

## The “See-ers”

Annie Dillard walks below her home the last week of September. As she approaches the Osage orange tree, a hundred migrating red-winged blackbirds fly away. She has heard their feeding racket, yet she has not seen the birds until they reveal themselves and fly. She walks closer and another hundred red-winged blackbirds materialize out of the tree. And finally as she nears the trunk of the Osage orange, the last hundred birds take flight. Dillard questions how so many red-winged blackbirds can hide in the tree without her seeing them. She concludes that we frequently don't see but that seeing is a free gift; “it's all a matter of keeping [our] eyes open.”

Marcel Proust also contends that the act of discovery begins with “seeing”: “The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes”—new eyes that see. “Seeing,” however, is not a passive activity. Sven Birkets also suggests this when he claims “I have not so much had my eyes opened as I have been taught to see more clearly” (106).

Charles Darwin exemplifies a person who “sees.” As the naturalist on H.M.S. *Beagle*, the 26 year-old Darwin noted, illustrated, and observed minute details during the exploratory voyage. The crew fatefully landed on the Galápagos Islands, and during that brief three-week stay, Darwin observed and collected enough samples, drawings, and information to vividly recount that event for the next fifty years. Although Darwin could “see,” he did not yet “perceive” what he did “see”—it took him nearly fifty more years to develop his theories of natural selection. Without ever returning to the Galápagos, Darwin's “seeing,” became the foundation for the rest of his scientific life.

And “seeing” also requires action. The word *observe* does denote seeing, but in the scriptures *observe* also connotes performance when Alma commands us to “observe to do” (Alma 5:61). Active “seeing,” then, is the ability to observe and perceive more clearly what is around us and to act upon those perceptions.

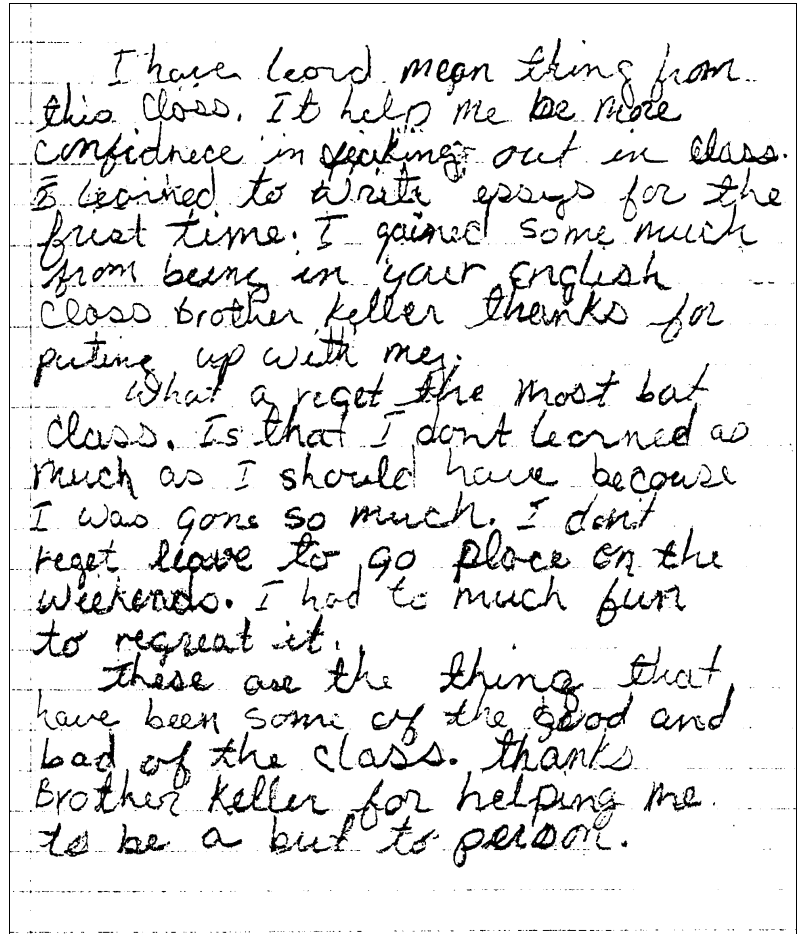
As teachers we need to “see,” to be “see-ers.” We need to see our individual students, ourselves as professionals, and our divine teaching responsibility. We need to observe what we haven't seen before, perceive the importance of those observations, and then act to enhance and improve our performance in and out of the classroom.

### “Seeing” Our Individual Students

As teachers, we stand before classes of students, yet rarely do we see the individual student. Cindy is one such individual student. Cindy had classes from me two different semesters, but I didn't “see” her until much later. I remember her on the first day we met because she wouldn't look at me, even as she introduced herself and as I walked around the room trying to learn names. She wouldn't look at me for several weeks. Cindy had weak writing

skills, bad skin, and poor personal hygiene. She didn't participate in class, and whenever we did group work, she'd simply listen and not offer comments. She did her work; I noticed general writing problems but not anything alarming. She wouldn't come in for conferencing, or when I'd approach her after class to comment on her work, she'd excuse herself and say she was in a hurry for another class. I was surprised to see Cindy in my composition class the next semester. She was the same old Cindy. But then she began to change--she had her first boyfriend. For the first time in her life, she felt significant, and her appearance and self-esteem began to improve. She tentatively started to work in small groups during class, and she'd write longer papers describing her dates and her boyfriend. She still had some major writing problems, but they were manageable.

What I didn't "see" was that Cindy did not submit working drafts of her papers--I only saw final products. I didn't "see" that Cindy had missed every in-class writing assignment for both semesters; instead she submitted late, computer-generated writings. She had missed the announced diagnostic writing activities each semester, yet she made arrangements to do them at home and bring them to me, computer-generated. Even when I required students to write informal letters regularly to me about class performance and concerns, Cindy's were also done on the computer and in final draft form. Not until the final exam of the second class when I repeatedly denied her permission to miss this last in-class writing or to do it on the computer did I "see" Cindy's true writing ability. Here is her final exam in which she was to write an essay telling what she had learned in class. She took the entire ninety minutes to write this essay. I had no clue until then how severe Cindy's writing problems were. She had received Cs in both of my classes, yet as her teacher, I had failed. Cindy graduated from Ricks with a 2.1 GPA, and she also received Cs in two other English classes, and I'm certain her teachers were also unaware of her abilities--we did not "see" the individual student.



I have leard mean thing from  
this class. It help me be more  
confidnece in speaking out in class.  
I learned to write essays for the  
first time. I gained some much  
from being in your english  
class brother keller thanks for  
puting up with me.  
What a regret the most bad  
class. Is that I dont learned as  
much as I should have because  
I was gone so much. I dont  
regret leave to go place on the  
weekends. I had to much fun  
to regret it.  
these are the thing that  
have been some of the good and  
bad of the class. thanks  
Brother keller for helping me  
to be a but to person.

#### Cindy's Final Essay

As writing teachers, we have better opportunities to “see” students than other teachers. Not only are our classes smaller, but the very nature of a writing class encourages trust between student and teacher as the student reveals inner feelings and thoughts through writing. We must do all we can to earn and intrust their confidence in us.

**Learning Names.** Perhaps the single most important first-step in “seeing” students is learning their names. No activity should be more important during the first several class periods--their names are more important than syllabi, books, course objectives, and diagnostic exercises. It doesn't matter if teachers use name-tags, seating charts, still-video cameras, association techniques, name games, or just hard, solid memorization, students must perceive immediately that they and their names are important to the teacher. Students are forgiving if we forget or confuse their names the first few class periods, but after the first week, we need to distinguish individual students. Ray Gallup daily stands outside his classroom door with roll-book in hand, shaking hands and talking with each student who enters the door. He not only checks attendance but welcomes each person individually by name. I use the first few minutes before class begins to return daily quizzes. I'm able to associate names with faces, comment on work in progress, and chat with students individually as I move about the room. This is my pre-class time to interact with students.

**Using School Resources.** Even if we know students' names, we often only know what they tell us, which isn't very much. We teachers do have access to students' academic records which may give us insights into students' abilities. Through the Registrar's office, teachers can obtain confidential student data lists. This list provides students' names, local phone numbers, dates they first registered, current credits, cumulative earned credit, cumulative GPA, ACT score breakdowns, major codes, advisors' names and phone numbers. If I had used this resource for Cindy, I would have known the first day that her English ACT score was only a 7 while her composite was 11. I concede that this information could influence “student-labeling,” but knowing Cindy's scores would have changed my approach in recognizing specific problems and helping her. More detailed information is available through AS400 providing more background and student transcripts. And the Writing Center also furnishes insights into individual students. Our Writing Center focuses on peer-tutorials with the individual student. The tutor, although still a student, often has an impressive ability to recognize specific problems because the tutor works with the students as they struggle with their writing, organization, or mechanics. Students may feel more comfortable discussing their writing weaknesses with the supposedly-removed tutor, and the tutors write discerning comments to teachers concerning sessions with individual students. The more knowledge we have about the students, the more clearly we can “see” their needs.

**Writing Letters.** People often reveal more about themselves through the distance of writing than through speaking one-to-one. For example, it's easier saying “I love you” or “I'm sorry” with a Hallmark card than saying it in person. Consequently, student letter-writing is an effective activity to “see” students' concerns. At times I have insisted on one-page letters from

students every other week. These letters focus on whatever interests the students. Most frequently these quickly-written letters describe weekend activities, but I become the intended audience for students to share feelings in a non-graded format. I respond briefly on each letter, and I gain valuable insights into each student. Heather Carasone periodically has her students write signed or unsigned letters discussing “the good, the bad, or the ugly” of the course. Students are able to air frustrations, and the teacher receives valuable feedback and insights.

**Conferencing with Students.** Student conferencing also allows the teacher and student to become better acquainted. During a conference, the student has the teacher’s personal attention. Conferencing, however, puts students at a definite disadvantage since they often feel uncomfortable in that situation. A conference is most successful if the student has done most of the talking while the teacher has done the listening (unfortunately, the opposite occurs, and neither teacher nor student has gained much from the experience). Conferences should be focused to meet a specific goal during a brief time period--usually just ten minutes. If the objective of the conference is clear to both teacher and student beforehand, then anxieties are reduced allowing for more free communication.

**Participating in Groups.** A principal objective of every teacher is to involve each student in each class period. The more students participate, the more comfortable they feel in class. Small groups are effective for class involvement. But often, teachers simply set up the groups and then leave the students on their own. However, the teacher who actively participates in groups as a roving member, not only serves as a teaching model but also learns how individual students are responding and interacting with others and with the subject. The teacher, through the group, can then provide immediate feedback and direction.

**Maintaining Distinct Student/Teacher Relationships.** Although it is imperative that a teacher “sees” students and learns as much about them as possible, the teacher must also maintain a clearly defined student/teacher distance. The knowledge about the student should only pertain to course objectives. There should never be an invasion of student privacy. Nor should a teacher ever assume the role of church leader or professional counselor. The only advice a teacher can freely give is on subject content and on academic procedure. The teacher also has a moral obligation to keep whatever student knowledge confidential unless students give their written consent. Cindy, for example, has allowed me to use her story on the condition I don’t mention her last name. I know some teachers meet often outside of class or the office in informal situations to teach or socialize, and some teachers allow students to call them by their first names, but these practices are rarely productive in promoting professional student/teacher relationships. Close professional relationships are possible in a formal classroom setting.

### **“Seeing” Ourselves as Professionals**

The need to “see” students is obvious, but “seeing” ourselves as professionals is less clear. Teaching English is demanding. In fact, the demands may be so significant, that teachers

bowed down with professional responsibilities may not perform well in or out of class. Often teachers see themselves as what Maxine Hairston calls “composition slaves.” Teacher burnout is a serious, common problem, and it can happen anytime during a career. “Seeing” ourselves as professionals rather than as slaves can significantly rejuvenate us. Teachers may consider five major positive approaches to be more professional and to avoid teacher burnout: organizing courses, grading papers, working with students, and developing professionally.

**Organizing Courses.** Unfortunately, many teachers are not organized. These teachers often feel frustrated because the course is not working well or there is too much material to possibly cover during the short class period or semester. Everything seems overwhelming. A strong organization helps temper some of these feelings. Writing teachers constantly tell students to *organize* their thoughts to give both the reader and the writer direction. Teachers also need organization to direct their classes. There is no set rule on how to organize a course, but an organization that allows the teacher and student to move toward a conclusion or objective is successful. Teachers with organized, concrete course objectives and plans to achieve those objectives have a stronger sense of direction than those who do not. Two aspects of organizing courses include establishing course outlines and maintaining lesson plans.

*Establishing Course Outlines.* Course outlines minimize teachers’ daily frustrations regarding course organization. Course outlines establish what, how, when, and why teachers present their course materials. Teachers with organized course outlines may know daily class topics, objectives, or assignments weeks in advance, allowing for more unhurried, careful, and thoughtful preparation. With course outlines, teachers may stagger major assignments lessening chances of excessive grading loads. Course outlines allow teachers to pace themselves and students evenly through class objectives and assignments while avoiding unproductive cramming at semester’s end. Course outlines provided organizations, directions, purposes, and methods freeing teachers from daily frustrations of what, when, how, and why to present their materials, thereby relieving significant tension. Some teachers, however, object to course outlines fearing schedule slavery. But schedules should be suggestive and helpful rather than madatory and damning. Class outlines with room for minor modifications become a first significant step in being a professional.

*Maintaining Lesson Plans.* Course outlines identify the daily subject while lesson plans provide basic principles, objectives, or procedures in presenting the subject to students. If teachers maintain and update lesson plans, they eliminate basic daily preparation. They know what objectives to present and how they are going to accomplish those objectives for each class period. Contrary to some beliefs, lesson plans do not inhibit creativity and spontaneity. Lesson plans, both formal and informal, provide only the basics of the day’s preparation, allowing more creative time to enhance existing lesson plans and presentations.

**Grading Papers.** Unquestionably, responding to students’ papers is the most emotional and time-consuming activity writing teachers perform. Few teachers, if any, eagerly anticipate a

set of papers to grade. This anxious anticipation multiplies with numerous sections of student writings requiring individual attention and time. Maxine Hairston, in “On Not Being a Composition Slave,” describes the conflicts teachers feel as they respond to papers and cautions teachers not to be overwhelmed by the paper load:

We all know that students must have instruction in writing and feedback on their writing in order to become better writers. . . . But we must focus on ways to give them quality instruction and quality feedback rather than overwhelming them with more advice than they can absorb and more criticism than they can tolerate. We need to realize that there is not necessarily a positive correlation between our success as writing teachers and the amount of time we spend grading our papers (124).

Teachers avoid becoming grading “slaves” by grading daily, responding positively, grading with purpose, encouraging student responses, and establishing late-paper policies.

*Grading Daily.* The only way for teachers to stay current with the paper load is to conscientiously set aside time each day for student papers. Teachers should religiously keep that grading time--perhaps even with a note on the door explaining why they cannot be disturbed. Since grading is so mentally and emotionally taxing, teachers need to allow themselves reasonable, unhurried, unpressured time to respond to student papers. Grading a specific, manageable number of papers each day alleviates the exhausting marathon grading sessions that devastate so many teachers.

*Responding Positively.* Many teachers respond to student writings by consciously commenting on all items that students have failed to do or have done improperly. These teachers read a paper negatively, copiously annotating every misspelled word and problem within the paper. This approach is emotionally exhaustive for teachers. Rather, teachers can try a fresh, often psychologically uplifting approach to responding to student papers by looking only for what the students have done effectively. Positive grading doesn't necessarily mean teachers can ignore major writing problems, but they can respond to the problem positively. Erika Lindemann suggests identifying “one or two problems and explain why they make understanding the piece difficult” and setting a goal with “specific strategies for reaching the goal” “to work toward in the next draft of paper” (218). Emphasizing positive responses reinforces students' positive work as well as relieves emotional burdens for teachers.

*Grading with Purpose.* Many teachers also believe they should respond or grade all the work students do. Teachers will have more time to respond well to students' major formal writings if they skim informal assignments giving holistic, superficial, yet honest comments. On informal assignments, teachers simply observe and note that students are practicing general principles, thereby saving the more concentrated responses for major assignments. Teachers may also highlight a paragraph or two when responding to a major assignment. Teachers then can give more detailed, explicit annotated comments on a couple paragraphs rather than discussing

every paragraph in the paper. This approach allows teachers to speed up the responding process while still carefully reading and commenting on specific sections.

*Encouraging Student Responses.* Teachers can also share with the students the responsibility of responding to non-graded assignments. Teachers often feel it necessary for students to write each class period, yet daily writing can produce an excessive paper load. But teachers may schedule different students for each class to present a daily topic for the class assignment. At the end of the writing, students submit their papers to the student with the topic who reads and responds superficially to that day's writing. Students, therefore, receive responses from various audiences, and teachers are free from reading non-grading writings.

*Establishing Late-Paper Policies.* Some teachers feel they never can finish grading because students' late papers continue to drift into their reading piles. This practice not only is unfair to teachers who must take time from other grading to respond to late work, but this procedure is also unfair to students who now have less time on their next assignment. Teachers should establish in the course outline a late-paper policy making late or make-up work unacceptable or allowing a two-day grace period before not accepting the assignment. If the course outline lists all assignment due dates at the beginning of the semester, students then can schedule time to meet deadlines.

**Working with Students.** Students must be the focus of a teacher's professional life. All preparations, assignments, and responses should reflect the needs of students both collectively and individually. But teachers may have an unhealthy sense of responsibility for their students, wanting to do everything for them. However, students and their multiple needs may smother teacher's needs. Gay Hendricks states in *The Centered Teacher*:

It is easy, if we view teaching as a one-way street, to fall into the trap of doing more than 50% of the work in the classroom. If we see teachers as having the answers and the students as having the questions we invite an imbalance in the relationship which can only cause a drain on teachers' energy. It is important to have a relationship with students which generates energy for *all* concerned rather than drains it (27).

At times teachers must pull away and help students become more self-reliant. To help meet both students' and teachers' needs, teachers can limit unscheduled student time by observing office hours and encouraging student responsibility.

*Observing Office Hours.* Although teachers may appear inaccessible, they should discourage students from "dropping-in" without an appointment. Few people understand the vast amount of work teachers do, so they assume that teachers have unlimited time to meet with students. Teacher's primary professional responsibility is to their students, but many students do not respect teachers' time. Teachers must post, publicize, and keep regular office hours. This policy allows teachers to plan their time to research, grade, or prepare. Teachers should depend

on reserved time for their own needs. If students can't meet during office hours, teachers can schedule appointments convenient for both.

*Encouraging Student Responsibility.* Writing teachers tend to take too much responsibility for their students, especially in writing conferences with individual students. Ruth Knudson in "A Question for Writing Teachers: How Much Help is Too Much?" emphasizes the need for students not to rely excessively on teachers:

The major concern associated with too much teacher help is that students will neither internalize the process nor access the strategies used by skilled writers because the teacher is so involved with the writing task that the student remains dependent on the teacher for problem formulation, content of the text, and composing strategies (91).

For example, students often ask teachers, "How can I make this better?" This question puts responsibility and pressure on teachers to solve the problem for the student. Students will then make the teachers' adjustments (most often superficial) and continue with the assumption that only teachers know how and what to do to improve writing. Instead when students ask "How can I make this better?" teachers respond with "Tell me what **you** can do to make it better. What suggestions do **you** have? Teachers then discuss students' responses. Teachers prepare students for this approach by requiring students to come to writing conferences with lists of suggested improvements. This approach also works well when discussing returned student papers. Students should wait twenty-four hours after receiving graded papers before making an appointment to discuss the paper. During that time students prepare lists of suggestions to improve their papers. Because of this approach, students begin to read their papers with a sense of revision. They observe paper weaknesses as well as strengths. Teachers then discuss the students' suggested lists of improvements. The responsibility now belongs to the students.

**Developing Professionally.** Many teachers have feelings of professional inadequacy. This natural feeling of inadequacy may become magnified because of fear. Jane Tompkins suggests that many teachers "perform" for classes to show their knowledge, preparation, and superiority over the students. Tompkins then declares, "Fear is the driving force behind the performance model. Fear of being shown up for what you are: a fraud, stupid, ignorant, a clod, a dolt, a sap, a weakling, someone who can't cut the mustard" (654).

Francis Christensen utters the same fear in his essay "Between Two Worlds." Christensen remembers teaching for the first time without the proper background. He relates, "I was a professor--professing to know, professing to teach, professing to teach others to teach--and I simply did not know my subject" (5). Christensen then emphatically declares, "The teacher of English must be a scholar" (2). A teacher gains more confidence and develops professionally by reading professional publications, joining professional organizations, attending professional conferences, producing writing projects, leaving work at school, and reading for pleasure..



*Reading Professional Publications.* Staying alive professionally is essential for quality teaching. Most teachers are so involved with daily preparations that the only reading they do is from the course textbook or student papers. But these sources provide limited stimulation. Teachers must remove themselves from the head of the classroom and become students on a regular basis. This does not necessarily mean enrolling in graduate courses, but it means on a weekly basis teachers should read what someone in the field has to say about the discipline. Never has this discipline been so rich with professional journals and publications making research and techniques readily available. Some of the articles and approaches are esoteric and highly theoretical, but most are not. Most articles reflect tested classroom procedures based on student or teaching problems. Teachers can accomplish a surprising amount of professional reading by spending one lunch hour a week with a brown bag and a professional journal.

*Joining Professional Organizations.* It is also necessary for teachers to participate in professional organizations on local, regional, or national levels. These organizations become a network of support groups sharing suggestions, sounding boards, and research. Each of these organizations depends on local members to become the source of fresh and tried ideas and research.

*Attending Professional Conferences.* English teachers should try to attend at least one conference a year although time, distance, and money often make that difficult. The conference may either be at a local, regional, or national convention. Teachers receive often unimaginable stimulation at conferences not only because of what others present at the conferences but more importantly because of what individuals question and think while at the conventions. New ideas and philosophies begin while teachers listen to presenters. There is also a strong sense of support as teachers see others with similar interests and concerns trying to become better teachers and researchers.

*Producing Writing Projects.* Perhaps the most effect method of developing professionally is writing. Through the writing process, minds stretch because of stimulation. Writing not only forces people to confront inadequacies, but writing stimulates solutions. Writing takes chaotic, fragmented, abstract thoughts and organizes those thoughts into coherent, concrete ideas and solutions. Although writing is painful, it is energizing. Many feel they do not have the time or resources to research and to write. These people often believe that writing needs large blocks of time, but writing is also effective in short, yet regular spurts. Writing teachers should spend a minimum of fifteen minutes a day writing on individual projects. This formal or informal writing allows fifteen minutes for fresh creativity, insights, and release from the monotonies of daily professional life.

Writing does not need to detract from class work. Effective use of time suggest teachers select a class concern such as revision and use the daily fifteen minutes researching, reading, and writing about revision. Teachers can also concentrate on revision strategies their students employ and keep informal notes or examples to use for future classes or papers.

Researching teachers see students in a new light. Students are not the source of frustration, but rather a source of questioning seeking solutions to particular problems. Students and classes become teachers' research projects. Not only will teachers become more sympathetic to students' writing problems, but students gain a deep respect for teachers who consciously continue to learn and practice their craft. Consequently, all of the enlightening insights and information gleaned by teachers' research, enhance teachers as professionals, as teachers, and as individuals.

*Leaving Work at School.* Many teachers, especially writing teachers, not only spend the entire work day at school preparing for classes and responding to students' papers, but they also take work home with them so they won't get behind. Work becomes the main part of their life, a drudgery, rather than a means of fulfillment. These teachers never get a break from school work. The pressures of school continue on into the night and on weekends. Therefore, teachers need to organize the school day so after a full day in the office, they can go home for much needed emotional, physical, and mental rest. Teachers should reserve all nights and weekends for themselves, their families, and outside interests.

*Reading for Pleasure.* Surprisingly, many English teachers do not read for pleasure. The only reading they do is for class assignments. They forget the release and enthusiasm good books bring into their lives. By reading for pleasure, teachers temporarily leave their every day worlds and return with new and different perspectives. Reading for pleasure will help teachers rediscover major reasons why they have entered their profession--they have a love for literature.

Teachers who "see" themselves as professionals can regain positive, uplifting teaching experiences. Teachers can rekindle the same motivations and energies they have experienced earlier in their careers, yet now, because of experience, they have deepened their maturity and wisdom--they are professionals.

### **"Seeing" Our Divine Teaching Responsibility: Intelligent Hearts**

Perhaps the most important aspect of teaching--more important than students and professionalism-- receives the least amount of public attention. We must focus on our divine teaching responsibility. Rodger Sorensen refers to this as "preparing ourselves personally to teach," and we can't possibly be prepared without divine guidance. Alma recognizes the need for such guidance and the personal preparation associated with teaching when he reveals what has made the sons of Helaman powerful teachers: "They had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were men of understanding and they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God. But this is not all; they had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God" (Alma 17:2-3). These are teachers. They have *knowledge* of the gospel and of the world around them. But they also have a clear

*understanding* of how that knowledge fits into the gospel plan as they receive inspiration to “prepare themselves personally to teach.”

As teachers we must cultivate both a scholarship of our disciplines and a refined sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. We must have “intelligent hearts.” An “intelligent heart” utilizes both scholarship and spirit, both thinking and feeling. I have gleaned the term “intelligent heart” from the title of two sources--each describing *imagination*. Imagination results both from functions of the mind and from feelings of the heart. First, the rhetorician Ann E. Berthoff, in her insightful essay “The Intelligent Eye and the Thinking Hand,” contends when we make meaning as writers or as readers that thinking and feeling are compatible and inseparable, each a vital part of the imagination. She insists that “differentiation of cognitive [thinking] and affective [feeling] is wrongheaded and misleading” (43). To illustrate her point, she refers to the British sculptor Dame Barbara Hepworth and the philosopher Susanne K. Langer. Hepworth in her autobiography illustrates the inter-related connection between thinking and feeling as she sculpts: “My left hand is my thinking hand. The right is only a motor hand. This holds the hammer. The left hand, the thinking hand, must be relaxed, sensitive. The rhythms of thought pass through the fingers and grip of this hand into the stone” (qtd. in Berthoff 42-43). Hepworth’s hands not only feel but “think” as she creates.

And Langer claims that creation or imagination incorporates both “*discursive mode*” (cognitive thought) and “*nondiscursive mode*” which she calls “direct, intensive insight” (qtd. in Berthoff 43). Berthoff then parenthetically inserts that the artist and the philosopher who have made the connection between thought and feeling are both women--they see the relationship. Berthoff calls this relationship the “intelligent eye,” when, in the case of our students, they “record observations and observe their observations” in attempts not only to “*conceive*” but also to “*perceive*” (42); they imagine by thinking and feeling.

Second, the children’s writer Katherine Paterson clarifies *imagination* in the essay “The Spying Heart.” She explicates the three parts of the Sino-Japanese character meaning “to imagine”:

First you draw a tree and then you draw an eye behind that tree. And then, underneath the eye spying out from behind the tree, you put a heart. Go to work on that for a minute. I love the idea of spying as tied up with the act of imagining. And since the heart in Japanese is the seat both of feeling and of the intellect, we’re not talking about some sentimental peeping, but the kind of spying, the kind of connecting that Einstein did, and Shakespeare, and Gerard Manley Hopkins.” (65)

Berthoff’s and Paterson’s references to imagination as the “intelligent eye” and the “spying heart” stress the necessity of developing relationships and encouraging connections between the mind and the heart. For us teachers, these relationships should be inseparable as “intelligent

hearts"--the relationship between the mind (scholarship) and heart (feeling) should be complete and whole rather than fragmented.

We need to have a strong sense that what we're doing is in accordance with what the Lord would have us do whether we're teaching at a church or public institution. This is so important. I look at my closest friends in graduate school, and the majority have either left the church or are not in harmony with its teachings--only several remain devoted and faithful. These individuals often place a higher emphasis on "intellectualism" (knowledge divorced from gospel principles) than they do on "understanding." They contend that their knowledge is not compatible with the church doctrines--they do not have "intelligent hearts." The church has always placed emphasis on gaining knowledge, and knowledge does not conflict with eternal principles. In fact the Lord reveals to Joseph Smith that "intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; wisdom receiveth wisdom; truth embraceth truth; virtue loveth virtue; light cleaveth unto light" (D&C 88:40). Intelligence is good and important, especially in teaching if we "hearken unto the counsels of God" (2 Nephi 9:29). In fact, one of the gifts and manifestations of the Spirit is knowledge (D&C 46:18). As teachers we need to "learn [our] duty. . . in all diligence" (D&C 107:99), and part of our duty is to gain and share knowledge. We are not fulfilling our duty, however, if we do not do what the Lord would have us do. We can't divide our loyalty between the principles of God and the scholarship of our profession.

For this reason, Harold Frederic's *The Damnation of Theron Ware or Illumination* has had such an impact on me. Theron Ware has much promise as a gifted, intelligent, insightful, young Methodist minister. But gradually he divorces his religious beliefs for his newly discovered intellectualism. He uses the wise and experienced Catholic Father Forbes as his model, but Theron does not recognize that Father Forbes has faithfully placed his religious responsibilities first before his intellectual quests. Theron's quest for intellectualism supersedes his search for religious truth and devotion, and that unfortunate value choice leads to Theron's spiritual and even intellectual damnation. Theron, however, is oblivious to the changes that are happening to him. Those close to him fearfully watch the destruction of Theron's life. Only after recently reading this novel have I started to catch glimpses of how my own graduate experience could have had the same damning experience for me because I, like most of my friends, separated the intellectual from the religious. I recognize now what my overt cynicism and subtle criticism of the church was doing to me, but I was unaware then. For example, to avoid answering specific questions from my campus bishop, I would go to my home bishop for a temple recommend interview. On that Sunday afternoon, the bishop who had known me most of my life asked in the interview, "What's happening to you; you're different?" He perceived what I did not.

I see the same "damnation" that has taken place in my thesis chair, the teacher and mentor who has taught me how to think, how to read, and how to write. He challenged and motivated me in ways no other teacher ever had. He directed my readings in areas I would not have ventured. He stimulated me intellectually so that I began to feel some confidence in my abilities--he

changed my life. Unfortunately, he was going through his own intellectual and religious crisis which finally forced him to leave the church. He gave in to a number of appetites including intellectualism. His struggle represents the conflict many people face.

But there does not need to be a conflict. Religion and secular knowledge can exist in harmony if religion comes first. Parley A. Christensen addresses this in a 1938 article for *Mental Hygiene* entitled “The Modern Headache.” Christensen, a BYU English professor, is responding to the dictum that life is a “long headache in a noisy street.” He claims that the headache occurs in cultivated, intelligent people who allow the mind to divide against itself--people who separate science (or intellectualism) from religion--those who separate the mind from the heart. Christensen suggests:

Science and religion, inciting causes of many a modern brain-storm, are thus judicially kept apart. Adam knows not Neanderthal Man, and the Tower of Babel never totters in the shadows of linguistic trees. But the type of mind here suggested in reality seldom exists. Sooner or later the thoughtful student seeks relationships, syntheses. . . . I should like to venture the belief that enlightened religion and great literature better than anything else offer or should offer that discipline, that integration. (137-138)

Christensen wisely uses the word *integration* or the unification of both mind and feeling. He continues by explaining how religion provides the necessary balance and synthesis:

So in recommending religion as an integrating and harmonizing influence, I am not thinking of it as something which in a miraculous way comprehends, evaluates, and reconciles all species of knowledge and assumed knowledge. I am thinking of religion as existent and effective, not so much in the abstract world of facts and theories as in the concrete realm of personal experience, and of spiritual values, the realm of human hopes, ideals, aspirations, inspirations, strivings. I am thinking of it as realizing its peculiar and ultimate purposes, not in an accumulated knowledge of undifferentiated truth, but rather in a particular order or quality of personal and spiritual experiences, such as a consciousness of the reality and nearness of God, a sense of immortality, a feeling of fellowship with Jesus, a love for mankind, a passion for righteousness and for a rich and beautiful life. (139-140)

Christensen insists that the prophet and the poet/scholar can co-exist, and they can co-exist within the individual teacher who has an “intelligent heart.” The “intelligent heart” not only is possible but is essential for academic teachers with solid testimonies of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Elder Bruce C. Hafen discusses this connection in an interview entitled “The Mind, the Spirit, the Soul.” Hafen admonishes that we follow the Lord’s counsel: “Teach ye diligently, and my grace shall attend you” (D&C 88:78). Hafen then explains:

Both elements are there--analytical rigor and spiritual power. But both parts require hard work. As President Boyd K. Packer once said, reason and revelations will mix only when they're interactively in motion, like stirring oil and water. When the motion stops, they may separate and pull apart. . . . In President Packer's words, it helps to have "a third ingredient, a catalyst, which itself remains unchanged in the blending process." That catalyst is the spirit, and it can be aided by our effort to give revelation the priority it deserves. (29-30).

This "mixing," this wholeness of the mind, heart, and spirit is evident in Thich Nhat Hanh's short story "The Pine Gate." Hanh, a poet, fiction writer, Zen master, and Buddhist monk whom Dr. Martin Luther King nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, dedicates many of his writings to a "mindful awareness" suggesting both heart and mind. In "The Pine Gate," a young swordsman returns to his Master after seven years to unexpectedly find the entrance barred by a tightly shut pine gate. He assumes the closed gate has been empowered by his Master, so he decided to wait out the night. During the night, the swordsman reflects on his Master's parting charge seven years earlier. He was to venture out into the world to carry out the Way and to help people. To assist the young man, the Master gives him a sword to subdue monsters and devils and a viewing glass named Me Ngo "to determine good and evil, to separate the virtuous from the wicked" (314).

The young man meets holy people, old sages, leaders, and multitudes of people. He learns from them and shares his message only to eventually gaze at them through Me Ngo discovering each individual is a demon or a monster he'll kill with the sword. He eventually gains a certain familiarity with these horrifying inhuman features and uses Me Ngo and the sword less and less.

He yearns to return to his Master, and now finds the gate closed. As the dark lightens into dawn, a young monk descends the path, and the gate opens for the swordsman. The swordsman questions the monk about the closed gate only to learn that it would "open itself for virtuous people but would stay shut and bar the way for those too heavy with the dust of the world!" (317). The perplexed swordsman goes to the stream and for the first time gazes at his own reflection through Me Ngo only to see the demon's face, "bringing self-knowledge to him in such a swift, brutal fashion that he could do nothing but collapse under this blow" (318). The young monk, however, comforting and supporting the swordsman says, "[Y]ou shouldn't worry about it. You know the Master had nothing but compassion for you. Let's go up now. We'll again live and work and study together" (318). The two figures begin ascending the steep, rocky path to the Master.

The swordsman, in the presence of the Master, possesses spiritual knowledge and only gains temporal knowledge while he's on his own. But he despairingly discovers how changed he has become because of his focus on the world. Yet he has renewed faith that through his Master and through living, working, and studying he will become complete and whole.

Additional meaningful examples are the prophets Mormon and Moroni. These two men exemplify a completeness and wholeness. Each focuses his life on the Savior and on the gospel while still being writers, scholars, historians, politicians, social reformers, and warriors. These prophet/scholars integrate the mind and the heart with the Spirit. In fact, Elder Neal A. Maxwell claims that “gaining knowledge and becoming more Christlike ‘are two aspects of a single process’” (68). And President Gordon B. Hinckley asserts, “The mind of man is the crowning creation of God, in whose express image man was made. The development of the mind is a companion responsibility to the cultivation of the spirit, as set forth in the revealed principles of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ” (“Come and Partake” 48).

Sometimes serious eternal problems arise when educators/ scholars have difficulties finding a balance between intellectualism and revelation--when the “intelligent heart” separates. President Hinckley maintains these individuals “have failed to realize that religion is as much concerned with the heart as it is with the intellect” (“The Continuous Pursuit of Truth” 5). Elder Maxwell suggests this separation can occur when individuals refuse to recognize that “all knowledge is not of equal significance. . . . As more and more, we brush against truth, we sense that it has a hierarchy of importance. Some truths are salvationally significant and others are not” (69). Maxwell then advocates that “ultimate orthodoxy” is vital in finding the balance because orthodoxy

is expressed in the Christlike life which involves both mind and behavior. . . . As we all know, Christ does not dominate by His intellect. He leads by example and love. There is no arrogance flowing from His, the keenest of all intellects. He seeks neither to conquer nor to prosper “according to his genius” (Alma 30:17). (69)

Consequently, when the Spirit guides our search for knowledge and our preparation for class, then we begin to *understand* our divine teaching responsibility. We become the writers, scholars, and teachers Parley Christensen envisions:<sup>1</sup>

We need teachers of the larger and clearer vision; teachers who are aware of the past and of the past in the present; teachers who can see in the eternal flux of human experiences the things that have abiding value; teachers who can draw from legends, the histories, the philosophies, the religions, the literature, and the widening and deepening experiences of humanity the wisdom and the beauty that are timeless; teachers who have the art to transmute these enduring values into living forms for our profit and delight. (141)

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<sup>1</sup>I have changed Christensen’s wording. Whenever he uses the word *writers*, I have inserted the word *teachers*.

We must have “intelligent hearts” to be effective teachers. And then with “intelligent hearts” we may testify with Carlfred B. Broderick:

[F]aith is at my core, rooted in my most unchallengeable experiences. Scholarship is my most valued auxiliary. Through it my mind is enriched, my relationships enlivened, my living procured, and such worldly reputation as I have sustained. But I never forget that when the Savior greets me at the veil, it will not be my scholarship that will be examined. (101).

We must be “see-ers” to be effective teachers. We must “see” our individual students, “see” ourselves as professionals, and “see” our divine teaching responsibility.



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