

resources perhaps we will have more time for the human aspects of education.

Below, some tactics are enumerated that might address this global challenge. Some may have already been implemented on various campuses. We should challenge each other to think of new and creative tactics to make an impact.

- (1) Encourage students to become campus leaders
- (2) Encourage agriculture faculty to become campus leaders
- (3) Give a 30-second commercial for agriculture any time you get the chance
- (4) Teach more science courses for non-science majors
- (5) Develop partnerships with industry
- (6) Organize faculty tours each year
- (7) Provide training/orientation for new faculty
- (8) Educate business managers about science and technology so they can institute innovations
- (9) Develop industry mentorships
- (10) Use technology to deliver/assist instruction

(11) Develop consortia for course development

(12) Share expertise across the U.S.

There are many useful models for addressing our educational, technical and international challenges. Share your ideas and models with each other so that all of education and agriculture will benefit.

References

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Facilitating Development of a Sense of Self

W. Lee Humphreys

I recently had the chance to talk with two students at a college I was visiting. We were discussing their experiences in certain key courses in their academic programs. Each began by stating that he or she got more out of this or that course than the grade received indicated. I asked what they meant, for I hear that from my own students sometimes and at times from others. They told me about how their experiences in these courses allowed them to grow, how affirmed they felt in their attempts to reach out in new directions or to try new skills. They spoke of new selves, richer and deeper, able more effectively to engage the world.

One told me how he came for the first time to value deeply his own heritage, the writings and customs and social patterns of his region. He spoke of coming to know them in ways that made him proud. And then he said that this allowed him truly to understand and value the heritage of others, to respect traditions and ways of life that he would before have held at arms length and even scorned as odd. "When you respect and understand yourself you can respect and understand others as well," captures the essence of what he said.

The other student told me of reading and writing about the world of one of her grandparents, whom the family rarely mentioned and of whom it seemed a bit ashamed. She said, "I can now imagine what she must have been like. And I like her, and like myself because I like her and find some of myself in her as I imagine

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her." As she discovered new roots she found a more fully nuanced self in herself.

I then asked each student what the grades were that they received. One was a B+ and the other a B. But they felt that what they got out of these courses was more than these grades indicated. In fact, it was of an order and type that cannot be neatly summed up in a grade.

I was struck that what these students spoke of was not simply information that they memorized, although they spoke of that. Nor did they center on basic skills attained, although these were mentioned as well. Behind the stuff and skills of course content they spoke of "self," of what they were and were becoming. They spoke less of the attainment of the basic skills and details of presentation needed for research papers. They talked of an "empowering," of being able to shape questions about our lives in our world, or to recognize and define problems, and then address them with answers or solutions.

For the last several years I have taught a course with UTK's Chancellor. It is called "The Sense of Self." In it we explore that slippery thing we call a "self." We look in the readings at some selves that are small, miserly, cramped; we look also at some that are expansive, rich, alive and enlivening. We look at some that seem stuck or frozen and at others that are growing and dynamic. And we explore what some of the factors are that shape and reshape, that expand or constrict, a self and sense of self.

Two things have struck me as we explore the sense of self in the readings and writing we do and as we talk

about our selves as well. First, a person is not fixed at age 16 or 18 or 21. We continue to grow and develop in profound and moving ways throughout the course of life. It is probably one of the most fundamental developments in psychology in the last twenty-five years that this has been recognized — at the popular level in the work of Gail Sheehy and others and at the more theoretical level in the work of Erik Erikson and the many influenced by his work.

The second striking thing is that educational experiences play a profound, and too often negative, role in the development of the sense of self. The two students of whom I just spoke point this out in a striking manner, and they show how positive a force education can be.

Too often the experiences in education that play a role in shaping a self are not as positive as those reported by these two. Too often they are experiences that cramp, limit, freeze. they are largely experiences of failure, or, as one student put it, "of feeling dumb." They are experiences of having brought home to you what it is you do not know, with little acknowledgement of what you do know, or what you cannot do, with little recognition of what you can do. Students speak of experiences of failure because of risks they took: an idea tried did not pan out, an experiment that did not lead to expected results. They tell how teachers respond by foregrounding how they fell short, while giving little recognition to the courage to risk or to what skill they may have shown.

I would like to explore some perspectives on our teaching that will allow our courses to be more positive forces in helping shape selves that are expansive, open, enlivened and enlivening. I am not going to suggest that we change the content — the stuff and skills — that are at the heart of our courses. I am interested rather in what we do with it, how our students encounter it. I am suggesting that we must be aware of the impact of our teaching on the sense of self of our students, and this for several reasons. First, it is in these terms that they often experience and speak of our courses. Perhaps of even more importance is the fact that mastery of content is profoundly interrelated with one's sense of self and the impact a course and teacher have on the development of that self.

Successful Beginnings

Beginnings are important, so I will begin with two beginnings. The first was devised by a colleague, and it sparked my own attempt.

His course is introductory Portuguese — first day, first term, first year. The class is waiting and the instructor is about five minutes late. Finally, in he strides, muttering to himself, clearly angry. He seems surprised to see the class. He turns his tirade on them as the mutterings become more audible — but they remain in Portuguese. After about two minutes of this he stops, smiles at them, and asks "What did I say?"

"How are we to know?" they reply, "It was in Portuguese." That's what they are here to learn, and its only the first day!

"How did you know it was Portuguese?" he asked.

"Well, that's what this class is, so we thought . . ."

"Good. Are you sure you can't figure out at least some of what I said? Wasn't a word or so like words you know?"

And so it went for fifteen or twenty minutes. Working first as a whole and then in smaller groups, and building on affect, gesture, cognates, and such, the class pieced together that he had an argument with his department head.

Of course he carefully planned and staged all this. But his message to the class was clear at the end of the experience: "You know more than you think and can do more than you suspect you can. Now let's build on that; let's deepen it and make it more systematic."

When I asked him why he did this he told me he wanted to begin the course with an experience of success, with what his students know and can do, and not with what they did not know or were unable to do. Beginning a language is a daunting experience for many students. Past experiences are often of failure. Foreign language study has made many feel stupid. Thus, to begin with presenting the syllabus was to set up requirements that from their perspective might seem like more chances to fail, to feel dumb. He wanted his students to begin feeling able, empowered, successful.

This conversation sparked my reflections on how I begin my courses. Like most I devote the first class to the course outline or syllabus. My intent is to present it as a set of opportunities and challenges, to set a tone of eager expectation and excitement. I now suspect that many students perceive it in a quite different manner. More hurdles to struggle over, more obstacles, chances to trip, falter, fail. "Moreover," they might reflect, "quite likely most of the others in the class are better than me, smarter than me; they will beat me out, they will win and I will lose." Or if the students are of a more suspicious or savy nature: "What are the real rules of this game?" What's his hidden agenda? How can I beat him out of an A?"

This insecurity, these suspicions, these self-doubts, are deeply ingrained, founded on too many experiences of failure in education, to many encounters with obstacles, with hidden curricula and criteria. The first session of any one course will not overcome them. However, there is no more effective place to begin, as long as the beginning sets a tone that will play through the course.

I recently attempted to build a new beginning of my own, for a course on the Jewish religious traditions that begins with the experience of exile and the destruction of the ancient nation of Israel by the armies of the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar. It is a course in which we spend a lot of time with specific texts, so what better way to begin than with a specific text. But I didn't want to have this experience be one of mystification and failure as they await or flounder toward a "right" interpretation that I alone possess.

I selected Psalm 137. I began that first class by saying that in this course we will read selected texts together, so the best way to give a feel for the course is to do that right on the first day. I gave them the following text as the one we would explore together in this class hour; together we would see how deeply and widely we could understand it.

By the waters of Babylon,
there we sat down and wept,
when we remembered Zion.
On the willows there
we hung up our lyres,
For there our captors
required of us songs,
and our tormentors, mirth, saying
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"
How shall we sing the Lord's song
in a foreign land?
If I forget you, O Jerusalem
let my right hand wither!
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
if I do not remember you,
if I do not set Jerusalem
above my highest joy!
Remember, O Yahweh, against the Edomites
the day of Jerusalem,
how they said, "Rase it, rase it!
Down to its foundations!"
O daughter of Babylon, you devastator!
Happy shall he be who requites you with what
you have done to us!
Happy shall he be who takes your little ones
and dashes them against the rock!

I asked them to read it over alone several times. Then I asked them to jot down responses to a range of such questions as:

- What are the key themes of this text?
- What are key words that capture that theme for you?
- What is the mood of the text?
- How does it make you feel?
- Does the mood change, and if so where?
- What do you feel at the end of the text?
- What sort of situation or experience might provoke someone to write this psalm?
- When have you felt like this?
- What might you want to know about the person who wrote this or the events that sparked it that would help you understand it even more fully?

I asked them to reflect and write individually at first. Then I asked them to share their jottings in groups of three, and then with the whole class.

The questions are rather standard I suspect, but they are paired to move constantly to the students, to privilege them as readers making meanings in their encounters with this text.

Their response takes time, to my surprise the exercise fills the first hour. They are able to relate to

the text, to its expressions of grief — the hurt ("We sat down and wept"), the disbelief or denial ("If I forget you . . ."), to the dislocation ("How can we sing . . ."), the anger ("dashes them against the rocks"). Themes and key words emerge. They reconstruct out of their own experiences of loss and dislocation, the sort of situation that might have provoked this text: a death or other type of loss, a faith that no longer sustains, memories that haunt, pain and anger that makes one want to strike out in any direction.

If we take time with the responses to the last question, they in fact come up with most of the central themes that shape the course. The material on the board, which is my attempt to capture what they have said and asked, reflected, in fact, the course outline, its key topics, and at points offered a most effective way of construing them. They had engaged in creative and meaningful ways a text like many we would read. We would now try to deepen and systematize what they had shown they were able to do.

I felt the class a success — their success. It was a successful beginning.

Theoretical Groundings

From a range of perspectives there is a solid foundation for building on success if we wish to facilitate learning and a richer sense of self. Positive reinforcement is found to be more effective than negative; rewards more effective than punishment. A person who puts her hand on a hot stove, for *example*, learns not to do so again. But she does not learn what she might do with her hand. A graceful gesture is complimented and it will be repeated, perhaps with innovation. A student told that his argument is unclear may well be left with little direction for the future other than what to avoid. Elements that are identified as clean and compelling will be repeated and provide a base upon which one can build.

Of special interest is the theoretical grounding provided by a range of recent studies of patterns of human development in cognition, valuing, and other areas. Included are some that have attracted attention in higher education in recent years. Best known perhaps is the work of William G. Perry (1970) concerning what he terms "intellectual and ethical development" during the college years, especially among males. Related is the work of Mary F. Belenky and her colleagues (1986) in the development of ways in which women construct meanings and construe authority. Their work is at key points in conversation with that of Perry. There exists also the many studies in the area of moral judgment conducted by Lawrence Kohlberg and his associates (1981); recently this has been nuanced and critiqued from the perspective of woman's experience by Carol Gilligan (1982). There is also the work of James Fowle (1981) on stages of faith development. Robert Kegan (1983) has attempted to integrate a number of these studies in a metatheory of human development that incorporates a number of domains. Kegan builds on the roots of developmental

