

Issue Eight (Spring 1997)

Table of Contents

The Smoke of the Dragon

Matthias Meiers

Education – “not an island, but part of the continent of culture” Review of *The Culture of Education*

Derwyn Davies

What Are We Doing?

Address Seven Oaks Divisional Inservice February 21, 1997

John Wiens

A Rationale For Using a Restitution Program in School

Valerie Williamson

THE SMOKE OF THE DRAGON

Matthias Meiers

Robin - who is twelve years old and in grade six - sat down next to me and placed her copy of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* on the conference table.

"I am ready for the oral test," she announced confidently.

"Which character have you chosen for our conference?"

"Gandalf, so fire away!"

Robin, I intuited, was ready for a difficult question and did not require "scaffolding", the enabling conversation which helps children focus on salient information and organize their thoughts. So I began with an abstract question, "Do you think it makes sense to think of Gandalf as a teacher?"

Robin paused. In my mind I began to formulate a few scaffolding questions when suddenly she broke out in a smile. A thought had come to mind and reached the point of utterance, "Gandalf is a really fine teacher. He brought Bilbo Baggins and the dwarves to the adventure. He tells them what they must know to get their treasure back from Smaug. He tells them about the enchanted forest, Mirkwood. He stops them and talks them out of doing stupid things like stealing Beorn's ponies."

"Why would that have been stupid?"

"Beorn is powerful and he would have turned on the dwarves. In the end he helps them because they don't rip him off. They keep him as their friend and that was smart."

"Does Gandalf let them make mistakes?"

"Quite a few! When Bilbo tries to pick the trolls' pockets. That was stupid. Bilbo just wanted to show off and almost got everybody killed. Then when the trolls have the dwarves all bagged and are talking about how to have them for supper Gandalf tricks the trolls and saves his friends."

"Robin, but how does Gandalf let Bilbo and his friends know they had to be responsible? As a good teacher, Gandalf has to tell them that he won't fight all their battles, doesn't he?"

"Just before they enter Mirkwood, the enchanted forest, Bilbo gets scared. He is thinking of his nice hobbit hole and he wants to go home."

Robin opens her copy of *The Hobbit* and finds the spot, "Listen to this. I'll read to you.

"Do we really have to go through?" groaned the hobbit. "Yes, you do!" said the wizard, "If you want to get to the other side. You must either go through or give up your quest. And I am not going to allow you to back out now Mr. Baggins. I am ashamed of you for thinking it. You have to look after all these dwarves for me," he laughed. (p. 136)

"So here Gandalf reminds Bilbo of his importance to the mission and of his responsibilities," I added.

Robin's eyes met mine and she smiled, "Mr. Meiers, I have a question for you. Would you like to be more like Gandalf?"

In the evening of that day I reread the hastily scribbled notes which I had taken during the conference and began to reconstruct the details of our conversation. I also decided to formulate an answer to Robin's question in writing.

Gandalf is an exemplary teacher for all the reasons Robin had so clearly articulated. He knows the territory, its inhabitants and dangers better than any of his travelling companions. This knowledge qualifies him to be their guide. However, what fundamentally sets him apart from the dwarves is that he is not interested in the treasure. "This is your expedition after all. Think of the treasure at the end, and forget the forest and the dragon, at any rate until tomorrow morning," Gandalf tells the dwarves (p. 135). With these words he divorces himself from their interest and their mission. The dwarves are looking for their gold. He is smelling dragon smoke.

What then motivates the wizard? Gandalf's vision reaches far beyond the moral horizon of the dwarves. He knows that killing Smaug and repossessing the treasure will not set their world right because it has been so profoundly brought out of joint by Smaug. It is now the world of the political fait accompli. Smaug's might and cunning represent right. His words serve to foretell and pronounce the destruction of all those who impose him. Smaug's morally disjointed, upside-down world is the dwarves' theatre of action and even if his death cannot rehabilitate it, as we see when the dwarf, Thorin, becomes infected with the dragon sickness. Gandalf understands that setting the world right requires dialogue and friendship and he expects Bilbo Baggins to help the dwarves learn this.

In the world of schools eight-year-olds are writing standards exams in mathematics, teachers are losing their collective bargaining rights, every political dictate masquerades as self-evident truth and necessity... I think I am smelling dragon smoke. The world of the political fait accompli with the attendant disappearance of dialogue, openness, debate and moral concern is emerging. In Smaug's world we should all quietly retreat

into our classrooms, profess that dragons are invincible and try to survive as individual teachers.

In the coming year we must find the time to build renewed communities of friendship and professional concern in our schools. With the possible disappearance of "early-dismissal Tuesdays" the pressure is on to define other structures and spaces in which the necessary critical dialogue can occur. We must articulate a moral vision which extends far beyond efficiently preparing children for standardized tests in mathematics. This vision and our ability to communicate and realize it in schools will define us as teachers and exemplars of humanity for children. It also defines us as teachers and human beings.

So how did I answer Robin's question? I told her without hesitation that Gandalf was my hero and that I wished to be more like he.

EDUCATION - "NOT AN ISLAND, BUT PART OF THE CONTINENT OF CULTURE"

Review of *The Culture of Education* (Jerome Bruner. Harvard U. Press, 1996)

Derwyn Davies

Whenever I met a former student, which I did often at one period, almost without fail, the first question would be: "How's Mac?" Mac was the woodwork teacher in the small Cotswold secondary school where I taught. He had obviously had a strong impact on his students which at first I could not understand. I knew that he had been under pressure from Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools who considered him borderline and wanted him dismissed. There was a clear contradiction between that official view and the consistency and tone of students' interest.

From the students' point of view, it was not what they learned or made in woodwork classes, the so-called 'outcomes', that prompted their fond enquiries. What they obviously treasured was Mac as a person - polite, considerate, invariably helpful and respectful of students, and a skilled craftsman in his own right. These were all personal qualities and had nothing to do with curriculum or even the minutiae of teaching. Nor was it the fond recollection of a nice person; students had obviously gained an appreciation of character and craftsmanship even though they had not particularly gained in terms of their own woodworking skills.

This was a powerful lesson for me, and, I suggest, for all teachers. We all know how much of what we teach in our classrooms has a short shelf-life in the minds of our students. We also know we revisit time and again, frustratingly and boringly, many things we think it important for students to learn, without significant results beyond immediate recall for the test. The lesson we should learn as teachers from this, and from the waves of innovations that have buffeted us over the years - individualized instruction, continuous progress, 'open' education - is surely to question what we think we are doing, and to look more closely at what we think students are learning. Lost in most of the recommended teaching methods, the new programs, the 'proven' innovations, has been a sense of the deeper and more important things about learning and about life.

Sadly, what has been overlooked was what so impressed me about Manitoba teachers when I first came to the province: their strong dedication to their students' learning, their desire to find the best ways to teach and the best materials to use. Of course, this may no longer be true, given the depredations of government and the myopic criticism of the public. I would argue that in their search for improvements, teachers have allowed themselves to be misled. There has been an emphasis on technique, instrumentation, even technology; but this has been superficial; it has lacked the depth of thinking and understanding needed to support and strengthen the substance of teachers' endeavours. Thus curriculum, testing and, consequently, teaching have remained for the past twenty years or more constricted by an outworn conception of learning which is fundamentally behaviourist, although no one would defend it as such explicitly.

What is the alternative?

If we reflect on some of the major advances in the sciences, we must surely recognize how little impact new, or even not-so-new, thinking has had on education - in epistemology, in communication theory, in neurosciences and even in the physical sciences and mathematics. It is over seventy years since Godel challenged the work of Whitehead and Russell in his incompleteness theorem, and since quantum indeterminacy replaced mechanistic certainty. It is at least forty years since studies began to show how incredibly complex and powerful the mind is. It is at least twenty years since complexity theories showed how vast, unpredictable patterns or events arise from minuscule beginnings. And there is the very substantial body of knowledge, founded on the works of A.R. Luria and Lev Vygotsky in the former Soviet Union and Noam Chomsky in the States, about language and thinking. All this informs and enlarges the impact of cognitive theory, with Jerome Bruner one of its most thoughtful and elegant proponents.

Jerome Bruner has never been one of those fashions with which educators like to clothe themselves in attempting magically to transform the daily classroom dress into high-standard gold. His name is not associated with all-encompassing, proven programs or scientifically-based innovations, such as are promulgated lavishly at conferences and in-services. Partly, this is because, early in his career, he had the temerity to offend the

academic educational world with an affirmation wrongly construed as: 'You can teach anything to any child at any age.' Partly it is because he began in association with the likes of George Miller and Noam Chomsky - the former all but forgotten, the latter only recently receiving a semblance of respectability after years of denigration and ostracization.

And partly because he puts forward no easy solutions.

His body of work ranges from *Essays for the Left Hand*, through much technical stuff on the minutiae of learning, to what has a claim to be the most substantive body of work in the latter part of the century on cognition - what it means, how it works. *The Culture of Education*, is the third in what can be considered a trilogy, the importance of which has yet to be given the recognition it deserves for its fundamental significance to education, schools and classrooms, let alone to the higher echelons of administration and management which generally eschew disturbing or thought-provoking ideas.

The first of these major works, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*, surveyed the state of thinking about thinking and proposed a dynamic and challenging alternative to what passes for thinking in the world of academic education. He put forward a framework of "two modes of cognitive functioning", as exemplified in a good story and a well-formed argument, in Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Newton's *Principia*. He argued, persuasively, that at the heart of learning is language as the instrument of reflection, self-realization, understanding and culture-creation. Like Piaget, he puts forward a constructive, generative concept of mind.

The second work, *Acts of Meaning*, delves further into the world of the immense potential of cognition and seeks to explore how we can think and learn "coherently, liveable and adequately". To some extent he is in line with others who place over-riding importance on the stories we tell - Robert Coles in particular comes to mind. But Bruner allies narrative with meaning as the keys to understanding one's self, and a pre-requisite for learning and living. He argues against the pervasive behavioursim which still informs and shapes what teachers generally do and how schools operate, and at whose door can be laid direct responsibility for the plethora of problems in schools and for the inadequate learning critics exult in.

Bruner's most recent work, *The Culture of Education*, takes the previous two works a step further. In it he looks at the impact and role of culture in the shaping of minds. While this might sound quite abstract, it is clear that he has in mind the child in a living context of family, school and community in ways which educational 'studies' rarely manage to do. His thinking about the mind, of children and adults, goes beyond the now accepted left-brain - right-brain stance. Thus he puts forward as the major elements in mind and learning the "rich protocols of computational theory", combined with the messy and metaphoric in our thinking. Because we necessarily function within groups - family and school in particular, learning is empowered by a "mental life lived with others". He proposes as essential functions of cognition not so much 'information' or 'data', but understanding, feeling, acting and making meaning - of our own lives and of

our world. His concept of schools therefore is broader and deeper than is implied by the usual curriculum/pedagogy / management focus. School is essentially a cultural community which can and should provide powerful opportunities for exploring precepts in practice, for getting a sense of how to use one's mind, how to deal with authority, how to treat others, and what things are valued; the school must provide "an antidote to mindlessness".

On the one hand, Bruner tackles what we know is a key characteristic of mind - its incredible complexity. He focuses on the "complexity of cognition": the perspectives, the constraints, the constructive, interactional and instrumental elements which combine to enlarge the scope and depth of a person's thinking. He sees these synthesized in the fundamental and universal concepts of identity, narrative and culture, which thus enables us to place the learning child in the activities, organization and life of those around him/her.

On the other hand, he cuts to simple truths, in particular what he calls "folk pedagogy". We would do better, he argues, to concentrate on learning and teaching in the setting of the school rather than on generalizing, as has usually been done, from the learning of a rat in a maze or of nonsense syllables. This requires a focus not so much on explaining what children do, but on trying to understand what they think they are doing, and their reasons for what they do. In this he calls to mind Piaget's stricture: it is not so much science that children have difficulty understanding, it is the science lessons.

He makes the case for schools and pre-schools designed to serve a renewed function within our changing society: building a school culture that operates in the framework of its community and as a mutual community of learners, with all contributing to the deep processes of learning. In this, he affirms that teachers are the ultimate change agents. What a responsibility! But also, what a challenge!

Bruner goes on to examine teaching - its past, troubled present and its potential. He stresses understanding and meaning as the critical elements in explaining and interpreting narratives, our students' and our own. He enlarges these narratives to encompass what he calls the narratives of science and of reality. In effect, he calls for a return to 'the study of man' as the school's primary mission, to the kind of conscious awareness of culture that John Ralston Saul expounded in *The Unconscious Civilization*. His exploration of what this might mean, how we might learn and help our students to learn what he calls "the narrative construal of reality" cannot fail to provoke a critical reappraisal of the tasks and responsibilities of the teacher.

The greatest challenge facing education today is the same as that facing society. Society today seeks to reduce the individual (in this most individualistic of societies) to little more than a bare statistic - of income, of consumption, etc. Society also demands that schools prepare children for what is an impoverished and mean-spirited workplace, and seeks to do so by processes that reduce the richness, complexity and incredible potential of the individual to a standardized, measurable entity. So while lip-service is paid to values in our education system - of family, of community, of joint endeavour - we

actually stultify our students' and our own minds by failing to face the simplistic and thoughtless challenge posed by those who would, with Mr. Gradgrind, measure each parcel of humanity and tell exactly what it is worth. Can teachers maintain the long tradition of valuing the fullness and richness of human experience in the learning they seek to encourage, in spite of the weight of oppression which bears so heavily on them and on most of us in these best of times and worst of times? Teachers have an added responsibility to think for themselves since this is the only way to give pride of place to thinking and meaning and to counter the dead weight of oppression which is so joyously being placed on their shoulders by those in authority. Bruner's clarity of thinking about thinking can help enormously in facing this challenge.

Selected works by Jerome Bruner:

- The Process of Education. Harvard University Press, 1962.
- On Knowing; Essays for the Left Hand. Harvard University Press, 1963.
- Studies in Cognitive Growth. Wiley, 1966.
- The Relevance of Education. W.W. Norton, 1971.
- Beyond the Information Given; studies in the psychology of knowing. W.W. Norton, 1973.
- Child's Talk; Learning to Use Language. Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Actual Minds, Possible Worlds. Harvard University Press, 1986.
- Acts of Meaning. Harvard University Press, 1990.

WHAT ARE WE DOING?
Address Seven Oaks Divisional Inservice February 21, 1997

John R. Wiens

Prime Minister:

"Let me give you a lesson in basic economics. Canadians at home must realize that we are on a global trade mission here in this country of South Korea. Union activities are a domestic concern and we cannot interfere in the civil affairs of another country. Human rights are domestic, national and international matters, trade rights are global matters -- they have no boundaries. Trade missions are about freedom to capitalize on the world's resources -- what countries do with their people, their children to make this happen is their responsibility."

Premier:

"I'm proud to tell you as the premier of this province that we are right on course with our fiscal plan for the province of Manitoba. Our balanced budget legislation is ensuring that our deficit will be under control in a few years' the private sector is creating thousands of jobs' those job layoffs and plant closures are simply a necessary adjustment to the global marketplace. Our economy is unfolding as it should; we in Manitoba are adapting well. Our children will thank us for the opportunities we are creating."

Child Advocate:

"In 1989, the Parliament of Canada declared war on child poverty. The target date for its elimination was the year 2000. Report Card 1996, a report from Campaign 2000, indicates that the number of poor children has increased by 46%. If this rate of increase is allowed to continue, Canada could enter the new millennium with nearly twice the number of poor child as in 1989."

Parent:

"Mr. Wiens, for the first time in my life I'm worried about what the future will bring for my children. How different will their world be from mine -- will they be able to get jobs and have meaningful work and be hopeful for something better -- like I was when I was their age? Will I be supporting them beyond my own retirement? What can I do to help these children that I've brought into this world?"

Student:

"Being born an aboriginal in Manitoba doesn't exactly and automatically qualify for a good life free from financial worries as a status Indian. And my parents' moving to Winnipeg because they wanted me to have a good education hasn't really worked out. It seems that all the things I learned in the North are useless here, and I hear lots of people saying they're trying to help us. But I'm not "us", I'm me and I'm different from many of "us". And I do wish I could get an education and a job and live in the suburbs and raise a family. I'm not stupid. I just don't know how to make that happen. The only thing that doesn't make me feel completely alone is that I know this is what most kids are afraid of these days."

Teacher:

"I've got enough trouble keeping up with the changes in curriculum, let alone defend myself against all those mean-spirited and unreasonable attacks in the media and by this government. Sometimes I feel like people look at me as if I'm Jonah, "Just throw teachers out of the boat and things will be OK!" They don't realize if it wasn't for teachers, children would be completely lost in today's world, and they don't realize if children don't get good care and a good education, none of us have a future. And the school division doesn't always help -- we don't get the kind of help we need to cope with everything -- sometimes I don't know whose side they're on."

How are we to make sense of this cacophony of confusing and contradictory messages that seem to be coming at us faster than ever? If we can't make sense of them what are we to do? Is everybody else making sense of them? Are we just not up to the task required of people in today's world? Is there something wrong with us? What are we to do amid this turmoil and seeming chaos -- this darkness?

When my children were a lot young I would, on occasion, assign tasks to them and, if I thought the tasks were unfamiliar or particularly complex I would demonstrate how I thought those tasks should be done. Usually I would then proceed to do something else and return from time to time to check on them. I can't really recall this next part, but my two children and my wife are adamant that this is how things happened. They claim that frequently, in returning to the scene of the assignment and finding that what they were engaged in no way captured what I thought I had told them and showed them, I would exclaim loudly and angrily, "What are you doing?" Inevitably, one or more of the following things would happen -- they would run to their mother or to their room crying or sulking, they would respond with their own angry retort, they would look at me helplessly, or they would continue what they were doing at a faster pace, this time without joy. And inevitably I would understand, almost immediately, that I had hurt them or offended them by my thoughtless and passionate outburst and I would ask myself, "What are you doing?" and I would feel guilty, inadequate, incompetent -- frustrated and weak, almost ill. Would I ever learn? Why hadn't I thought about what I was doing? My thoughtless"ness" had caused or allowed me to act either uncharacteristically or in ways

which, at the very least, I didn't want to. I'm sure that in today's world people often feel like my children did at these times -- or like me.

The teachers in the Professional Development committee of the Seven Oaks Teachers' Association have been very thoughtful in the sense of considerate. In one sense they have allowed me to comment on what I think we are doing in Seven Oaks, giving me cause to stop and reflect. In another, they have bestowed a great honour on me by inviting me to speak to all of you today -- I am honoured to be asked and honoured to share the podium with Maude Barlow, one of the great Canadian citizens of our time, and with educators like Ben Levin and other members of the Seven Oaks community. Congratulations on bringing those people to spend time with us today and thanks for planning a great day for us to spend together. Likewise, I am humbled because I have been asked to address in forty-five minutes who we are, what we stand for in Seven Oaks, and what we are to do with these awesome responsibilities and possibilities. I simply feel like I'm not up to the task -- I will not pretend to capture the diversity and the richness that exists in and through all of you and your relationships and interactions. And still I feel today like I did the day I was asked to speak -- it is my responsibility to let you know as well as I can how I perceive and understand the world of Seven Oaks and how I represent us to the world beyond. I do not suggest to you that you must either accept my accounts nor my interpretations, nor do I promise that mine will be the same tomorrow even though they have been formulated over 14 years here. What I do is, somewhat tentatively, invite you to join with me in "**thinking**" on "**what we are doing**" and considering it as part of that ongoing dialogue on education, *a democratic dialogue for understanding*, a phrase which represents what "Seven Oaks" means to me. Please take the time to talk to me about my comments if you care to.

My first caveat -- I bring to this task a particular frame of reference which is best expressed by the words of a woman whose thought and work I have come to admire and respect. In my own thoughts and actions today I am trying my best to understand and honour hers. Hannah Arendt, in 1958, wrote in the introduction to a book called *The Human Condition*,

What I propose in the following is a reconsideration of the human condition from the vantage point of our newest experiences and our most recent fears. This, obviously, is a matter of thought and thoughtlessness -- the heedless recklessness or helpless confusion or complacent repetition of "truths" which have become trivial and empty -- seems to me among the outstanding characteristics of our time. What I propose, therefore, is very simple; it is nothing more than to think on what we are doing.

Hannah Arendt was trying to understand the conditions that defined our humanity and what those meant if we truly wished to achieve our potential. She particularly wished to understand our experiences as humans in terms of how we thought about ourselves and the world of humankind. My goal is similar today. To understand her you need to know one peculiarity about the way she wrote -- English was not her first language -- and she often insisted on using words as she understood them -- for example, when I

use the word "thoughtless"ness" as she used it, it means not the usual, inconsideration, but a certain vacuousness, loss of thought, absence of thought or absence of thinking and judgement.

One further caveat -- there are those who would find the kind of thinking I am inviting you to engage in today outdated, shopworn, tiresome, even strange and out of step. I, on the other hand, believe it is always current, relevant, hopeful, and most of all enjoyable to talk about what we are doing as human beings, why we are doing it, what it means about what and who we are and what we want to do next. And, since I see education, in somewhat abstract terms, as simple "preparing us to live our lives better" as human beings, I will use education and schooling as the prism through which to view the human condition today. In doing so I am not telling you how to think. I am asking you to join me in thinking and trying to understand why things are as they are, suggesting a way we can understand them and talk to each other about them.

What are we doing? My way of thinking about what we're doing has mostly to do with our words and expressions, our public languages. I try to "listen in" on public conversations -- the words we use, who uses them, what deeper meanings we attribute to them when we're talking with each other, and when we write to each other, and even the effects they have on people just because of the hidden meanings which some words bring with them. Please let me explain with a familiar example -- we could all think of many others. The public rhetoric on the economy sounds like this:

We are experiencing an evolving global economy unfolding as it will. Companies will need to adjust their operations and people adapt to the realities of the new global workplace.

One reading of this short, familiar paragraph is that the global economy is akin to a supernatural force much like gravity which follows the technological laws of a science of economics within which we as people are only material objects conforming or adapting to a predetermined and predictable order much like the theory of the scientific evolution of the species proposed by Darwin. Only those who adjust or adopt will evolve or survive -- that's just the way things are and we better get used to it. It follows that those who do not accept or object to this march of inevitable historical process we know as progress are either flawed members of the species, enemies of progress or just plain "out of touch" with reality -- they are expendable, interchangeable and replaceable -- we're better off without them!

Another reading holds that this expression of reality is just the recurrent reflection of a prevailing ideology of capitalism, an ideology which is an aberration of human ingenuity and sensibilities identified with mechanistic technologies, oppressive control and bureaucratic manipulation, rampant privatization with its destructive competition and fierce individualism which will eventually lead to anarchy and chaos. The sooner we destroy the system, its machinery and its artifacts, the better off we'll be as people. We are not Luddites, they are Philistines! Ridding the world of these manipulators with their

global agenda will make the world a safer and better place for everyone. We aren't going to take it anymore and whatever we do to fight back is justified.

In both of these readings there is a suggestion that there is not enough room in the world for some people -- in fact, the world would be better off without them -- in the now infamous words of a former Minister of Education -- "the life raft is not big enough for everyone." Some people are superfluous, redundant, just not needed or even obstructions to our ideal systems.

Both, in fact, are ideologies (logics within ideas which are illogical themselves in human terms) and both, in fact, are human creations. The first fails to recognize that neither the economy nor the technological infrastructure which sustains it are supernatural forces; they are human constructions and can, for that reason, be interrupted by human action. The second fails to recognize that in today's pluralistic world it is increasingly difficult to hide ourselves off from others, and doing so threatens our beings the moment we are prepared to "write anyone off" -- the moment we are prepared to deny the right of some to have rights. Both fail to recognize that what is humanly possible is not necessarily desirable and shouldn't necessarily be done and that there is a strong connection between doing what we are able and making people superfluous.

We have choices to make -- does free trade benefit more people than it hurts; is technological advancement, just because it is possible, what we want if it displaces our neighbours and friends; does genetic engineering promise a better life; and when we standardize curricula across Canada, tests across the world, and leave behind those who don't meet these standards, do we make the world a better place -- and what do acceptance of these things do to us? Can we use strategic plans, referenda, edicts, rules, regulations, policies, structures, systems, legislation, collective agreements, and the like to guarantee a place and an identity for everyone in the world? I think not! I believe we must think less recklessly on these things. Our prevailing public talk is like a large fungus covering the prisms of our humanity not allowing in the light humanity needs to develop and flourish -- it trivializes, obscures or denies the facts that real people, children included, are suffering real indignities and, in some cases, threats to their very existence -- or absorbing the light and killing it inside the prism, making us incoherent or silent. And I want to shout with the Mothers of the Disappeared in Argentina, "Silence is the worst opinion." Note, not option, but opinion. Our silence is as deafening as our shouting of the rallying cries of the new economics and their justifications.

Please allow me a few musings on a similar theme as I understand it.

"Our health care system is too costly and not responsive to real needs and too many people are taking advantage of our Medicare system -- we need a multi-tier health system -- that will be better for all of us."

"There are thousands of jobs in the hyper-technology area out there just going begging. If only our young people had these skills they would all have jobs."

"If only Canadian workers were skilled enough Canada's position in the world economy would be secure and all Canadians would be better off. Our union environment makes it impossible to respond the way we should and our governments lack the will to put them in their place. We can't trust the government to provide jobs. Look to your Chamber of Commerce, working for the community."

"The biggest threats to our way of life are our huge governmental debts and annual debt-servicing costs. We governments must pass laws to protect those people who elected us from ourselves."

"Our school system costs too much and the teachers are to blame. Therefore we must discredit them publicly for their greediness and remove their collective bargaining rights and talk to them about recertification and merit pay."

"Our schools aren't doing their jobs. Our students aren't prepared to compete in the global marketplace. Therefore we must cut spending on public education and introduce standards. Oh, and while we're at it we'll introduce new pan-western Canadian curricula at all levels in most subjects at the same time and we'll make people write proposals to receive help from us in implementing those essential curricula and if the proposals aren't good enough they won't get help."

"Only 5% of students need special needs designation -- Bonnie, you can decide who that includes and excludes. If you include Mary you'll have to give up Pablo or Natasha. You must see to it that 95% of your students attain our minimum standards. In fact, it's clear to us that only if we set standards will schools and teachers do what's necessary to achieve this 95%."

My favourites (I can't resist): "I didn't know there was trouble brewing in Headingly"; "Nobody complained to me about the standards tests."; "I can't respond to your questions on Health Care, I've only been the Minister for six weeks."; and, "I'm proud to announce today that public funding for education will experience a zero increase."

For most of us these pieces of conventional wisdom, with their modicums of truth like brief flashes of light, simply do not match our experiences or those of the people we know -- in fact, they appear contradictory, even foolish -- and yet we find ourselves repeating them to each other. What I hear is a lot of dehumanizing talk -- polarity and the need to choose sides; legalisms and moralizing; fault and blame; despair and alienation; spin-doctoring and image-making; conformity, confusion, illogic, irrationality and loss of common sense. It's as if the prism of our economic system absorbs all the little flashes of light each of these contribute and buries them deep within a triangular framework to wander about aimlessly merely wreaking havoc with each other -- their coherence becoming the prism not the bands of joyful colour we expect from light and prisms.

We accept and use (and repeat) worlds publicly which do not emphasize, encourage or invite our humanity -- who we are as people sharing a world with other people. These,

my friends, are 'the heedless, recklessness or helpless confusion or complacent repetition of "truths" which have become "trivial and empty"' that Hannah Arendt was talking about. Allowing ourselves to "thoughtless"ly repeat them or try to deal with them at face value makes us accomplices of recklessness and carelessness. as in the absence of care and caring. First, these statements become no more logical nor reasonable with each repetition, even if that repetition is done at a higher volume or with greater feeling. Secondly, some are an affront to our intelligence because they're just not true. Thirdly, they bear little or no connection to any reality we've experienced -- there is a huge gap between this rhetoric and our experiences. The more rigid a curriculum, for example, the less likely it will connect to real students' understandings. Rigid conformity does not connect to our humanity -- it trivializes it. Rules and structures, timelines and time allotments and competition are not the only "stuff" of our lifeworld -- in fact, they do not define our humanity as well as flexibility, friendship, love, cooperation, commitment, and forgiveness. Finally, and most importantly, statements like these make it impossible for us to talk to each other -- oh, we talk -- but right past each other from our own little territories with their own little doctrines.

When our speech acts have no way of connecting us to those with whom we share the world, the world is no longer shared. When those in power deliberately ensure that we cannot connect with them unless we accept their world views and the accompanying rhetoric, they are guilty of trying to shape the very possibilities we represent as human beings, they are making us up "human" -- destroying the very essence of human "ness" -- spontaneity, individuality, plurality as diversity, and renewal as creativity. When they do it without thinking about the consequences, they are themselves perpetrators and simultaneously victims of thoughtless "ness" and their words merely spread a fungus-like blanket of vacuous darkness and other-worldly abstraction over the world. In the shadow of this covering we are forced back upon ourselves, worrying more about ourselves than others -- isolated, suspicious and unable to hear kindness or give benefit of the doubt. It is thinking, making judgement and choices and taking initiatives, often in the face of overwhelming odds that beats back this darkness. Allow me to illustrate by telling you how the light of thinking through the dark prism of turmoil and confusion creates a rainbow of hope and joy, an array of testimonies to our humanity. I invite you to think of thoughtfulness; a different notion of globalization; a different reaction to current fears and experiences; and optimism and joy rather than despair and powerlessness. Listen in with me to how some people make sense of their lives in this era of turmoil and uncertainty. (In case you wonder, and so it doesn't get in the way of hearing them, I have checked will all these people before using their names. I trust they will allow me a bit of poetic licence.)

What are we doing? "The Seven Oaks Hospital is important to the young people of this community. " A young, clear, and steady voice rang through the halls of the Manitoba Legislature. At the top of the huge staircase stood **Melanie Humiski**, a grade 11 student from Maples Collegiate along with the chair of the Board, the Minister of Health, the leader of the Opposition and a host of other dignitaries. The stairs, the balconies around and above them and the foyer to the front door were filled with people from the Seven Oaks community -- secretaries, library technicians, custodians,

paraprofessionals, bus drivers (who had also donated their time), teachers -- mingling with others from the community -- all adding support to the young woman representing them.

"Why did you do this, Melanie, and how did it make you feel?"

"I did it because I don't think youth are powerless and I do believe that somebody had to speak up for them -- this is their community too, you know. I was scared and proud at the same time. My parents thought I was great." * * * *

"Mr. Wiens, this is CJOB. We'd like you to go on the air to talk about reorganization in West Kildonan. Would you be willing to call us back at 5:40?"

At 5:40, on CJOB via telephone, I met **Ryan Wagner** for the first time, much to my surprise and, I suspect, to his as well. "Mr. Wiens, we have Ryan Wagner, a West Kildonan student, on the other line. He'll be able to hear our conversation and you'll be able to hear him -- you'll both be live on radio."

"Hello Ryan."

"Hello Mr. Wiens."

I proceeded, under questioning, to outline why the superintendents had recommended reorganization in West Kildonan.

"Ryan, that sounds pretty reasonable. What is it you object too?"

"My friends and I felt that our feelings and views weren't being taken into consideration by the superintendents -- the principal and vice-principal listened, but we weren't sure about Mr. Wiens. Also, we are worried that we already don't have all the courses and books we need, and that this is just an unnecessary expense resulting in higher taxes and we'd be forced to adjust to another new school."

"Ryan, why did you agree to go on the air and what was it like?"

"I was nervous, but I've always felt that if I had something to say I should say it, and I thought it had to be done because students weren't being taken seriously enough. I thought it was kind of short, but I felt good. People were surprised that I went on the bus to hand out flyers and that I went on radio -- I surprised myself by getting that involved . . . I learned a lot about how to speak in my experience in Fantasy Theatre. When I do things like this I try not to think about myself first and it makes things easier." * * * *

"The main reason I was speaking at the hearings is because I live with an activist. He nags at my conscience. I'm really a very private person and it's very unlike me to go public like that. But I had a story to tell that was different -- I wanted people to know what it's like for real teachers, in this case one with post-polio syndrome. It is a unique story and brought a different perspective, and even though it was very difficult, I'm glad I did it. Afterward I felt very positive and I got incredible support from everybody."

*"Well, **Diane Minaker**, what was the point? -- Bill 72 passed anyway."*

"You're right, I agree, it didn't really make a difference right now, but it had to be done and I'm glad I did it, and I'm particularly glad because so many people have told me how much they appreciated it -- and that I expressed their feelings as well." * * * *

The woman, a teacher I know well (and who will go unnamed) was sobbing. Wasn't there anything I could do? Jimmy (not his real name), one of her students whom I also knew well as being returned to a reserve up North. It just wasn't fair -- he would have no chance up there and just when he was starting to improve.

"I worked so hard with him."

There was nothing I could do but sympathize. This is the same teacher who half a year earlier had requested that Jimmy stay with her because he didn't misbehave all the time in her class like he did everywhere else, and since she had connected with him she thought he should stay with her longer. Nobody objected -- if she wanted to deal with him she was welcome to him. And they it had to end this way. * * * *

It was the day before Christmas break. **Three students, Steve Medwick** and I were on our way back from Lord Selkirk Regional School. The students, ambassadors of Margaret Park School and Lori MacGregor's friends and classmates, had just spent a few hours being shown the Lord Selkirk complex, getting their nails done in the Cosmetology area and accepting a cheque from the student council for the "Loonies for Lori" campaign.

"Steve, why did we drive all the way out to Selkirk?", I asked hoping he wouldn't ask me why I wanted to go with him.

"The students need to know that they can represent others and they need to know firsthand how and why people help others they don't even know. It was students who raised the money -- its students who should receive it on behalf of Lori. Who better than her friends? They'll know that it feels good to give and receive -- a good lesson for life." * * * *

"There goes that darn phone again! (you'll notice that I tempered the language) What do people think -- that we live at the school. It's July the 5th for crying out loud!

"Good morning, Constable Finney School, **Margaret Brett** speaking."

"Oh hi, Strini. No, no, I'm not busy, you know me."

"You'll need somebody to coordinate Project Love in Seven Oaks? To put together kits for students in Malawi -- me? -- I'll do my best." . . . "What did I get myself into now?"

"Margaret, how many kits went from Seven Oaks?"

"Two thousand and nine hundred, about twice as many as from all of Manitoba last year. And what's more, our teachers are corresponding with teachers in Malawi and our students have made connections with Malawi students -- you wouldn't believe that Marilyn Pressman -- and what a great unit Karen Botting put together."

"Awesome, kind of puts a different light on globalization, doesn't it?" * * * *

"John, I wonder if I could talk to you about something in private for a minute?" *Now what.*

"O.K."

"We in CUPE 731 have been thinking." *Oh no, this is not a good sign -- **Brian Peters** has been thinking again.*

"You know, last year Fred Hooper wore that Santa Claus outfit and it's in pretty bad shape. We were wondering if the Board would chip in if we decided to buy a new suit -- maybe the teachers would too."

(Three months later) "Oh John, we bought two suits because we couldn't fit in all the requests from the schools. Cliff let us make all the arrangements with schools and we had two Santa's from Maintenance. Those guys had a great time and you should have seen the looks on the kids' faces. It made it all worthwhile. I guess I can send you the bills now."

"Brian, what made you think of this? I know it was your idea."

"Well, you should have seen those kids with Freddy and you'd know." * * * *

"He's got to come out of there sometime", **Rosanne Joseph** said to her two friends, **Debra Diubaldo** and **Karen Romanoff** outside the men's washroom at the Holiday Inn South. The door opened slowly. A head appeared attached to a slim body in a light grey suit.

"Mr. Stefanson, we're parents from Seven Oaks and we're wondering if we could meet with you sometime. Linda McIntosh told us that any more funding was out of her hands so we'd like to meet with you to talk about our concerns with someone who can do something about it?"

"Excuse me, ladies, can I talk to you later? -- I have to go in for the presentation now."

What were these three doing at the Pre-budget consultations anyway? How did they get in here? Wasn't this an invitational affair? Yes, it was and as unlikely as it might seem they had garnered an invitation and opened the door for a January 15th, 1997 meeting with the Minister of Finance. At that meeting Rosanne explained her motivation for her forthrightness and persistence.

"Mr. Minister, we're concerned about our children's future. We think the school division is doing its part, but we think our kids are being shortchanged by the way Seven Oaks schools are funded. I'm afraid, Mr. Stefanson. My kids are still young and the resources available to them have decreased alarmingly in the last three years . . . and we wonder whether the Minister and this government care about our kids." * * * *

"We are not the enemy, Madam Minister. We are elected in our community to represent the community -- and to do the reasonable bidding of the government in our community -- in the best way that we know how" is the way **Ben Zaidman**, chair of the Board, opened his comments at the Legislative hearings, having already been at hearings about three items in the past three weeks. He went on.

"Local bargaining is an open exchange of ideas . . . it is not unusual that at the negotiating table we have significant differences of opinion about community capabilities and expectations . . . but it is a forum for mutual exchange."

. . . "The priority of parent is uninterrupted, safe, quality education and interrelationships with teachers based on good will."

. . . "If government perceives that there is an economic crisis, that fact does not prove that teachers are paid too much or that teachers are not competent to teach. The dissatisfaction of government, MTS and MAST is with outcomes, not the process and repeated cuts in government budgets add to the dissatisfaction."

. . . "Arbitrariness and merit systems which haven't worked anywhere detract from teacher."

. . . "If Government wishes to restrict bargaining it should do so and accept the political consequences of doing so."

(Afterward) "It feels pretty futile, but it has to be done -- not only do I get the sense that they aren't listening, they don't understand what they're doing -- so now it's up to us to do our best at home." * * * *

"Mr. Wiens, I want to talk to you about provincial testing. You're the only division who didn't take part in the Grade 3 Mathematics pilot. Why?"

"It's quite simple really - we believe it's largely a waste of time and the province's resources. Our teachers already know which parts of the curriculum children have difficulty with and which children have or are likely to have difficulty with which parts and we would rather like teachers to use their time and energy thinking about and trying to help their students than preparing them for tests and writing tests. We also know which schools are likely to score higher if you aggregate test results and quite frankly, these results are no indication of how well schools are teaching the curriculum. Furthermore, we think it's pure fiction when someone tries to connect eight-year-old children's average test results to the performance of the Canadian economy in the world. More importantly, however, are the consequences for children, teachers and the teaching-learning relationships -- we are afraid that it's too easy to write kids and teachers off by an arbitrary and unsubstantiated measurement of their performances and to somehow relate that to their competencies and potential. It's a huge waste of our resources and of teaching and learning time. It's also easy to forget that people have intrinsic worth as well as instrumental worth. What they bring to the world of people by their sheer uniqueness and variety enriches all of our lives, probably more than how useful they are to someone else for the purposes of making money. Any other questions?"

"Uh -- No -- thanks, Mr. Wiens, could we send someone over to take your picture?"

. . . The story appeared in the Free Press the next day.

Last Board meeting I was able to report to the Board that virtually every Division in the city and many in rural areas have written to the Government complaining about how the supposed pilot test results have been used publicly. They note the betrayal they feel about commitments that this test was to be a trial run only for purposes of testing Manitoba Education's testing procedures. * * * *

These are ten brief accounts, ten "little islands of freedom" -- little break-away republics from mainstream thought, seen through my eyes, of things we are doing in Seven Oaks. For me they have common themes. I could have chosen sadder, more hurtful stories, but in my view such stories have less important things to teach us about the possibilities of humankind, humanity, schooling and education than do these. I could have chosen examples of where the Division initiated program, defended schools and teachers and stood in opposition to illogic and the way of governmental arbitrariness -- though no less important, perhaps they are often more public and better known. However, more importantly, I could have chosen many others from the vast storehouse-treasury that defines the lives and events of the people in Seven Oaks -- I invite you to do that for

yourself -- let me start you off with a few -- Maples Unity committee, Garden City "Free the Children" campaign, high school researchers, integrated curriculum groups, the stories in the last Oak Leaf, R.F. Morrison parent fund raising, Leila North student-leds, Victory's "I Love to Read" project, West St. Paul Terry Fox Run and many more.

Who are the people in these stories? Ordinary real people like you and me -- we can put a face to them, we meet them in the community club, in Garden City Shopping Centre, perhaps in the Bay downtown, we pass them on the street -- they are Seven Oaks and they represent Seven Oaks - again just like you and me. We might well ask -- what is their role in the global economy? Do they have the skills to compete for jobs in the world marketplace? Do they "surf the net" for new information? And we could ask - do their families love them? Do they have friends? What would their classes or our schools be like without them? Wouldn't Seven Oaks be worse off without them? What might they want from life? How could we make their lives and ours better and more fulfilling? Or we could ask -- what made them act as they did in the face of their very real fears, anxieties and experiences -- why did they quietly ignore subject time allotments, modify curricula, debate ad nauseum the consequences of assigning marks to young students, spend extra "voluntary" with student, stay up until the wee hours of the morning to correct a test, plan until the lesson on genetics was perfect, network computers at the school, lie awake at night worrying about a pregnant student, volunteer to supervise special children after hours? The list goes on! What are we doing when we do these things? We are real human being living our real humanity and rejoicing in its possibilities in the face of improbabilities.

What are we doing?

What have I tried to tell you today?

In all of the human stories I have recounted, and in all the ones you thought of, people are affirming themselves and others as human beings with the potential to act in and into the world on behalf of others and themselves -- they said we are not superfluous and neither is anyone else and we will stand in the ways of systems and structures that try to make them so. They affirm our human ability and freedom to interrupt and penetrate the bounds of the absorbing prism through **thinking** about what we are capable of as humans, and not accepting and believing the energy sucking, mind and soul numbing versions of humanity perpetrated by our economic systems world with its winners and losers, rights for some and not for others, people who don't belong, people who are resources for the use of others, to which people all look alike or are invisible -- its cries for adaptation and adjustment and subjugation to a force beyond the control of people. No, the people I talked about are people who can say, STOP, the world is not evolving as it should -- there are other ways, there is not just one way -- these things being offered us as realities were created by people and can be shaped into more humane forms by people's interventions. They have faith in and hope for human action.

These are the kinds of people some of our students are and they are the kinds of people we want our students to become, even if it means that they challenge our ways

of thinking and our ways of living. We like to think they can become thoughtful, caring human beings by following us, the adults in their worlds. We in Seven Oaks want our students to accept that there is an irresistible connection between other peoples of our community and the world and ourselves -- human, not technological nor economic bonds, which binds our fortunes to that of others in the world. We want our students to speak the language of co-responsibility and this language to give them spontaneous courage, joy and hope (à la Rosanne Joseph, for example). We want our students to have a place, and identify, a community and communities where they have a place and identity. We want them to bring differences and uniqueness to our conversations -- so our world is alive and interactive -- so that we have something to talk about to each other. We want them to speak the languages of freedom as easily as the language of necessity. We want to celebrate that they were born into the world and that each of them provides us with renewed hope that the world can become a better place.

For the goal of totalizing ideologies, the ideologies of one choice and one right way is to destroy the spontaneity of our humanity, to transform human beings into a species that reacts automatically to commands. Every totalitarian system in the history of the world has feared education, thinking and understanding -- and also the people involved in promoting those activities. Attacks on teachers and intellectuals and their work is one of the first signs that freedom is at risk. When we're at our best in Seven Oaks, totalizing conditions do not prevail -- school staffs can make their own decisions and carry them to their community and vice versa; teachers, students and parents can have new ideas thoroughly considered all within the security and comfort of a supportive divisional and community environment. The conditions of human freedom exist -- the freedom to act, to initiate, to begin spontaneously something new to be a distinctive human being among a plurality of human beings, and to have a perspective and place in a common world.

A precondition to freedom is guarding the freedom of others, particularly preserving its preconditions for our children. That, my friends, is our real challenge today -- to uphold and safeguard "freedom" for our children -- we can leave them no greater legacy. Freedom is not represented entirely, and certainly not adequately by the global economic agenda of capital acquisition. The fact is that those whose first priority is to accumulate money don't need most of us to help them like they did in the past -- they can easily do it without most of us. Thus, the agenda must change to one of distribution, no acquisition, if we are to realize worth and legitimacy. Freedom comes from ensuring that nobody becomes superfluous in our world and from thinking deeply and conscientiously about what we're doing and basing our thinking on the lives of real people, extending to others the privileges and rights we wish to claim for ourselves.

We like to believe in Seven Oaks that not all good things happen serendipitously or because of our intuitive goodness (although we welcome those as well). We like to believe good things happen because we think carefully, deeply and respectfully together about important things -- something we call democratic dialogue for understanding. We also believe that if we understand better what it is we want to achieve, the greater the likelihood we will achieve it -- and we believe that, if we grow familiar with our legitimate

wants we will find new and ingenious ways to achieve them. In education this means respecting childhood and not forgetting children, their circumstances and their potential for renewing our world. It means thinking and challenging publicly, as we are able to responsibly, "beyond the banisters" of edicts, deadlines, draconian legislation, rigid curricula and standards, instrumental outcomes, stultifying technologies and the like, and acting accordingly to help our children and each other co-author our living life stories. I encourage and challenge each and every one of you to claim that legacy of human freedom for children -- a freedom that is celebrated and valued in Seven Oaks. In the words of Hannah Arendt, embellished by my words,

"Education is the point at which we decide *through thinking and judging* whether we love the world *of people* enough to assume *co-responsibility* for it . . . And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough . . . to prepare them in advance *through our actions* for the task of renewing a common world *where everyone has place and worth and together we are better.*"

A RATIONALE FOR USING A RESTITUTION PROGRAM IN SCHOOL

Valerie Williamson

The ultimate self-discipline is becoming the person who is responsible, self-controlled and who self-evaluates and makes restitution. In the penal system, restitution is the act of making good any loss, injury or damage, but in the educational system, restitution is used to describe a technique which stresses becoming the person one wants to be. Restitution, therefore, is a word used "to describe self-discipline based on internal motivation" (Gossen, 1995, p. 26). Diane Gossen has based her technique, restitution, on reality therapy which helps "people become self-directed, self-disciplined and self-healing" (page 26). This method along with Dr. Glasser's reality therapy stresses two things: stay out of the negative and don't focus on the past; to achieve self-discipline one must ask and answer the question, what are you going to do to make it better for yourself?

Restitution is not behaving to please others or to make sure one does not have unpleasant consequences. According to Glasser's control theory, everyone is internally motivated and because of this motivation, a behaviour is chosen to match the picture that one wants to present. Each person has a picture of what she wants to be in the

world and this world picture is what she strives to obtain of herself. Each world picture is unique as each of us is unique. Diane Gossen believes that each person is a unique individual and his/her job in life is to work toward or invent that uniqueness. "Maslow called this self-actualizing. Erikson calls it integrity. Glasser calls it fulfilling genetic potential to meet one's need" (page 26).

What is now being done in the school system is not working. Some students are disruptive, some students are dropping out and jails are overflowing. Restitution is a technique that does not force people to behave, but it creates conditions so that the students and inmates want to be with the rest of society and to behave because that is their picture of themselves in the world.

The major focus on Diane Gossen's restitution is on restoring the self. The person who makes the mistake must restore himself and become again the person he wants to be. Although victim restitution is important, self-reparation is the key to restitution. Restitution is challenging for teachers, administrators and students. It is a very creative process and sometimes reparations is not always evident. Gossen describes restitution as a simple practice that "embodies the human propensity for equity" (page 14). The discipline in this technique is based on the belief of the family, of the school and of the community working together as caring, learning and safe participants. The students become stronger in a united front with parents, schools and community.

Restoring the self helps the inner healing or restoring the picture of oneself in his world picture and, in turn, this creates the willingness of that person to make amends which is the restitution to the victim. Restoring the self includes a self-evaluation of the person's beliefs and his world picture of himself. This self-evaluation leads to doing the right thing.

W. Glasser in his book *Control Theory* (1984) states, "We are not controlled by external events, difficult as they may be. We are motivated completely by forces inside ourselves, and all of our behaviour is our attempt to control our lives" (XIII). As not all students have had the chance to develop socially acceptable beliefs, teachers, administrators and family must provide the opportunity for re-education. The re-education includes focusing on who the person is, and then on what the person does. Unless restitution or making it right comes from within the person, the person is not healing and will more than likely repeat the offence.

There are many ways to set up a restitution program. Diane Gossen's program includes establishing with each group of students a set of beliefs which all students can agree. Family beliefs or values are integrated and this integration strengthens the connection with the family and the community. From this set of beliefs, each student would work out how he could become the best person he could be, as well as being part of the best class that he and his classmates could be. This set of beliefs should be extended to the way the class or the individuals function in the school and in the community. The students then sign a contract of beliefs and each are given a copy. Gossen (1995)

states, "Working on beliefs at the classroom level is essential to maintaining a sound base for restitution (page 9).

The next step in the restitution process is the introduction of the basic needs of love, power, fun and freedom. "Reality therapy teaches us that we have five basic needs to meet: *Love, Power, Freedom, Fun and Survival* (page 27). The students may need time to identify the need to which they are reacting. Repetition of the need-identifying concept is always necessary unless this concept has been introduced in earlier grades. Time has to be spent to understand the amount of choice students have in their lives and that choice is why students behave the way they do. Restitution, in this sense, is healing and strengthening yourself by fixing a mistake.

The five types of control are usually introduced at this point. The punisher, the guilter and buddy are mentioned, but the monitor and the manager are stressed. "The conundrum of control theory is you can't control another person, you can only control yourself" (page 17). Adults need to find their method of control and learn to create the conditions for promoting self-discipline. Some schools have developed lessons on the values and beliefs to help students become completely in control of their restitution plan. Still others have stabilized the identity that all people make mistakes. Misbehaviours are then validated by asking what could they have done worse, and then seeking the insights or solutions to the misbehaviour. "No behaviour is a misbehaviour because all behaviour is purposeful. Each of our behaviours is generated to control a want perception we have created" (Gossen, 1996, p. 10).

The entire restitution process is based on questions rather than statements:

What do I want?

What am I doing to get what I want?

Is my behaviour getting me what I want?

Do you want to change?

What does this change look like, sound like?

These are all questions which could be asked.

E. Perry Good in her book, *In Pursuit of Happiness* uses these questions because she believes that if we meet our basic needs, we will be happy, and if we do not, we are not happy. She also says that restitution sounds simple, but it really is not so simple to do. A more direct school approach would be questions like:

Do you believe you made a mistake?

Is it okay to make a mistake?

What could you have done that would have been worse?

Can you think of a way to fix the situation?

Do you need help?

What is your plan?

If you follow this plan will you be the kind of person you want to be?

Are you the kind of person that means what they say?

This restitution approach teaches youth self-discipline rather than trying to control them through consequences and rewards. Alfie Kohn in his book *Punished by Rewards* states, "My love of learning has been kicked out of me by well-meaning people who used bribes and threats to get me to do my school work. Now all I want to know is whether I have to do it and what will you give me if I do?"

Thomas Sergiovanni takes it one step further in his book *Building Community* which states adults have a responsibility and that: "It is their responsibility to show students how these values and skills can lead to the development of standards and codes for living together. It is their responsibility to teach students the obligations of citizenship to the common good. And it is their responsibility to teach the importance of community members caring for each other" (p. 123-124). Dr. Martin Seligman in his book *Learned Optimism* says people can choose not to dispute or to dispute. Allowing the student to fix or find a solution for his mistake gives him freedom, one of the basic needs. Freedom of choice brings more responsibility and, therefore, more strength to the student. "Learning optimism does not erode your sense of values or your judgement. Rather it frees you to use a tool to better achieve the goals you set" (p. 292).

Judy Anderson talks about the social contract and reinforces what Diane Gossen states about restitution and what Dr. Seligman says about learned optimism. "A social contract is a picture that a group shares about how they want to treat each other based on community held beliefs and values" (Anderson, p. 9). Restitution is particularly effective with a multicultural group where many personal values are different. "The shared picture of the group emerges from each person's personal picture through a process of consensus which celebrates diversity and views conflict as positive" (p. 9). Restitution uses the process of establishing a social contract to establish ownership, to show commonality between beliefs of families, school and community as well as building consensus strategies. Once the students have ownership, they have the responsibility, and it is easy to move from being a monitor asking, "What's the rule, what's the consequence, what did you do and what happens now?" to being a manager. True restitution starts at this level with these questions: What do we believe, do you believe it, if you believe it, do you want to fix it, and if you fix it, what does it say about you? If the students have bought into the social contract then it must be redone.

Dr. Glasser's (1994) control theory states that all behaviour is purposeful and each behaviour is an attempt to obtain the world picture. Students choose their behaviour in an attempt to obtain their world picture of themselves. "Nothing we do is caused by what happens outside of us . . . Because we are alive, we can choose whether or not to answer the phone, depending on whether or not it fulfils a current goal" (p. 1 - 2). Restitution is a program used to develop people who are self-managed and not authority-directed. They are also self-evaluating and, therefore, self-strengthening. Self-evaluating in restitution requires that the highest level of perception be involved because they are establishing the positive pictures of themselves in their quality world. Dr. Glasser's theory helps us with self-evaluation by asking questions like: Does your behaviour have a reasonable chance of getting you what you want now and in the future? By self-evaluating the students take control over their behaviour, and also find solutions rather than being the problem. Dr. Glasser (1990) states, "Unhappy people . . . mostly evaluate the behaviour of others and spend their time criticizing, complaining and judging in an attempt to coerce them into 'improving' what they do. Happy people evaluate their own behaviour and constantly attempt to improve what they do" (p. 180).

People behave for many reasons. James Q. Wilson in his book, *The Moral Sense* says that people behave to avoid pain, for respect from others, and for respect from self. Restitution strives for the third reason which is respect for self. Restoring the self after a mistake by restituting and self-evaluating leads to respect of self and reaching the world picture of oneself. E. Perry Good says you have built-in physiological and emotional signals which tell you how and what you are doing is working for you (p. 29).

Rebalancing or refocusing is an attempt to obtain respect both from oneself and others. Self-evaluation can be in terms of what one is doing or it can be in terms of what a person wants, and possibly redefining one's goals. By taking responsibility for one's behaviour to others, the person is telling people that he is not the person he wants to be and this self-evaluating leads to respect from others as well as to what will be different the next time. Restitution stresses the taking of responsibility for one's actions and, therefore, doing public self-evaluation so that one learns from his mistakes. The self-evaluation in restitution includes the impact on others as well as being cultural and based on a particular time and place.

Restitution, particularly in school, leads to a stronger relationship between the students and the teachers and administrators. The students own their own problems and, therefore, less discipline is involved. Restitution, however, is time consuming and it takes a lot of effort from both the students and the teachers. "Restitution is time-consuming and takes effort. But in the long run the attempt at restitution is better than giving consequences. It is better for relationships and better for the students' self-esteem" (p. 124). The inner healing or the restoring of the self creates the willingness of the student to make amends which results in making restitution to the victim. The student must examine his beliefs and the social contract and do the right thing. Re-educating the student about shared beliefs and socially acceptable beliefs may have to be done over and over until the student accepts the beliefs as his own and then takes responsibility for his actions.

Restitution deals with the inner person first before it deals with what the person has done. James Wilson states, "We have a moral sense, most people instinctively rely on it even if intellectuals deny it . . . But saying that a moral sense exists is the same thing as saying that humans, by their nature, are potentially good" (p. 12). Restitution through the belief system is congruent with Wilson's statement. The students have a world picture of themselves and strive toward it. By accepting responsibility for their behaviours and, therefore, improving them, making them closer to their world picture, they show their moral sense.

Society now wants students who are self-directed learners, skilled at acquiring information, problem solvers, team players, self-disciplined workers and negotiators. Students who know how to conform, apologize and how to do time are not going to succeed in the changing world. Restitution is a method in which children are learning to take control of their own lives by being responsible for their actions and thoughts. Through restitution the students learn to be problem solvers, negotiators, team players and they are continually learning to be self-directed and self-disciplined. The students learn that apologizing is not as effective as problem solving so that the behaviour does not occur again. The students gain control over themselves. They gain insight and a way to attain the pictures they have in their heads of the way they want things to be as well as the way that they want to be. These pictures reflect the values that one holds, therefore, the change that occurs through restitution is an improvement or a step closer to the world picture.

This process is an ongoing self-reparation and will become automatic through time. The change of emphasis from behaving to please others or to avoid pain to becoming the person one wants to be gives power or control back to the individual. Because people are internally motivated, they choose their behaviour to match their picture of the way they want to be. Since each of us is unique, each person has his own unique picture of self. Meeting the needs of *love, power, freedom, fun and survival* and attaining the picture one wants others to see may cause some discomfort, but becomes self-strengthening through the restitution process.

Restitution is not always done through mistakes, but it is about becoming what you want to be. Students use their belief system or social contract to self-evaluate and, therefore, prevent mistakes. Restitution provides a creative way for students to think about their values in the context of what they are doing. "Restitution shows students there are ways of solving problems and righting wrongs that help us feel better about ourselves not worse" (p. 124). Restitution will not replace the present framework of discipline immediately like eliminating all rules and consequences because students and the adults cannot change so quickly.

The growing pains of restitution may take years. Rules and consequences must be in place to fall back on in case the student is not ready to start self-discipline. In a workshop given by Diane Gossen in 1995 she stated, "I do not advocate giving up rules and consequences. These limits must be kept in place to fall back on for those children not ready to practice self-discipline". The social contract is the base for restitution.

Teachers and students must work on an acceptable belief contract or restitution will not be able to take place. Even though some individual beliefs may differ, the values of cooperation, respect for self, others and property, and quality work are universal and can be a starting point. The time element is also important. Making plans with the whole class so that everyone has practice is an effective way to cut down on the time spent with each individual problem.

Students cannot be forced to make restitution as it becomes a consequence and is not coming from within. There is, therefore, no growth or advancement for the offender. Until a student is ready to make restitution, consequences should be used. When the student is ready to develop his self-discipline, he is ready to start restitution. The focus of restitution is getting students to take responsibility and to strengthen themselves. Controlling or coercive behaviours do not develop self-discipline. People make mistakes and, if restitution is freely made, you start to become the person you want to be. Successful restitution strengthens the person and this benefits the individual as well as society. Time and practice are needed if restitution is going to work, but it will be a great benefit to all. Restitution is an excellent way to encourage students to understand the needs behind their behaviour, to fix their mistakes, to learn from their mistakes, to make amends, to figure out a better way, and to become the person they want to be.

References

- Anderson, Judy (1996). *Social Contract: What We Believe*, Canada: Chilsom Consultants Ltd.
- Glasser, Wm. M.D. (1984). *Control Theory*, New York: Harper & Row.
- Glasser, Wm. M.D. (1990). *The Quality School*, New York: Harper & Row.
- Good, E. Perry (1987). *In Pursuit of Happiness*, Chapel Hill: New View Publications.
- Gossen, Diane (1995). *The Person I Want to Be - Restitution Self-Discipline*, Chapel Hill: New View Publications.
- Gossen, Diane (1996). *Restitution Triangle*, Saskatoon: Chilsom Consultants Ltd.
- Kohn, Alfie (1993), *Punished by Reward*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Seligman, Dr. Martin E.P. (1991). *Learned Optimism*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Sergiovanni, Thomas (1994). *Building Community*, San Francisco: Josey-Bass.
- Wilson, James (1993). *The Moral Sense*, New York: MacMillan, Inc.