

Extracts from "Transmitting Spirit Life in the Classroom" by Mark & Patti Virker, & Parker Palmer

The Living Curriculum in Contemporary Education

1. The focus of the conventional classroom is always outward, on nature, on someone else's vision of reality. The reality inside the classroom, inside the teacher and inside the students, is regarded as irrelevant.
2. The heart of the knower is never held up for inspection. The ideal of objectivism is that the knower is a blank slate receiving the unadulterated imprint of whatever facts are floating around.
3. The gathered group of students is not a true community. Actually, through the competition of grading, it becomes anti-community.
4. Students become manipulators rather than co-creators. They are schooled to be detached spectators of a world "out there".

Why is conventional educational style maintained?

1. It gives the teacher power and security.
2. It gives students security. They receive their learning boxed and tied and are not called into a creative role. Objectivist education is a strategy for the avoiding of our own conversion. If we keep reality "out there" we can avoid for a while the truth that lays a claim of community on our individual and collective lives.

The Greek View of Knowledge

- Detached knowledge
- Speculative interest

The Hebrew View of Knowledge

- Personal encounter
- Response to God's Revelation

Objectivism and Traditional Teaching Style

1. The classroom revolves around the teacher.
2. The teacher and authors report on "reality" to the students.
3. The student's task is to memorize these reports so that they can repeat them in exams.
4. The classroom is not a place for original inquiry but for imitation of authority. It's not a place for collaboration, but for competition between learners.

To teach is to create a space in which obedience to truth is practiced.

- Creating openness
- Creating boundaries
- Creating hospitality

Two ways to seek out truth

- Objective only: the mind establishes truth from the Word.
- Objective and subjective flowing together: truth is discerned as the mind and the heart seek the Word while listening to the Holy Spirit, the counsel of others and the experience of life.

Let us not limit truth to the limitations of one single mind.

What is Truth?

1. Truth is personal. ("I am the Truth." John 14:6)
2. Truth is communal. ("In the multitude of counselors there is safety." Prov. 11:14)
3. Truth calls to us. ("When He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth.." John 16:13)
4. Truth calls us to obedience. ("I have walked in Thy truth." Psalm 26:3)
5. Truth may be discovered in God's word. ("Thy Law is truth." Psalm 119:142)

Seeing with both eyes

The eye of the mind:

1. Sees fact and reason
2. Sees a cold and mechanical world.
3. Draws upon outer senses.

The eye of the heart:

1. Uses intuition and imagination
2. Flourishes in love and community
3. Draws upon inner senses

Maturity and wholeness require seeing with vision, with clarity, seeing all of reality, having both eyes wide open.

Variables in the learning process

To be an effective conveyer of prophetic truth in the classroom, you will need to be sensitive to the presence and integration of the following variables among the gathered community.

1. Life of the teacher

- Ability to hear from God
- Personal wholeness (spirit, soul and body)
- Wholeness in interpersonal relationships
- Brokenness – the ability to serve the needs of others rather than his/her own
- Ability to live out the principles being taught within the course
- Gifted by God with the ministry gift of teaching
- Free to allow hi/her motive gift to flow-through his/her teaching
- Understanding of teaching principles
- A teachable spirit

2. Pre-class preparation

- Prepare yourself academically
- Get your mind, will and emotions focussed
- Become focussed on and immersed in seeing clearly what God wants to say in the upcoming class. Picture the flow of activities throughout the session. Be certain that every activity contributes to the central theme of the session.
- Pray for each student

1. Lives of the student

- Ability to hear form God
- Teachable spirit
- Personal wholeness
- Wholeness in interpersonal relationships
- Willingness to experience the principles being espoused withing the classroom setting.

3. The Subject: course content & texts

- Academically sound
- Spiritually transforming
- Simple in its ability to communicate
- Contemporary
- Relevant

4. The Voice of God

- Provide journaling experiences (where one records what he/she senses God is speaking) within the classroom setting
- Provide avenues of testing to make sure the journaling is from God,)i.e. small – large group sharing)
- Provide avenues of training on how to hear the voice of God

Hearing the voice of God

"But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him." (1 Corinthians 6:17)

- Inner ear – the voice of God
- Inner eye – the sight of God
- Inner mind – the mind of God
- Inner will – the will of God
- Inner emotions – the feeling of God