

THE ART TEACHING IN THE 21ST CENTURY: USING A HOLISTIC PEDAGOGY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS REGARDLESS OF RACE, COLOR, OR CREED

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ABSTRACT

It is truly unfortunate and completely unjust, but in America, a country that has gained its substantive strength from its diverse population, we continue to perpetuate racism through the *one-size-fits-all* cognitive model that serves as the foundation of the American education system. The Supreme Court case of *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 were suppose to end segregation in schools and other venues in our American (diverse) society. But, if the truth be told, these major historical events have done very little to eliminate segregation, separation, and prejudice in the hearts and minds of many American citizens because of the *institutionalized* racism that is built into and buried within the confines of the American education system. It is this author's belief that *racism* is born out of the quest for power, and the quest to sustain power long-term. Because of the real desire to maintain total power, the *power-brokers* of America have chosen to ignore the large percentage of Americans (mostly minorities) who possess an *affective frame of reference* which could benefit greatly from the tenets of the Affective Learning Domain. This domain goes to great extents to grow and develop the emotional state and/or spirits of human beings, whereas, the historical and current educational model has as its foundation Bloom's Taxonomy which is based primarily on the tenets of the Cognitive Learning Domain. This domain serves to address the learning strengths of those individuals who are primarily among this nation's *majority* population. In the 21st century, situations and circumstances mandate that we as educational practitioners commit to banding together to create balance in both curriculum and instruction (*through new and/or different teacher training methods*) if we are to avoid the eminent danger that is seen approaching in the rear view mirror.

More than a few researchers have concluded that public school systems in America are in crisis. Others have concluded that it is not so much our schools that are in a crisis state, but rather, our youth. They are failing in schools for reasons that we continue to be reluctant to discuss openly (Pickering, 1996). Pickering, a concerned citizen who resides in Houston, Texas, stated: “There is nothing bogus about the statistics of young people becoming increasingly violent as they face daily the problems of poverty, promiscuity, drugs and physical, sexual and emotional abuse. These children fill classrooms across the country. I=am appalled that we can obsess over test scores while a growing majority of our youth languish.” According to Mickelson (1996), Children at Risk, a nonprofit child advocacy organization, has recently concluded that we do not have a consistent, strong and broad-based commitment to our children. We are not investing enough in them, and what we are investing is not being targeted as effectively as it might be. The organization went on to state that excuses of the past are unacceptable, excuses such as “we care, but we don't know what to do; we care, but there's not enough money; we care, but there are more compelling issues to deal with first.” The uncertainty of what may work is not an excuse to do nothing. In other arenas, like medicine, we continue to expend research dollars to find out what does work (Mickelson, 1996).

Holistic education has as its aim to nurture human growth and development for the purpose of accomplishing five (5) learning goals. They are as follows:

1. **Develop Common Sense** (teaching and/or orienting students how to manage the different ASPECTS of their life before their 13th birthday).
2. **Develop Charitable Nature** (teaching/demonstrating to students how to put LOVE in action).
3. **Develop Intelligence** (teaching students how to appropriately develop critical thinking skills through the use of both inductive and deductive REASONING).
4. **Develop Character** (teaching students how to overcome bad and/or evil with GOODNESS).
5. **Inspire All To Strive For Excellence** (teaching students how to connect good with better, and better with BEST).

Because of a lack of balance in both curriculum and instruction, many of the factors that impact student motivation are largely ignored by the current (cognitive) educational model, and in particular, how the model and its practitioners FAIL to train teachers in a manner that will cause them to not be reluctant to step out of their “*comfort zones*” for the purpose of meeting each student on his/her level and moving them systematical through the learning process. The four (4) categorical factors that impact human motivation are as follows:

1. **Biological Factors** - food, water, sex, sleep, etc.

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2. **Emotional Factors** - panic, fear, love, hate, joy, despair, anger, etc.
 3. **Cognitive Factors** - knowledge, perceptions, myths, stereotypes, etc.
 4. **Social Factors** - reactions, and/or inactions associated with one's family, neighbor, and/or community.

Teachers in the 21st century must be trained in a manner that allows them to convey a message for learning, and learning's purpose to all students. This message should be similar to the following:

Learn₁ to do good, to be just and fair; help the poor, the fatherless, and the single parents. Come and let us talk it over! No matter how deep the emotional hurt and pain, I can heal you and make you well. Even if you have been neglected or made to feel inferior and unimportant, I can make you strong and filled with self-confidence. If you will only let me help you; if you will only be obedient and patient, and follow instructions, then I will make you a champion!

But if you keep running from the spirit of TRUTH (*where your real power is located*) and refusing to **LISTEN**₂ (*the first duty of love*), you will be destroyed by the **Enemies of Hope**: Fear; Anger; Self-Hatred, Alcohol; Tobacco; Drugs; Sexual Promiscuity; and Gambling.

1 Learning is an **absolute**—all situations provide an opportunity to learn: 1) *what to do*; and 2) *what not to do*.

2 The **skill** that is most fundamental to learning on any level is **listening**. The **non-practice** of listening is at the root of ineffective **communication**. Ineffective communication is the *cancer* that destroys relationships on any level.

I, **TRUTH**₃, have spoken.

3 Truth, a spirit that dwells in us, is the #1 universal source of power. The spirit of **truth** and the spirit of **love** (the #2 universal source of power) connect us to LIFE. The spirit of **lies** and the spirit of **hate** (the inverse of truth and love) connect us to DEATH.

In the 21st century, teachers must be trained to accept and embrace teaching as a calling. This call to teacher makes teachers more than just teachers, but mentors who demonstrate to students how to conduct themselves in and outside the classroom. This CALL to teach is summarized in the passage that follows:

*To **TEACH** the **TRUTH** urgently at all times, whenever you get the chance, in season and out, when it is convenient and when it is not. Correct and reprimand the students when they need it, encourage them to do right, and at **ALL** times, feed them **PATIENTLY** with the word that is truth.*

*For there is going to come a time when students won't **LISTEN** to the truth, but will go around looking for teachers who will tell them just what they want to hear. They won't listen to what the book of knowledge and love (which gives birth to **UNDERSTANDING**) says, but will joyfully follow their own misguided ideas.*

***STAND** (with sternness and steadfastness), and don't be afraid of persecution [**Fear Not**]. Bring others to the **PLACE** of righteousness, peace, and joy. Leave nothing undone that you ought to do.*

As an educational practitioner in the 21st century, I have developed five (5) strands for achieving long-term student success in the classroom and in their future adult life. These strands are as follows:

1] **DISCIPLINE** - Developing Management Skills

- Manage Thought* - *teaching how to develop mental stability - 40% of power located here*
- Manage Feelings* - *teaching how to develop emotional stability - 60% of power located here*
- Manage Time - *teaching how to master 4 major areas of a 24-hour day: sleep/rest time; school time; study time; social activities time*
- Manage Diet - *teaching the importance of learning to love fruits, nuts, vegetables, and water*
- Manage Money - *teaching the long-term benefits of saving--the pathway to investing, which is the pathway to financial freedom*

* Teach learners HOW TO construct a value system.

Note: Teaching discipline in this manner will help learners to develop common sense by their 13th birthday. All learners **MUST** understand that *self-discipline* is the foundation to greatness.

2] **CITIZENSHIP** - Understanding the Pathway from Childhood to Responsible Adulthood B **male** is standard-bearer for truth; **female** for love

- Obedience vs. Disobedience - *teaching how all actions have consequences B good or bad*
- Responsibility
 - self - *teaching personal responsibility--esteem; happiness; growth; fulfillment*
 - family - *teaching roles and responsibilities including: providing for; protecting; and nurturing*
 - community - *teaching how to become a leader who truly makes a difference utilizing the 5 attributes of a great leader: vision; creativity; initiative; courage; and humility*
- Accountability
 - words - *teaching the impact (harmful or helpful) of what you say and how you say it*
 - actions - *teaching the impact (harmful or helpful) of what you do and how you do it*
- Character vs. Culture (*prioritizing*) - *teaching how to value content of character over color of skin or socio-economic class*
- Leadership Roles and Duties - *teaching how to embrace and connect the six duties of a 21st century leader: instruct (the unknowledgeable); minister (the emotionally hurting); counsel (the misguided); coach (the unmotivated); listen (to the cries of the disenfranchised); and model (for those who dare to be great)*

3] **STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT** - Setting and Achieving Academic Goals

- Vision and Prosperity - *teaching how to make and sustain a quality life B without a vision the people perish; with a vision the people prosper*
- Expectations and Results Correlation - *teaching how expecting and planning to win impacts preparation, which invariably impacts performance*
- Standards and Quality Correlation - *teaching how to establish personal benchmarks that involve good attitudes and good behaviors*
- Will and Work Ethic - *teaching how champions emerge and/or evolve through the development of mental and emotional toughness*
- Truth / Love Connection - *teaching the great secret and/or mystery to maximizing one's life B truth is the #1 universal source of power; love is #2*

4] **CAREER GOAL SETTING** - See It..... Before You Be It

- Goals Process - *teaching how to set, reach, fulfill, and maximize personal and/or career goals*
- Preparation - *teaching how to practice for the race/journey, and how practice gives birth to skills*
 - growth - *teaching how growth always precedes development*
 - development - *teaching that development involves not just what you become, but also, who you become*
- Execution (*running the race to win*)
 - good - *teaching that getting to a point of being good is the first phase of performance*
 - better - *teaching that getting to the point of better is the second phase of performance*

- best - *teaching that getting to the point of best is the final phase of performance*

5] **STUDENT SETBACKS** - Understanding HOW TO Not Just Survive, But Overcome

- Overcoming Hardships - *teaching how to withstand courageously and ultimately defeat the multi-forms of hardships (economic, emotional, and physical)*
- Power of Patience - *teaching the importance of pacing one's self valuing delayed gratification over instant gratification*
- The Big Picture - *teaching that the goal is to always win the war, which consists of a series of battles some in which we lose*
- Quitting is not an Option - *teaching how to endure to the end through the use of a formula that consists of the 4Ps of Endurance (preparation, persistence, perseverance, and patience)*

Note: *All learners must come to understand that life is a marathon, not a 100 yard sprint!*

This author has developed ten (10) classroom strategies for teaching unmotivated and undisciplined students. These strategies are designed to assist teachers in the 21st century with their committed effort to teach the aforementioned five strands for achieving great success in school and beyond. These ten teaching strategies are as follows:

1. Teachers must establish EXPECTATIONS and STANDARDS at the beginning of the course as it relates to performance (*goals to achieve*) and behavior (*values to be honored*).

Note: Children will meet expectations and adhere to standards if environment is continuously structured. Disseminating handouts pertaining to course outline and code of conduct, and setting benchmarks will serve to initiate this strategy.

2. Teachers must get children INVOLVED immediately in types of classroom activities that allow them to set achievable goals for the purpose of promoting **accomplishment**.

Note: Accomplishing goals will instantly boost a child's **self-esteem**, as well as renew one's vision and hope for the future.

3. Teachers must employ LISTENING SKILLS to monitor/assess children's level of comprehension or clarity associated with instructions given. Teachers can teach LISTENING SKILLS through the use of **role plays, one-act plays, and video presentations** and test children's ability to listen (*holistically*) with their hearts, minds, eyes, and ears. An example of areas to test children on follows:

- A. Heart - for assurances of care and concern (*theme, setting, or character portrayals that prompts an emotional reaction*).
- B. Mind - for assurances of focus (*key words and phrases*).
- C. Eyes - for assurances of observation (*hugs, kisses, twitches, handshakes, etc.*).
- D. Ears - for assurances of the transmittal of sound (*coughs, laughs, screams, etc.*).

Note: Teachers can develop and administer a multiple choice exam (perhaps 5 questions from each category) for assessment purposes.

4. Teach SELF-DISCIPLINE by allowing children to develop time management skills. Assist them by illustrating how each 24-hour school day can be divided into four sections:

- A. Rest/Sleep time - 10 hours
- B. School time - 8 hours
- C. After-School Study time - 2.5 hours
- D. Social Activities time - 3.5 hours

Note: This strategy will allow parents to be integrated into the process.

5. Teach CRITICAL / IN-DEPTH THINKING SKILLS by having children ask and subsequently answer questions (of themselves and others) that begin with the words: Why; Which; What; When; Where; and/or How.

Note: Children will gain an understanding of the importance of motives (why), directions taken/choices made (which), goal setting (what), time lines (when), origin/destination (where), and planning (how).

6. Teachers must learn to TALK **to** children, not **at** children. When reprimanding or scolding children, sit down and talk across to them (not down to them, which breeds intimidation) with eyes parallel to each other.

Note: The critical issue here is **respect**. Once children feel like they have been disrespected by the teacher, he/she has lost their respect and/or cooperation.

7. Teachers must speak to children in a tone or manner that **is not** viewed as condescending.

Note: Children want and need compassion, not pity.

8. It is important for teachers to know that children respond to LOVE. Illustrations of love include:

- A. Kindness and Consideration - a smile; sympathetic ear; assertive B but gentle speech; etc.
- B. Encouragement - pat on the back; emotional support (believing in them); etc.
- C. Respect/ Acceptance - handshake; verbal greeting that consists of Mr./Ms.; chance to speak their minds without threat of punishment; etc.
- D. Explanations to problems related to their unhappiness, confusion, frustration, and/or anger.

Note: **Question:** *How do you mend a broken heart?*
 Answer: *With lots of love!*

9. Teachers must gain an understanding of when to push a child to a point of excelling, and when to pull (*guide or lead*) a child to a point of excelling.

Note: Striking a balance between pushing (*encouraging and/or coercing*) and pulling (*showing*) is preferable.

10. Teachers must move back and forth between teaching and coaching children in the classroom.

Note: Teachers should learn the art of teaching/coaching to inform, motivate, inspire, and challenge children to give their very best effort at all times.

In summary, it is important for all persons concerned to know and understand that children **need discipline, want guidance, and respond to love**. Responsible adults must make a commitment to teach them how to set challenging goals that are accompanied by high expectations and standards. They must teach them how to discipline themselves. Responsible adults must model appropriate attitudes and behaviors, and must become standard-bearers for conveying care and concern, kindness and consideration, respect and acceptance, encouragement and support, and compassion.

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