside (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1994, p.115). The soldiers went from barrack to barrack until they reached Barrack 66. Here they discovered hundreds of boys, aged eight to twenty, with deep-set eyes and faces resembling those of elderly men. The commander of the American troops, feeling totally befuddled, sent a cable to the OSE (Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants, a society devoted to providing help to children), “Have found a thousand Jewish children in Buchenwald. Take immediate measures to evacuate them” (Hemmendinger & Krell, 2000, p. 21).
Two months later, June of 1945, 426 of these children arrived in France. The children were barely distinguishable from each other, their heads shaven, their stares blank, and their bodies emaciated. A team of physicians, psychologists, teachers, and social workers, employed by international child relief agencies, examined the children.

Assumptions were made, allegations whispered, and theories expounded. Some of the mental health workers considered these children psychopaths, assuming that they had survived by developing personalities that were selfish, manipulative and mean-spirited. For the most part, these children, ravaged in the developmental years, were viewed as “damaged beyond hope of repair, of recovery of normalcy” (Hemmendinger & Krell, 2000, p. 8).

History has shown the predications of these well trained and well-meaning professionals were wrong, dramatically so. Yes, a few of the orphans required hospitalization or committed suicide, however, the majority of this group became devoted husbands and fathers. What is more, this group of 426 children produced distinguished rabbis, scholars, physicists, physicians, businessmen, artists and a Nobel Prize winning author.

How did these children, bereft of family and home, security, nourishment, identity, and self-worth, learn to voice the void, to speak the unspeakable? How did they transform mistrust and suspiciousness of authority to integrity and faith in community? How did they turn grief, bereavement and rage to love, compassion and hope?

An Analogue

The experiences of the children liberated from concentration camps, and the experiences of the professionals who, with the best of intentions worked with them after
liberation, are unique. (Perhaps unique is too strong a word given the more recent trauma experienced by children in Rwanda and Kosovo.) Nonetheless, it is the thesis of this paper that the experiences of the survivors of Buchenwald can provide an important analogue for thinking about traumatized children who attend 21st century schools as well as the challenges faced by those entrusted to work with them.

Literature from teachers who are survivors of such trauma substantiates this assertion. For example, these words from Noemi Ban (1996), a survivor of the camps, who went on to become an award-winning teacher:

It is [not] a stretch to compare the traumatic reasons a student might fail in school to the traumatic affect of those who survived the Holocaust. Those of us who are survivors understand…what it is like to not be able to concentrate because we are hurting so much. We understand what it is like to be ashamed to admit that we have experienced “hell” on earth…. That is why it is not a stretch to say that young people today, who are dealing with the trauma of abuse, violence, homophobia, bigotry, and hate are experiencing the same type of hurt as those of us who survived the Holocaust. (pp. 97-99)

Mrs. Ban’s “understanding” is supported by trauma treatment specialists such as psychiatrist Herman (1997) who speaks of the commonalities "…between rape survivors and combat veterans, between battered women and political prisoners, between the survivors of vast concentration camps created by tyrants who rule nations and the
survivors of small, hidden concentration camps created by tyrants who rule their homes" (p. 3).

**Traumatic Affect Interferes with Learning in American Classrooms**

Professional literature documents the multitudes of American school children whose learning has been negatively affected by trauma (Browne & Finkelhorn, 1986; Courtois, 1994; Gardner, 1971; Pynoos & Nader, 1990; Terr, 1990; van der Kolk, Perry & Herman, 1991; Simmers-Wolpow, 1995). Many of these children, survivors of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, pervasive familial or community violence or drug abuse, the horrors of bigotry, misogyny, rape or homelessness are spending their formative years bereft of the nurturing homes, families, and thus the emotional and physical security necessary to establish the affect necessary for learning.

Despite the prevalence of traumatic affect among students in America’s schools there is little in the professional literature to guide teacher preparation. A search of the Educational Resources Information Database (E.R.I.C) and Dissertations Abstracts International keying in “literacy” and “trauma” would find but a handful of (Simmers-Wolpow, 1995, p. 17).

Given the above, this paper has two endeavors: First it will examine similarities between the realities faced by a) the children of Buchenwald and the professionals who diagnosed and predicted their potentialities, and b) current day American children victimized by atrocity and the struggles of literacy diagnosticians and practitioners entrusted to serve their needs. The need for increased preparation and support in dealing with the affective issues that directly effect literacy skill diagnosis and learning will be highlighted.
Second, this paper will elaborate on the affective literacy skills needed to “read” the literature Holocaust survivors invented: the literature of testimony. This paper will attempt to articulate the affective literacy skills of testimony and witness.

**An Etiology of Mis-Diagnoses by Well-Meaning Professionals**

In order to recover from atrocities, children who are victims of prolonged and pervasive mistreatment need to attach words to their "unspeakable" memories and effectively communicate them to an appropriate, empathetic audience. In so doing they take steps toward restoring integrity, connectedness and community in a world they accurately perceive as fraught with untrustworthy, hurtful adults (Herman, 1997). How is it then possible that well-meaning and sensitive professionals, knowledgeably trained in psychopathology and the art of “talk therapy,” missed so dramatically in their predicative diagnosis for the majority of the children from Buchenwald?

Simply stated, misdiagnosis arises from the clinicians’ inabilities to listen with courage, empathy and integrity. These inabilities are often rooted in clinicians’ personal biases and/or unresolved personal issues. Clinicians aware of this personal deficit would be wise to excuse themselves from working with such a suffering child. Often, due to resource constraints, recusation is not an option.

The practitioner, however, is not always aware that she or he is unable to listen. As one might imagine, finding words to describe that which is beyond imagination is time consuming and arduous. Such struggles are usually accompanied by outbursts of tearful, angry or violent behaviors. The process requires careful listening in a supportive trusting environment. Hence, witnessing the child’s struggle may be emotionally undesirable for the clinician. Kluft (1990) describes this as a "...clinical situation in which
the payoff for denial on the part of the clinician may equal or exceed the payoff for denial on the part of the victim” (p.32). When the clinician attributes his or her inability to intervene positively on behalf of the child, to the fault of the child’s alleged pathology itself, misdiagnosis, as was the case in Buchenwald, is inevitable.

A parallel and often interwoven aspect of a clinician’s unconscious inability to listen may be labeled listener incredulity. Psychiatrist Goodwin (1985) expands upon the cause of this error in clinical terms: “… incredulity is an effective way to gain distances from terrifying realities. Thus, [professionals] can be counted upon to routinely disbelieve … accounts that are simply too horrible to be accepted without threatening their emotional homeostasis” (p.7-8).

Maintaining perspective is of great importance. Let us remember that those who worked with the children from Buchenwald were unprepared for what they would encounter.

**Incredulity and Misdiagnoses in the Literacy Classroom**

The following case study is chosen because it illustrates how literacy professionals, lacking preparation and support in recognition of affective issues, can make errors not unlike those made by the well-meaning professionals who worked with the children from Buchenwald. It is not intended to represent common practice. It is nonetheless, a true story.

Laverne (a pseudonym), 16, is a child about to have a child. She got drunk at a party and doesn’t know the father. She has never known her dad, but she has known a series of her mother’s boyfriends. Her mom, a late stage alcoholic with an “anger-control” problem, “threw a fit” and gave her a one-way bus ticket to the town in which
her older sister lives. Her sister, not married, has two children. Laverne has seen them abused, physically and emotionally. Laverne earns her rent by caring for the children after school while her sister works swing shift. On weekends, Laverne works dayshift at McDonalds. On these days she often comes home to find her nieces home alone, sitting in their pajamas on the floor amongst broken beer bottles, feeding themselves Cocoa Puffs.

Laverne is not passing any of her classes. Her reading teacher, Mr. Swift (also a pseudonym), earned his masters degree in literacy from a local university. He is known for getting results. The average student enrolled in his class makes significant yearly jumps in their reading scores. Swift, acting in concordance with his training, administers a diagnostic battery of tests to each student upon enrollment in his class. When Swift attempted to administer this battery to Laverne, she tuned out. Swift reported that she was incapable of focusing on small details. The next day Smith persisted hoping this would help her stay on task. Laverne “flew off the handle.” This routine lasted for a week after which Swift requested that Laverne be removed from his class. Swift complains that “Laverne is the worst case of ADHD I have seen in years.” When approached by the school counselor, Swift responds, “I have 4 reading classes, 20-25 students per class. They all have learning needs and there is a waiting list of others who can benefit from this program. They all have problems. I have neither the time or the wherewithal to listen to them.” Seeing the frown on the face of the counselor Swift retorts, “I had problems as a child and I overcame them. If Laverne wants to continue in this class, she can come in after school and complete the required reading test.”
Swift is well trained in literacy diagnosis and remediation. And yes, Swift is overburdened. However, it appears that Swift has had minimal preparation in dealing with the affective issues that effect diagnosis. For example, Swift’s is placing a heavy emphasis on diagnostic pre-tests. The International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English provide standards for assessment in reading and writing (IRA/NCTE, 1994). These include the following:

- The interests of the student are paramount in assessment….Assessment must serve, not harm, each and every student…(pp. 13-14)

- The consequences of an assessment procedure are the first, and most important, consideration in establishing the validity of the assessment. .... (p. 25)

Nearly all survivors of pervasive and prolonged mistreatment have a history of malevolent control by perpetrating adults (Herman, 1997). Students like Laverne, with a history of classroom failure and subsequent humiliation by peers, may perceive normal diagnostic pre-testing procedures as psychologically invasive. (Is it that Laverne cannot complete the test, or is it that the testing situation increases the manifestations of Laverne’s symptoms?) Unless Swift is willing to invalidate the test results, he should postpone all pre-testing until he is certain that the consequences of this assessment serves, not harms, his student.

However, whether by reason of denial or incredulity, Swift chooses to limit enrollment to those students who will benefit from a program almost solely addressing the cognitive learning needs of students. Swift is correct, Laverne does find it difficult to focus, is easily distracted, and has trouble modulating responses. Are not Laverne’s symptoms appropriate to her reality? Is not the well-meaning, trained response of Mr.
Swift, looking to see what is organically and/or behaviorally wrong with Laverne, inappropriate to his reality as a teacher of reading? Is Laverne’s inability to play chess (diagnostic test) in the hurricane of her life grounds for her disqualification from literacy instruction? Laverne, like an expired canary, has been removed from the literacy-learning coalmine. Yet Swift continues his labors as if her removal is not an indicator of deficiencies of essential ingredients necessary to support life-long learning.

Once again, this true case study is not intended to represent common practice. It does, however, illustrate how literacy professionals, lacking preparation and support in recognition of affective issues, can make unintended errors. Several things are missing from Mr. Swift’s practice. One of the missing elements is a working knowledge of the literacy of testimony and witness.

**The Literacy of Testimony and Witness**

Mr. Swift knew little about Laverne’s situation. Was she to try to find the words to describe her living situation, could she? If she did, could Swift understand these words? Could we?

One of the 426 children ravaged in his developmental years, “damaged beyond hope and repair” at Buchenwald is Nobel laureate scholar and writer, Elie Wiesel. It was Wiesel (1977) who first described a new genre of literature: “If the Greeks invented tragedy, the Romans the epistle, and the Renaissance the sonnet, our generation invented a new literature, that of testimony” (p.19).

Reading and writing testimony requires the affective literacy skills of receiving, responding and valuing. Survivors who read and write the affective text of their lives enable themselves to manifest, in words and silences, pathological memories and
sómatically buried horror not yet contextualized into current awareness. Dori Laub, a skilled listener of Holocaust survivor testimony, was among the first to describe the process by which a sufferer of violence and trauma gives "testimony" to an attentive listener who "bears witness" to the telling. The listener participates in the personal process of bearing witness by consciously apprehending and responding to words and silences and the meaning they attempt to encompass. When the survivor can “hear the listener witnessing” reconnection occurs (receiving and responding). Through this process a new common knowledge is created, a knowledge that allows teller and listener to restore an understanding of their world (valuing). This mutual understanding might be represented as a new story, what Laub calls knowledge de novo... (in Felman & Laub, 1992, p. 57). This notion of engaging in the process of the co-creation of "knowledge de novo" is literally at the heart of the process. Within this process is the healing agency of the new story.

**Binocularity and Healing: The Place Where the Sufferer and the Listener Meet**

For those less accustomed to operating within the affective domain, an analogy from the study of monocular and binocular vision may be helpful. In the case of monocular vision, the observer who views a moving object with only one eye is provided with a clear image. This image, however, lacks depth and can thus lead to errors in perception. With binocular vision, the observer viewing a moving object with both eyes acquires depth; however, she may also acquire substantial perceptual distortion. Boundary problems, manifested by the blurring caused by the overlapping of two distinctly different singular visions, require the brain to locate images in the contexts of time, place and belief.
By analogy, binocular understanding, the overlapping of two distinctly different perceptions of the meaning of symbolic language, may likewise blur the boundaries between "self" and "other," "sufferer" and "listener," and "student" and "teacher." In the negotiation between the picture provided by the sufferer and the picture provided by the listener lies the potential healing agency of telling (writing or speaking) and listening (reading or witnessing). Giving testimony (telling) and bearing witness (listening) require an embrace or melding with the "other" that changes both irrevocably.

**Conclusion**

During 1995, at the height of the Bosnian Crisis, Elie Wiesel traveled to the barbed-wired gates of camps where victims of ethnic cleansing were being tended to by U.N. troops. Here he met a barrage of reporters who demanded to know the purpose of his trip. He had not come to compare these events to the Holocaust. He had not come to influence American public sentiment. He did not come to proclaim that some 50 years after his liberation from Buchenwald, history was repeating itself. Wiesel came to listen, to bear witness.

Tomorrow a new student may enter a reading lab and act in ways that indicate she is not prepared to succeed in that class. She may not be ready to complete a diagnostic battery. She may exhibit behaviors that are objectionable; in fact, they might interfere with the class’ normal operation. Although the literacy of testimony and witness is outside the paradigm of diagnostic/prescriptive instruction and although it may be painful to work with students like Laverne, who suffer from severe mistreatment, their pain, unattended, is our pain too. Like Wiesel, sometimes we have to come to listen. Choosing not to do so is analogous to ignoring asphyxiated canaries in the literacy learning
coalmines. If we, heirs to the universe of the Holocaust, wish to restore the humane in humanity, literacy must also testify and bear witness.

References


Literacy and Feeling: Toward a New Synthesis

Carolyn P. Panofsky

In the last several decades, there have been significant shifts in educational thinking, particularly in literacy theory. Behaviorism has been largely superseded by cognitivist and, to lesser degree, social perspectives. A parallel shift in educational philosophy and moral education has seen the rise of feminist perspectives and the development of an ethic of care. For some, the ethic of care entails a critique of education for the neglect of feeling, emotion, and the affective domain. These two changes in
education, however—to the cognitive (and to some extent the social) in reading pedagogy, to the affective in philosophy and moral education—have had little contact.

Yet in myriad ways, literacy is profoundly linked with feeling, emotion, the affective domain. In this discussion, I will use the feminist analyses to view literacy in a new light and I will argue that the neglect of feeling in education generally and in literacy specifically carries significant costs to both individuals and institutions. With some others (e.g., Fox, 1999; Stuckey, 1991) I suggest that literacy has the potential to deny the very humanity that it is claimed to promote. After sketching a framework, and drawing on stories of learners presented by others, I present material about an adult learner from my own work in teacher education.

**Part I: A new focus for thinking about literacy**

The analysis of education presented by educational philosopher Jane Roland Martin (1994) is useful for introducing the feminist perspective. Martin invokes a fundamental distinction between the productive and the reproductive processes of society and asserts that historical and philosophical discussions of education have defined “the educational realm in relation to society’s productive processes only” (p. 204). The concept of the “productive processes” includes political, social, and cultural activities, as well as economic ones—and these are processes of the public domain. On the other hand, “reproductive processes”—representing human activities not included in the productive processes—refers not only to biological reproduction of the species, but also to the rearing of children to maturity, the related activities of “keeping house” and “managing a household,” as well as serving the range of needs, including care of the sick, and purposes of family members as they arise, often unplanned—and these are processes of
the private domain. Martin puts particular emphasis on the correspondences of production/public domain and reproduction/private domain, “for in our society reproductive processes are for the most part carried on in the private world of the home and domesticity, and productive processes in the public world of politics and work” (p. 204). As much as John Dewey, for example, regretted that liberal and vocational education are organized as opposite forms of curricula, representing a separation of head and hand, mind and body, Martin points out that both are, nonetheless, designed to prepare students to carry on productive, not reproductive, societal processes.

Martin uses the educational autobiography of Richard Rodriguez (1982), Hunger of memory, to expose the costs of the educational separation of productive and reproductive processes. On the surface, the autobiographical story of a Spanish-speaking Mexican child who wins a scholarship to Stanford and goes on to earn a Ph.D. in English literature is a classic American success story.

But in Martin’s reading, Rodriguez’ educational success story “is notable primarily as a narrative of loss” (p. 201). In becoming an educated person, Rodriguez tells a story of alienation: from his parents, for whom he soon has no names [when teachers convince his parents to forego their native Spanish even at home]; from the Spanish language, in which he loses his childhood fluency; from his Mexican roots, in which he shows no interest; from his own feelings and emotions, which all but disappear as he learns to control them; from his body itself, as he discovers when he takes a construction job after his senior year in college” (p. 201).
In Martin’s view, while not every American has Rodriguez’ good fortune of “being born into a loving home filled with the warm sounds of intimacy” --sounds that ceased when English replaced Spanish --nonetheless, “the separation and distance he ultimately experienced are not unique to him. On the contrary, they represent the natural endpoint of the educational journey he took” (p. 201).

Martin suggests that “It is not surprising that Rodriguez acquires habits of quiet reflection rather than noisy activity, reasoned deliberation rather than spontaneous reaction, dispassionate inquiry rather than emotional response, abstract analytic theorizing rather than concrete storytelling” (p. 202, emphasis added). These tendencies, she points out, “are integral to the ideal of the educated person that has come down to us from Plato” (p. 202). Martin concludes that, “Only in light of the fact that education turns its back on the reproductive processes of society and the private world of the home can Rodriguez’s story of alienation be understood” (p. 205).

Martin links Rodriguez’ experience of education as a process of alienation--from family, from ethnic background, from a sense of community--to a set of ideals dominant in western education since the time of Plato. As other feminist analyses have found significant “binaries” in Western thought, so too Martin finds binaries or splits in educational thought. In Platonic ideals, Martin finds profound separations corresponding to the separation of productive and reproductive processes. Martin’s analysis can be organized into a set of divisions in Western educational ideals which I present as Figure 1, with the left term of each pair dominant:
Figure 1. Martin’s binaries derived from Plato

- reason v. emotion
- thought v. action
- mind v. body
- head v. hand
- self v. other
- education v. life

The dominant ideals represented in Figure 1 were set forth by Plato in *The Republic*, as Martin writes:

[Plato’s] worthies are to acquire through their education a wide range of theoretical knowledge, highly developed powers of reasoning, and the qualities of objectivity and emotional distance.... an education of heads, not hands.... Moreover, considering the passions to be unruly and untrustworthy, Plato held up for the guardians an ideal of self-discipline and self-government in which reason keeps feeling and emotion under tight control. [An ideal of] “inner” harmony at the expense of “outward” connection.... to confirm in them a sense of self in isolation from others. (1994, p. 202)

The separations between the productive and reproductive processes, the public and private realms, and within the productive realm, can be linked with the dominant and subordinate ideas, as I have illustrated in Figure 2.
Martin argues that the separations--generally uninspected, taken for granted--between reason and emotion and self and other, as well as between liberal and vocational education, need not be continued and that reproductive processes can be brought into the educational realm. It is increasingly apparent that society does an imperfect job of preparing the next generation for the whole of family living as well as the specifics of parenthood--of both fathers and mothers. Both sexes have much to learn to carry on the reproductive processes of society, just as both sexes need to be educated for carrying on the productive processes. Yet it is in the public domain of the school that we see these separations taking place, although there is little evidence that the private sphere has been tremendously successful at redressing the separations, as evidenced in social facts such as rising incidence of family violence and child abuse (forms of violence that have consequences in the public domain).

Feminists have long argued that traits and qualities traditionally associated with the reproductive processes have value for society and humanity as well as for individuals and families (e.g., Dinnerstein, 1976). Martin quotes from Jonathan Schell (1982), author of The fate of the earth: “The nuclear peril makes all of us, whether we happen to have children of our own or not, the parents of all future generations.” Schell suggests that the will needed to save the human species is a form of love resembling “the generative love of parents.” The capacity to which Schell refers is for nurturance and the “ethic of care.” Whether the challenge is the nuclear threat which was more salient in the 1980s or the varied forms of environmental degradation more in the foreground today, the qualities associated with the reproductive processes of society have the broadest moral, social and political significance. Martin concludes, then, that, “Care, concern, connectedness,
nurturance are as important for carrying on society’s economic, political, and social processes as its reproductive ones. If education is to help us acquire them, it must be redefined” (p. 206).

I began this discussion by pointing to the cognitivist emphasis (some might even say ‘bias’) in literacy education and the neglect of feeling, emotion, the “affective domain.” An example of how literacy teaching, in this case Reading, tends to an exclusive cognitive focus--and even a shunning of feeling and the affective--is presented in this collection by Ray Wolpow. Wolpow (2001) tells the story of “Laverne,” an at-risk reader who is excluded from a remedial reading class after she tunes out during the diagnostic test. The reading teacher excludes Laverne from his class on the grounds that he has too many students to deal with, others on a waiting list, and says he cannot take the time to get to know a traumatized student so that he can evaluate her reading. Martin’s analysis shows that the traditional view of reason prescribes an “objective standard” be used in such diagnosis, implying in turn a “universal application”: everyone is to be treated the same. Reflecting the orientation (of his own education) toward self, rather than other, the reading teacher feels justified in saying, “I’m a teacher, not a social worker.” And, besides, Wolpow tells us, this teacher is known for “getting results.”

Wolpow (2001) offers the story of the reading student as emblematic of a “canary in the mine” for literacy learning. I see the reading teacher as evidence of the need for an ethic of care in the education of the teacher, as well. Neglect of the reproductive processes constructs both a diminished understanding and experience of texts as well as a diminished commitment to the learner.
Perhaps, however, Wolpow’s reading teacher is merely the product of a poor preparation program. His reputation “for getting results” suggests otherwise. The analysis of Jane Roland Martin implies that such questions are not answered by looking at any specific program but at the larger framework in which all teacher preparation programs are situated, a framework so broad it is effectively beyond our peripheral vision, out of view. Wolpow’s teacher is not an exception; rather, he is the “successful” teacher that all programs aim to produce.

Part II: The “absent presence” in teacher preparation

Shifting focus away from the habitual attention on the academic and cognitive, to consider the division between productive and reproductive processes, helps to make some important observations about the conventional ways of doing education. J. R. Martin’s analysis yields a set of divisions in Western educational ideals, with the emphases suggested earlier: reason over emotion, thought over action, mind over body, head over hand, self over other, education over life.

The resulting splits support conceptualizations of education on multiple levels, with broad implications. Ray Wolpow’s story illustrates that teacher education may produce model teachers who are content, even aggressively so, to not know their students. However, Marilyn Eanet (2001) shows that there are many sources to which the interested teacher educator may turn for new knowledge to address these implications.

Perhaps it is not so surprising, though, that teachers may feel justified in ignoring the affective dimension. Post-graduate trained academics including teacher educators, long schooled in a tradition structured by such values, are expected to value:

- Dispassionate inquiry (rather than emotional response);
Reasoned deliberation (rather than spontaneous reaction);

Abstract analytic theorizing (rather than concrete storytelling).

Recall that Rodriguez’ assimilation of the Platonic virtues of objectivity and emotional distance represent the quintessential academic achievement, but that his journey is one of alienation from home, family, and community.

The same qualities of objectivity and emotional distance are ones teacher educators are expected to embrace as we, too, go about the process of selection, admission and certification of aspiring future teachers. We expect students to pass a dispassionate objective measure of literacy such as the Pre-Professional Skills Test, and later a more rigorous measure of professional preparation, perhaps imposed by state licensure. True, the admissions process asks for other information in which passion may be valued, such as a commitment essay, information about prior experiences, and teacher recommendations. Nevertheless, it is not surprising that the objective and dispassionate measure has the power to trump all the rest. Pass the PPST or the gate to the preparation program remains closed. At the end of the process, pass the teacher test or be denied certification and access to employment.

Jane Roland Martin reveals emotion and feeling in education as an “absent presence,” and her reader becomes increasingly aware of the missing elements as her discussion proceeds. While Martin illustrates her analysis with a classic success story that she reads as one of loss, I want to tell a story that some may read as failure, but that I read as one of triumph. This story is important because it illustrates the play of high stakes testing in the current politicized climate of teacher certification and program
accreditation, and it highlights the literacy double-standard between academic and vocational education.

My tale is about “Tom,” an adult student who was seeking to become a technology education teacher. I first met Tom in Fall 1998 when he sought special permission (I was department chair) to enroll in his required practicum course. Special permission was required because he had not yet achieved minimum scores on all subtests of the PPST. Tom had passed the math and reading subtests, but several retakes had not resulted in his meeting the writing subtest requirement. Unlike some students, Tom had been both proactive and accepting in the face of his challenge. He had purchased preparation materials, he had gained the assistance of a more capable peer, he had signed up for help at the academic skills center, he had been “practicing the book” and he was signed up to take the test again. In contrast with some students who requested a waiver and argued about “just one or two points,” Tom accepted the judgment implied by the test scores, wanted to improve his writing, and was pursuing a plan of activity. He was seeking special permission to enroll in practicum because it was only offered once each year and he had already been working on his degree for six years, alternating between part time and fulltime while he worked more than fulltime on graveyard shift in a machine shop and cared for an ailing parent.\(^1\) Compared with other students’ requests, the maturity of Tom’s attitude and his proactive approach made his request simple to support. He appreciated the importance of good writing and understood that he would not be allowed to advance to student teaching until the test score had been achieved.

\(^1\) In fact, by this time, Tom had amassed around 150 credits, representing about a year’s more credit than required for the degree. This number of credits reflected a transfer from a technical college, including credits that did not meet liberal arts requirements, along with shifting interests on his part but also shifting requirements in the program which his slow paced progress had made inescapable.
However, despite diligence on his part, Tom’s later attempts at the test brought repeated failures. By late 1999, Tom was quite frustrated and was getting depressed. He was 40 years old, he had been studying at our institution for seven years (following two years of fulltime study at a technical college), and his dream of getting a bachelor’s and becoming a teacher seemed to be slipping away. He had tried to work with tutors at the academic development center, but the time they could give him was limited and they did not seem able to offer instruction that helped him. I offered to do an independent study with him, if the dean approved. I had worked as a college writing teacher and academic skills counselor in an earlier phase of my career and had long been frustrated by higher education’s ambivalent response to the needs of many non-traditional students who are given access to a degree program without the academic supports they need to succeed.

Indeed, the discovery that a student could get as far as Tom and still face a serious writing challenge should, alone, trigger alarms. Tom had completed 150 credits of college work, had a B average, but could not achieve what was by many considered “a minimal score” on the PPST Writing Subtest. What did this mean? What did such a test score represent? Perhaps Tom was a good enough writer but poor at test-taking, at least at taking a writing test? Perhaps very few of his major courses and cognates required writing? This was in fact the case; his lowest grades, including in two repeated courses, came in courses with more demanding writing assignments.

Tom was delighted that someone was offering to help him. The dean agreed to allow the independent study, rationalized as an experimental approach to explore the needs of non-traditional students. In Spring 2000, Tom and I began meeting weekly, and sometimes more often. Our meetings lasted at least two hours and sometimes three. Over
time I learned a lot about Tom’s life story and also about his school experiences, including some of his instructional history. He grew up in a poor working class family. He was the youngest of three, with siblings nine and eleven years older. His father died during his early schooling, but not before leaving memories of drunkenness and battering. Tom recalls episodes of trying to protect his mother, and later of his widowed mother on welfare, taking in laundry to make ends meet, the main room festooned with men’s ironed shirts.

Tom’s early schooling was not pleasant. He had trouble learning to read, so there was much testing, sometimes lasting all day. He repeated first grade and then second grade and was sent to “speech class” throughout elementary school. Tom recalls multiple sources of anger as a child and labels himself a “problem kid” throughout school. He tells of being “a common boy,” using the local term for boys who grew up in the “tough neighborhood” of the town common. He recalls sitting out games on the bench, despite recognized athletic skill: a fatherless boy without a defender to prod the coach into letting his son play, he was displaced by less capable players whose fathers “knew the coach.” He refers to developing “a chip on [his] shoulder” and a willingness to fight back.

Following a rocky path in earlier grades, in high school Tom’s school life started to turn around both in coursework and athletics: he discovered industrial arts courses and his emerging height led him to new feats on the basketball court. He persisted in school. He became the president of an industrial arts students’ organization. He excelled on the

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2 It’s difficult to know what “speech class” of 35 years ago refers to. Tom has no recollection of any speech “impediment” and his speech bears no trace of speech difficulty. But he does occasionally use working class dialect forms. I suspect that his referral reflects the kind of instruction that Collins (1991), following Piestrup (1973), discusses as ‘hegemonic practice’ in which the instructional intent is to “correct” a non-standard dialect such as Tom’s working class speech.
basketball team. But there were still rough spots: again he faced the unfairness of paternal intervention for a less deserving player. This time Tom’s sense of injustice led to a burst of anger in which he quit the team. But he later rejoined when urged by a promise it would not happen again.

At the age of 21, Tom graduated from high school. He was the first high school graduate in his family: neither of his parents, none of his aunts or uncles, neither of his siblings had graduated from high school. There were some G.E.D.s in the family, but Tom was the only one to triumph over the odds against high school completion for a student twice held back, diagnosed with difficulty that today would probably be labeled “learning disability,” and frequently referred for behavioral infractions.

Tom did many things between the time he graduated high school and when I met him almost twenty years later: military service, jobs in several locales, a marriage, a divorce. In the late 1980s, Tom returned to the state of his birth to help care for his ailing mother and began attending the local technical college, in part because the machine shop jobs that had paid quite well “down south” were much less rewarding in southern New England. But after finding success in the A.S. program, Tom realized that what he really wanted was to become a teacher so that he could give to future students the gift that had been given to him in industrial arts classes in high school. Tom knew he liked working with kids because over the years he had coached a lot of kids’ sports teams, especially basketball, and he’d been a foster-father for his nephews. He had come to place high values on learning, literacy and giving: he’d become a vegetable gardener who supplied his relatives, neighbors and friends all summer with fresh vegetables, a cook who prepared family feasts, and a daily reader of the New York Times. When his teacher
preparation courses led him into schools and classrooms, he repeatedly showed himself to have a wonderful knack for connecting with just those kids whom many teachers cannot connect with at all, the disaffected and “oppositional” students.

As I learned Tom’s story, I came to see him as someone who had progressed in education in spite of tremendous odds and as someone who had great gifts to give to the young people who would be his students. In our work together, Tom wrote some wonderful pieces about his experiences, he perfected his résumé, he wrote letters of application, and we worked on exercises and practice tests of the type on the PPST. We talked about differences between speech and writing and about different ways of speaking in different contexts. In speech he occasionally used “non-standard” grammar such as “seen” for “saw” and double negatives, but these forms did not appear in his writing and he could spot them in workbook exercises.

Interestingly, Tom had no recollection of ever having been taught some of the most basic facts of “standard written English” or even of traditional spelling rules such as “i before e except after c” and dropping an “e” or doubling a consonant before adding “ing.” In fact, he had no recollection of any writing instruction, except for handwriting, during any point in his K-12 schooling, and then only in one course during the associate’s degree (which had satisfied the bachelor’s requirement also). His recollections of schooling suggest that his teachers gave much attention to the acquisition of receptive literacy but none to productive literacy, to reading but not to writing. As others have suggested, such an emphasis prepares students to follow, but not to lead, to take orders, but not give them. Thus, such a distinction reflects the stratified curriculum that a number of researchers have found between the curriculum offered to working class students, in
contrast to the education offered to middle and upper class students (e.g., Anyon, 1981; Collins, 1986, 1991).

Given that Tom may have had almost no writing instruction during his K-12 schooling and only limited instruction once he entered higher education after the age of 30, one might be amazed at his progress. In our work together, he was extremely diligent and learned Microsoft Word at the same time so that he might enter his writing on a computer (in a lab; he owned only an irreparable Kaypro) and keep track of his drafts and his progress. In one of our sessions, Tom took a practice PPST and improved his score on objective items by almost 100 percent over what he had achieved some weeks earlier. In both those exercises and in writing, he seemed to be making progress.

About half-way through the semester, Tom again took the actual PPST and improved his score--but not enough. I had thought that his signing up for that test session would be premature, but he wanted to try it again anyway. We kept working. Later, around the end of the term, he took the test again. We waited for his test score. Regardless of the outcome, we agreed to keep working together throughout the summer (he had become committed to writing, and I had become committed to helping him realize his goals). But, Tom was eager to get his PPST score, so for a second time he decided to spend the extra $25 to get scores early by phone: again he was disappointed. He received the same score as the previous time. I think we both felt desperate. I saw that Tom had made significant progress and I was disturbed by the discrepancy between his practice test performance and the “real thing.” What I saw as a significant increase in both his knowledge and in his comfort level and self-confidence when doing practice tests did not seem to transfer to the actual testing situation. I decided to write a letter of
appeal to the Dean, asking that he admit Tom to the School despite the deficient test score (2 points shy of the cut-off). By this time, Tom had 160 credits; his school history suggested that he may have had a learning disability that years of “speech class” had failed to address during his schooling over three decades before. I marshaled evidence of his potential contribution. I wrote of what I saw as an extraordinary achievement against tremendous odds. After all, how many first and second grade repeaters, not to mention children of high school dropouts, go on not only to graduate high school but also aspire to become teachers and achieve a college degree? Tom already had well beyond the credits for the degree, had a B average (higher than required), and had satisfied every requirement enacted over the last decade. Except, of course, the requirement of the score on the PPST writing subtest.

The Dean denied the appeal.

Tom and I were both discouraged. To me, the Dean’s refusal felt like a miscarriage of justice. Why, I brooded, couldn’t he see Tom’s situation as one that justified some allowance? Why couldn’t he accept that some tests are overwhelming in their intimidation of some test-takers. In addition, I was deeply angry. My professional judgment, the knowledge gained from three decades of experience in education, senior faculty standing, the experience of chairing the largest department in the school of education--all these counted for nothing against the politics of “maintaining standards.”

I came to see in a way that I had not before a complete separation in the Dean’s and my way of looking at the world. I was thinking in terms of the divisions identified by feminist scholars such as Carol Gilligan (1982) between different ways of reasoning about moral dilemmas. I saw the decision to admit or not admit Tom as a moral dilemma,
not a simple matter of a test score. One point in my letter was that Tom had not been well-served by public education--neither K-12 nor higher education. Such an argument takes education as a relationship between two entities having responsibilities to each other, learner and institution, rather than as the self-pursuit of an individual. Noddings (1992) points out that such a relational view is integral to an ethic of care. So I was thinking in terms of an ethic of care, while the Dean thought in terms of upholding a dispassionate and universally applied standard. I thought in terms of the situational specificity of Tom’s life and of his chosen field, of his trajectory and his rooted perspective that could offer so much to the kids who often are given so little in schools and society. But my way of knowing Tom evidently held no persuasive force, no credibility. To borrow from feminist theorist Luce Irigaray (1985), perhaps the feminist perspective reflected in such “utterances are unintelligible according to the code in force” (p. 149), a code that takes a standardized test score as an “objective measure.”

But there were a few times that universal standard had been relaxed, in one case when a non-native speaker of English appealed beyond the Dean to the institution’s Vice President. I let Tom know about this remaining possibility. He called the Vice President’s office and was given an appointment for the next week. Tom talked to me about what he would say, but he didn’t really need help. Thankfully, the Vice President recommended the Dean admit Tom to the School so that he could be placed for student teaching the following fall. The Dean and the Vice President battled for a week, I later heard, but in the end the Vice President ordered the Dean, and that was the end of it.

In the fall, Tom did his student teaching at a middle school and was a great success, impressing both his cooperating teacher and his college supervisor. Again, kids
whom others couldn’t “manage” performed well in Tom’s class. Word got out that he
was “terrific at classroom management,” and he was inundated with substitute-teaching
offers after student teaching ended. I didn’t see Tom much while he was out student
teaching but we emailed and talked on the phone every few weeks. He told me about his
students and some great experiences he was having in the classroom, as well as about a
tragedy that occurred at the school, when a boy he knew committed suicide. But the
grueling schedule of full time swing shift and weekend work on top of student teaching
left him exhausted much of the time.

During Tom’s student teaching, the school offered little in the way of resources to
 provision the students’ projects. The cooperating teacher seemed content to have students
do only book work and to plan projects that they “could do at home,” but Tom was
angered by that complacency and believed the kids weren’t being given a fair
opportunity. So he spent several hundred dollars on materials. He also discovered that his
students lacked some fundamental understandings that should have been addressed years
before: many, for example, could not accurately use a ruler. He organized special help
sessions to help students fill gaps in their knowledge, and he developed diagnostic
activities to assess students’ prior knowledge along with follow-up activities for those
who needed help. Tom also became a teacher whom students sought out for help with
personal and peer problems. During the second quarter, the suicide occurred. The student
had been in Tom’s class during first quarter and Tom was devastated; but he was also a
teacher to whom many students turned for comfort and understanding, and he was “there”
for those students.
Tom showed himself to be deeply committed to his students, creative in designing instruction and in meeting kids’ needs, both academic and social. He was caring in his relations with students and insightful in dealing with problem-behavior and other challenges. He brought so much to teaching that others are missing—especially his ability to work with kids from backgrounds similar to his own. Unlike the reading teacher that Wolpow (2000) writes about, Tom gave top priority to getting to know his students, especially those he saw as troubled or less skilled.

Tom’s supervising teacher saw him as “a great role model for the kids,” which was true, but incomplete. For to see Tom only as a good “role model” is to miss the fullness and depth of his gifts. His way of being with his students embodied Noddings’ (1992) notion of the ethic of care, which includes meeting students in genuine dialogue and affirming and encouraging the best in them. Noddings writes that the emphasis of this ethic “is on living together, on creating, maintaining, and enhancing positive relations” (1992, p. 21). Relational skill is reflected not only in Tom’s spending of personal funds and the giving of additional time and concern to students whose needs had been neglected, but also in the fact that kids who were seen as “trouble-makers” in other teachers’ classes were productive and respectful in Tom’s classes.

**Conclusion**

What should we draw from this story? Tom is a kind of “natural,” and there are not enough like him. I suggest that teacher preparation programs needs to shift the narrow focus on content preparation more broadly onto the “absent presence” of feeling and to incorporate an ethic of care in teacher preparation. This means, as well, that schools should be seen as places for promoting both the reproductive as well as the productive
functions, that students have to learn to care for both self and others, and teachers have to
care for students. Schools of care could achieve a form of excellence that no current high
stakes testing can address. Testing, too, needs to be a way of identifying and then
supporting needs rather than a way of excluding potential contributors, as a more
“relational” perspective might suggest. If there is truly a teacher shortage--and in Tom’s
field of technology education there is--then colleges need to recruit potential teachers and
support their development, rather than waste both resources and lives in the empty pursuit
of standards that in the end are best at depriving those who are already least well-served
by current institutional practices. What’s needed is education that attempts to realize the
unifications represented in Figure 3 of head, heart and hand, the productive and the
reproductive domains:

The view represented in Figure 3 reflects Jane Roland Martin’s vision of
education that aims at “uniting thought and action, reason and emotion, self and other”
(p. 211). Instead of a journey like Richard Rodriguez’ from the private world of intimacy
to isolation in the public world, from connection with others to alienation from others as
well as self, becoming educated can become a journey of integration and connection. In
the end, an education of personal integration will be an education of social integration.
Education as alienation, whether of the successful, like Richard Rodriguez, or the
unsuccessful, like Wolpow’s Laverne, reflects the “absent presence” and necessitates a
“meta-reform” in both the means and ends of education.

References

3-42.


**Reaction: Literacy and the Affective Domain**

*Eunice N. Askov*

As society moves toward educational standards and high stakes testing, Wolpow, Panofsky, and Eanet stress the importance of the affective domain in literacy instruction. Not listening and responding to children in distress is comparable to suffocating canaries in a coal mine. Just as canaries were used to predict poisonous gases in a coal mine, today we can study our children in distress to see the sickness in our society and education system.

The authors argue for the importance of the affective domain in an era when “reason, head, thought, and mind” are valued more than “emotion, heart, action, and body”. Perhaps because the affective domain cannot be measured by standardized tests, the “system” does not support the caring part of the teaching job. Nevertheless, it is crucial that preservice and inservice teachers become more respectful toward children. The authors argue for “empathetic listening” or witnessing the testimonies of troubled
children. Only when these children feel that someone (the reading teacher, for example) understands them can these children learn.

While teacher competencies relating to the affective domain are usually not required for teacher certification, as cognitive skills are, university faculty members can develop these affective abilities through modeling concern for their students. Narrative texts can also be used to promote multiple points of view so that college students understand children from backgrounds different from their own and with problems that they have not experienced. Students can engage in reflective practice by journaling and by class and/or internet discussions.

While most preservice teachers can be taught at least some empathetic skills, they may not be sincerely applied in a real teaching situation. How does the university know that the preservice teacher really cares about children and understands their problems? Are objective standards for the affective domain even possible or desirable?

If students are to be denied teacher certification due to a lack of affective skills, that implies a set of commonly agreed upon values that can be evaluated at least somewhat objectively. This evaluation could become problematic in dealing with preservice teachers from backgrounds different from their college professors. This type of evaluation could be highly political and potentially litigious.

Another difficulty is the argument that affective abilities are not the province of the reading teacher. The reading teacher’s job is thus defined narrowly as teaching cognitive skills without regard to the whole child. The recent emphasis on teaching the basics certainly reinforces this point of view. Rewards within a school system are not
likely to come to teachers who are affectively effective with children unless these teachers are also skilled in teaching cognitive skills.

So, why should we care about the affective domain when all public attention is on mastering the “basics”? The answer lies in the observation of children in our society. It is clear that children are suffering from the traumas of alcoholic parents, drug abuse at young ages, urban and rural poverty, disfunctional families, and so forth. To ignore the tremendous affective needs of these children is to condemn them to failure. With love, respect, and understanding, they may be able to thrive. The first step is empathetic listening to truly understand and then bear witness to the trauma of the child. Only through such understanding can healing occur. Otherwise, more “canaries” must perish in our school systems until we recognize the importance of the affective dimension.