

Teaching or Facilitating: A False Dichotomy*

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A recent trend suggests teachers should facilitate learning rather than instruct children. This alarming idea is couched in the slogan “we facilitate learning, we don’t teach.” I argue that to take the idea seriously is to eclipse the tradition of teaching and push it to one side, putting at risk the general education of youngsters. I clarify the terms “teaching” and “facilitating,” and give reasons why the former, not the latter, should be emphasized.

Une tendance récente suggère que les enseignants devraient faciliter l'apprentissage plutôt que d'enseigner. L'auteur soutient qu'en retenant cette idée inquiétante, on balaie du revers de la main toute une tradition de l'enseignement et on met en péril l'éducation générale des jeunes. L'auteur clarifie les deux approches et explique pourquoi la première, à savoir l'enseignement, devrait être privilégiée.

INTRODUCTION

One of the latest in a litany of educational slogans to play havoc with the formation of sound theory and practice advances the idea that teachers don't teach, they “facilitate learning.” It is an idea that seems to have caught on with teacher organizations and is taking hold with students in faculties of education. In Saskatchewan, “facilitating” made its formal appearance in February 1984, with the publication of *Directions*, the final report of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Curriculum and Instruction Review and a blueprint for provincial curriculum reform. According to *Directions*, a mainly child-centred work, the “role of the teacher is changing from disseminator of knowledge to facilitator of learning and *this changing role should be acknowledged*” (Saskatchewan Education, February 1984, p. 37, italics added). A similar theme is pressed in a companion report, *Saskatchewan Education: Its Programs and Policies* (June 1984), which claims that teachers “need to structure the environment and facilitate learning to provide opportunities for students to engage in problem-solving and decision-making about what and how they learn” (p. 54). Pressure has continued to mount for the replacement of teaching by facilitating. According to a recent study,

Inherent in the supposition of teachers' lack of knowledge about how students prefer to learn is a criticism of the teacher/lesson orientation still visible in the education system

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of Saskatchewan. The change of teacher role to that of a facilitator of learning has not been fully incorporated. The emphasis is often still on content and the presentation of content by the teacher rather than on the learning processes of the students. (Campbell, 1991, p. 107)

These are misleading and dangerous ideas for the education of children not only in Saskatchewan but generally. I argue that the slogan “we facilitate learning, we don’t teach” (or versions thereof) is based on a serious misconception of teaching and that were teachers to act consistently on the slogan, children would be educationally deprived or at least in grave risk of such a state. If my conceptual analysis of the case and overall arguments for a renewed emphasis on teaching are sound, then there are good reasons why we should think twice about handing children over to “facilitators” in our schools, and why faculties of education should think twice about presenting the teacher’s role as one of facilitating learning rather than of teaching curriculum subjects.

Teaching: A Summary Analysis

Teaching is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of learning. It is not a necessary condition since there can be learning without teaching (a person can learn by reading, observing, or other means); and it is not sufficient since there can be teaching without learning (I might teach a class but the students not learn what I teach them). Teaching and learning are thus logically independent. It would be incorrect to think that if learning occurs there must have been teaching, or that if there was no teaching there could not have been learning. Of course, it is true that “we facilitate learning, we don’t teach” is consistent with the logical independence of these concepts, but that in itself is not sufficient to justify the slogan nor a good reason to take it seriously. Logical considerations alone do not give us a full account of what teaching is. To discard or even minimize teaching in favour of something called “facilitating” on grounds that teaching is not necessary to learning would be premature indeed.

Although teaching does not entail learning, it does entail the *intention* to bring about learning (Scheffler, 1960; Hirst & Peters, 1970; Hellgren, 1985; Pearson, 1989). To teach something to others—for example, to teach a mathematical fact, a moral value, a motor skill, or a metaphor—is to intend that others learn these things. Learning is the central “good” at which teaching necessarily aims. Even when learning is not the result, teaching could still have occurred provided at least the purpose or aim to have others learn is present. Although learning as an outcome is not necessary for teaching proper, if the aim to achieve learning is removed there can be no teaching. There is, then, an important *conceptual* link between teaching and learning. Without a reference to “learning,” as embodied in the intention criterion, we could not have a concept of teaching—or certainly not a very coherent and recognizable one.

Given this conceptual link and the fact that learning may often follow teaching (that is, teaching may often be successful), it might be tempting to conclude that teaching and learning are related in some further way—causally, for example. Recent work on the teaching-learning relationship has explored the question of causal linkages (Ericson & Ellett, 1987; Macmillan & Garrison, 1983, 1986; Pearson, 1989). But we should tread cautiously here. Causal connections hold between events, not concepts, and occur in empirical, not conceptual, realms. If there *are* causal links, these would need to be brought out in concrete instances of the concepts in which episodes of teaching (cause) regularly lead to instances of learning (effect). Since experience cannot confirm what is not logically possible, and since teaching does not entail learning, instances of teaching cannot be said to guarantee instances of learning. Teaching (by itself) is not the cause of learning in the sense of being an empirically sufficient condition for it. That would be too stringent a test. It would also put in limbo the idea that students must take some responsibility for learning what they are taught. As others have pointed out, however, “sufficient causes are only one type of causal relation,” so that if teaching is not an empirically sufficient condition of learning, it would “not preclude that teaching and learning are causally related in another way” (Pearson, 1989, p. 83). Without going into details of a rather complex argument, it can be seen that teaching is factually or empirically related to learning at least as a “partial cause” (Pearson, 1989, p. 85) or “causal factor” (Hare, 1990, p. 201), even though teaching is not always sufficient and is not necessary to bring about learning.

I have briefly advanced these conceptual and empirical claims to offset in part the criticism, often made by proponents of facilitating, that teaching is not a learner-centred activity. Just where critics think the “centre” of teaching actually lies is not clear, but, since (as I have outlined) the essential purpose of teaching is to bring about learning in others, and since it can be a causal factor in the achievement of learning, there can be little doubt as to the confusion from which such criticism must stem. Teaching is obviously more prominent in learning than enthusiasts of facilitating are generally willing to concede. Yet, an intention to achieve learning in others does not in itself do full justice to “teaching” as a learner-centred activity. The CBC’s Peter Mansbridge and Pamela Wallin (let us suppose) certainly intend their viewers to learn what they report in the nightly news, but we do not say they are teaching. Further *differentia* of “teaching” can certainly be appealed to, criteria that even strengthen its learner-centred emphasis—for example, that the intended content be first indicated to learners and that it fall within range of their capabilities (Hirst & Peters, 1970). But it is obvious that Mansbridge and Wallin can satisfy these additional criteria without much difficulty.

The distinction we seek between teaching (at least in the context of schooling) and other activities like news broadcasting lies primarily in the *types* of learning

at which they respectively aim. We teach children so they will learn basic cognitive skills (how to read, write, calculate, estimate) and basic moral-social dispositions (to be kind, considerate, fair-minded, honest), and with the intent that they develop an understanding of the reasons why of things (why seasons change, why famines or revolutions occur, why nations go to war). The purpose of a news telecast, on the other hand, is to inform people of major events and happenings in the world, not to develop viewers' cognitive skills, moral dispositions, or wider forms of understanding (except, perhaps, incidentally). The learning objectives associated with teaching are generally more complex and in some cases more fundamental than those typically associated with news reporting. Moreover, there can be little doubt that of the two processes, reading the news from a prepared text and teaching, the latter is easily the more difficult and complex. In fact, the idea that teaching incorporates a family of activities guided by an overall aim to achieve learning of certain kinds is critical to the case against featuring the teacher as "facilitator."

Activities of Teaching

Analysts (Green, 1971; Hellgren, 1985; Komisar, 1969) have drawn attention to an important distinction between the intellectual (or logical) acts of teaching (e.g., explaining, defining, justifying, demonstrating, comparing, questioning, probing, inferring, concluding, interpreting, illustrating, and proving), and the strategic acts of teaching (e.g., motivating, planning, encouraging, guiding, counselling, and disciplining). At the core of teaching are the intellectual acts. Teaching a motor skill, for example, involves explaining and illustrating the critical aspects of the skill, and demonstrating it by performance. Teaching a metaphor involves acts of defining, illustrating, and interpreting. Questioning may be present in both cases; and so on. The intellectual acts of teaching thus criss-cross and overlap in a variety of combinations depending on the nature and complexity of what is taught. The strategic acts, on the other hand, are secondary to the teaching enterprise in the sense to which Hellgren (1985) has alluded. He argues that what is most distinctive about these acts is their concern to expedite or to improve the external practical conditions that make the occurrence of learning more likely, and he concludes (correctly) that strategic acts are therefore "subsidiary" to teaching proper (p. 54). In performing just the strategic acts a person would not actually be teaching, although any episode of teaching would normally incorporate such acts, along with intellectual acts—for instance, the use of humour or anecdote at critical points in one's teaching to heighten student interest in a topic. Strategic and intellectual acts can be further differentiated by reference to the general kinds of knowledge each entails—a (psychological) knowledge of human behaviour, motivation, and learning styles for strategic acts; a (logical) knowledge concerned with the laws of human thought and ways of knowing for intellectual acts—and by the fact that the former but not the latter

are evaluated chiefly by their consequences or outcomes for learning (Green, 1971, p. 7).

According to Green (1971), both types of acts are “indispensable to the conduct of teaching whenever and wherever it is found,” and the absence of either “would count heavily [strongly] against the view that teaching was going on” (p. 6). This seems to make the intellectual and strategic acts necessary not only for the *conduct* of teaching, but for the *concept* as well. On the first point, that intellectual acts are necessary for the concept *and* the practice of teaching, Green is surely right. But he is mistaken in thinking that strategic acts are necessary for the *concept* of teaching (though they may have a bearing on the conceptual issue). That would make learning outcomes part of what “teaching” means, which, according to the analysis of the concept, is not the case. Teaching (as a task) does not entail learning, and cannot, therefore, be evaluated strictly in terms of learning results. “Bad” teaching implies (at least) that the intellectual acts were incompetently performed, not that “learning did not occur” (learning may result even when teaching is “bad”). If strategic acts have value or a place in the wider enterprise of teaching, it is not because they are conceptually necessary to the latter. Their relation to the occurrence of learning is more indirect, mediated as it were through material and social conditions that enhance the achievement of learning or through modifying external environments that might otherwise make learning more difficult.

One further type of teaching act has not, with few exceptions (see Fenstermacher, 1990; Sirotnik, 1990), received the attention it deserves. I refer to the “moral acts” of teaching, such as exemplifying honesty and fairness in attempting to bring about learning in others; being considerate of others’ views while at the same time being diligent about matters of truth, evidence, and argument; showing active concern for standards implicit in the disciplines of thought, and so on. The moral acts of teaching are important for two reasons. “Good” teaching is defined in part by reference to them, and, given the intention to have students emulate the virtues displayed in teaching, the moral acts of teaching are themselves among the acts of moral formation.

FACILITATING: SKETCH OF A CONCEPT

According to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (8th ed.), “to facilitate” is to make something less difficult or easier to achieve. Wearing proper boots facilitates mountain-hiking by making the ascent not quite as arduous; using a sharp knife facilitates carving by making a cleaner cut. But what is it to facilitate learning? Is it simply to provide a well-lit and pleasant classroom, or one free of interruptions, or to ensure that children come to school properly fed and rested? We may distinguish here between facilitating conditions and empirically necessary conditions for the achievement of learning. A facilitating condition

enhances the occurrence of learning but is one whose absence would not make it impossible, only more difficult. By contrast, an empirically necessary condition for learning is one whose absence would actually prevent learning's occurrence. A well-lit and pleasant classroom, or one free of interruption, is a facilitating condition, since it would favour the achievement of learning. If such conditions were absent, learning would be more difficult, but certainly not impossible. On the other hand, children coming to school fed and rested is a necessary, not a facilitating, condition, since lack of food and sleep would seem to thwart the occurrence of learning altogether. In the standard sense of the term, then, to "facilitate learning" is to provide or to arrange a set of external material conditions or social circumstances that make learning easier but whose absence would not prevent it from being achieved. The following modest list of strategies is illustrative of facilitating conditions: displaying various curriculum or other related materials in the classroom; constructing activity centres; making oneself accessible to students, advising them about projects—how students might get started and might proceed; establishing co-operative learning groups or other social contexts that favour problem-solving approaches and (or) discovery learning; setting individual or group learning contracts; having students access information for themselves or use resources on their own; offering words of encouragement, inspiration, praise, or caution, and so on.

Based on this first level of analysis we may conclude that "facilitating learning" is a *strategic* act of teaching. It is at home with such activities as motivating, guiding, and counselling rather than those of defining, justifying, inferring, and so on. Like other strategic acts, it must be subsidiary to teaching proper. One who is "facilitating" learning is understood as not engaged in actual teaching. For those who champion the slogan, however, there is more at stake than what is entailed by the descriptive use of "facilitate learning." As Scheffler (1960, chaps. 1 and 2) has pointed out, when key expressions are programmatically defined—that is, express a choice of program or course of action—and are then embedded in a slogan they become rallying symbols for educational movements that are often controversial. "We facilitate learning, we don't teach" is no exception. It rallies support for a favoured but problematic principle of child-centred education: that children ought to choose their own learning. It is based on the normative assumption that what children should learn be in accordance with their nature, and on the empirical claim that their choices faithfully embody that nature. The intent of the slogan is precisely to free children from adults' instruction and intervention, from what is seen to be an unnecessary and unhelpful preoccupation with instruction, and to give children latitude to manage their own learning independently. It is thus a hand-maiden to child-centred principles. The slogan also urges teachers to accept the marginalization of teaching and its traditions, and to see this as a "natural" and desirable progression of their professional role to one more sensitive to learners'

interests and learning styles. To remove the “tedium” of teacher-determined learning, facilitating strategies are designed primarily to make learning less demanding, more fun, and ostensibly more significant.

It should not come as any surprise that teachers might find the idea of “facilitating” attractive. Yet the reasons for its appeal need to be scrutinized more closely. It can be argued, for example, that to facilitate learning is important because it represents a more humane approach to take with children than does teaching. As we have seen, “facilitating learning” refers to a non-interventionist strategy that is largely about teachers backing off, freeing children from the “imposition” of instruction and respecting their individual “autonomy.” Yet if the activities of teaching are basically rational and moral in kind, then teaching itself has a strong claim to being “humane.” Nor is teaching at odds with the idea of developing students’ individual autonomy. Particular instances of authoritarian or heavy-handed teaching should not be allowed to confuse the issue or jaundice the conception of what teaching is. Second, it might be argued that facilitating strategies more actively engage childrens’ minds than do acts of teaching, and consequently “facilitated” learning is superior to any learning that results from teaching. There may be elements of truth to the first part of this claim, although I would point out that the intellectual acts of teaching, and in particular those of questioning, probing, illustrating, comparing, and explaining, are intrinsically mind-engaging. Moreover, if “facilitating” is just a euphemism for “children learning on their own with minimal intervention by the teacher,” then at least for the earlier and more critical stages of schooling, and given the limited experience and maturity of children coupled with the low profile of teachers in their role as facilitator, only fairly minimal and simplistic kinds of learning can reasonably be expected. Claims for the qualitative superiority of learning that is “facilitated” should be treated with a healthy skepticism. There is, thirdly, the knowledge-explosion argument. It is based on the idea that knowledge and information taught in school is quickly “dated” and that there is no point in continuing to teach it. The argument concludes that what best aid students to cope effectively with a rapidly changing world are strategies that facilitate problem-solving and learning by discovery. But aspects of this line of thought are troublesome too. It downplays the central value of substantive knowledge in favour of processes and procedures, and of the need for a judicious selection of knowledge in the general education of children. It fails as well to recognize that areas at the core of knowledge, with which schools ought to be primarily concerned (as I shall argue presently), are remarkably stable and not easily susceptible of becoming “dated.” A fourth but seldom-acknowledged reason for the attraction of “facilitating” is the relative ease with which it can be done. Psychologically, facilitating is (arguably) less stressful since one is not consistently in “front” of students as one is who teaches; and intellectually demanding since it requires neither the logical acts of teaching nor the same degree of knowledge and understanding of subject areas and their wider epistemological frameworks.

AGAINST FACILITATING

I shall establish two lines of critical argument here. According to the first and shorter, the facilitating movement (as embodied in the slogan) trades on a conception of teaching that is narrow and skewed. Teaching is characterized pejoratively as the act of direct “telling” or “imparting” facts to children (invariably described as passive and indifferent recipients), or as the act of “dispensing,” “transmitting” or “disseminating” knowledge (see Saskatchewan Education, February 1984), as if knowledge were all of a piece and to be handed out as a block. Small wonder that children might find such prospects tedious. This one-sided view, present in child-centred literature, sees teaching as a relic of the past. There is much to be criticized in such literature. It often appeals to undeniably grim instances of deadening or insensitive teaching from the history of schooling, then proceeds to offer these as standard or received accounts of teaching. This is surely a case of attacking “straw men.” No solid base is provided for the slogan to condemn teaching nor valid premises for it to uphold facilitating. What is carelessly overlooked by such literature, as well as by those who would dispose of teaching if they could, are precisely the essential features already discussed. Teaching is not restricted in its intent to achieve learning of only one kind. Learning beliefs, skills, rules, and (possibly) attitudes, as well as concepts, theories, and knowledge of different kinds can all equally be aims of teaching. There is too the critically related point illustrated at length earlier that teaching is “polymorphous” (Hirst, 1973; Senchuk, 1984); that is, it takes many different forms, and is thus improperly conceptualized as limited to essentially one type of activity such as “telling.” Telling is of course an important logical act of teaching. To tell children basic facts in mathematics, science, language, history, geography, or morals is virtually inescapable, and it is an efficient means of helping them learn at lower levels what is necessary for learning at more advanced levels of schooling. Yet “telling” is but one of many activities of teaching and cannot begin to capture the richness of the concept. Reduction of teaching to a single, linear act is evidence of conceptual muddle.

The second argument concludes that the policy to “facilitate learning rather than teach” puts at risk the education of children. Behind this claim lies a view of what schools are for and how their goals are to be achieved. If we did not object to students learning very little of value in school, or if we thought the main reason for school was to entertain children or to keep them off the streets, then having adults as facilitators might be a splendid idea. But this is not what schools are for.

The primary and certainly most demanding goal of schooling is *education*, which (roughly) is the development of mind or consciousness through the achievement of various kinds of knowledge and understanding (Peters, 1977). The more knowledge and understanding, the more mind one has to discern what

is presented to it, and consequently the more fully a person one is. Thus education, and schooling, to the extent that education is its primary goal, are fundamentally about empowering learners to better discern and comprehend what is in the world and to respond intelligently and sensitively to it. Schooling must therefore be centrally concerned with the growth of childrens' intellectual capacities. Remove the development of cognition and there can be little advance in critical areas of social or emotional growth either (Peters, 1974). Schools have (of course) other important purposes, notably the achievement of moral dispositions and of an ability and willingness to relate well to others; basic preparation for citizenship in a democracy; and achievement of physical health and fitness and responsible attitudes towards care of the human body. Yet the achievement of greater awareness through knowledge and understanding remains the critical mission overall. Cognitive development underpins the moral, social, and health purposes of schooling and is at the core of the goal to educate.

Such goals are not easily or quickly accomplished. A command of language is absolutely critical to conceptual and personal development, yet our record on language competence is not what it should be. Were teachers to adopt a facilitating mode in place of the activities of teaching the situation would be worse. Language arts is one area of curriculum where teachers can ill afford to shy away from acts of direct telling and explaining the basic language facts and skills, let alone from demonstrating such skills and setting examples of correct language use for children to emulate. In the second place, the basic "forms of understanding" or "ways of knowing"—identified in recent formulations as the scientific, mathematical, social-historical, aesthetic, moral, and religious (see Hirst, 1974; Reid, 1986)—are central to education and the development of consciousness of the world. At the same time they are enormously complex conceptual structures and not immediately or directly accessible to young learners. This raises serious questions about the means by which children are initiated into the basic ways of knowing. Given what schools are for and in particular their primary purpose, I contend that teaching, not facilitating, is what needs to be at the forefront. Why is this?

Three distinct types of concept are relevant to achievement of a general education and to how the forms of understanding are developed in children (Dearden, 1968, chap. 6). *Perceptual* concepts, among the very first that they learn and that help bring order and sense into their everyday experience, are concepts of common physical objects and properties, such as dog, flower, tree, bird, stone, hot, rough, loud, sticky, and heavy. *Practical* concepts are also concepts of physical objects but with the difference that to understand them one must grasp what people *do* with objects or what they *use* them for (Dearden, p. 112). To have a concept of table, chair, pillow, car, clock, coat, telephone, or street is to recognize how these function in forms of social life. Even before they start school, most children have quite a number of perceptual and practical

concepts to discriminate among and relate many things they encounter daily, if in a limited or rather superficial way. Since perceptual and practical concepts are commonly learned through social contact and interaction outside formal instruction, it might be thought that facilitating strategies best suit such learning. This is not entirely persuasive, however, given that the formal acts of pointing, illustrating, or instantiating by someone already in possession of the concepts would seem to be necessary even in the informal social settings of concept learning. Yet it is also possible that a facilitating strategy such as the co-operative learning group can provide a useful context for children, clarifying and expanding the repertoire of their perceptual and practical concepts, provided this is not redundant of everyday learning experiences and therefore wasteful of school time.

Perceptual and practical concepts play a less critical role in the development of human consciousness and understanding than do *theoretical* concepts. This third type is integral to the basic forms or traditions of thought. To understand a theoretical concept entails understanding some relevant body of theory. Theoretical concepts “organize in highly systematic ways our ordinary ‘common sense’ experience, and in so doing *greatly increase our intellectual understanding of it*” (Dearden, 1968, p. 116, italics added). To see that a fossil, for example, is more than just a pattern of markings on a stone, that a lunar eclipse is more than a blocking of the moon’s light, a graph more than a series of lines on paper, acts of chivalry or of oppression more than overt human movements, it is necessary to move beyond the limited perceptual level of understanding to grasp each of these notions in their relationship to wider, more elaborate and sophisticated theoretical frameworks (Dearden, pp. 116–117). For “fossil,” that framework consists of principles of biological evolution; for “lunar eclipse,” principles of the solar system; “graph,” mathematical functions; “chivalry,” Medieval life; and “oppression,” principles of morality and interpersonal knowing.

Theoretical or conceptual frameworks do not lie about waiting to rush sensibly and coherently into untutored minds of children, nor are they readily mastered in some random and off-hand manner. These systems of thought are manifestly discontinuous with everyday experience. They are “strange” to children and represent major breaks with their familiar physical and social worlds, breaks nonetheless critical to the growth of cognition and understanding (Flodden, Buchmann, & Schwille, 1987). That young learners could initiate themselves independently into this necessarily complex and unfamiliar territory, or could single-handedly achieve even modest scientific, mathematical, historical, aesthetic, or moral perspectives of the world by means of activity centres, co-operative learning groups, or individual learning contracts where teachers take only a peripheral part—unless, of course, a good deal of relevant teaching and learning had *already* been accomplished—is a profound delusion and clearly a recipe for “educational” disaster.

Where theoretical concepts are concerned, and therefore greater awareness of the world, the intellectual acts of teaching need to be fully and systematically engaged at least at critical points. Mathematical conclusions have first to be “demonstrated” and “proved” according to principles of deduction by someone in-the-know to help others with less knowledge and experience get the “hang” of mathematically reasoning; natural phenomena must first be “identified,” “illustrated,” and “explained” in light of scientific laws and principles; moral judgments and actions “justified” in contexts of moral principles and relevant facts; works “interpreted” in light of aesthetic criteria; political or social movements “probed” and “explained” in terms of human aims, purposes, and emotions; and so on. How such objectives might be achieved systematically and meaningfully in the absence of informed and dedicated instruction by those already “inside” the forms of understanding, armed with the intellectual and moral acts of teaching, is unclear.

CONCLUSION

If much of the school curriculum can simply be “facilitated”—that is, if what students are expected to learn at school is already more or less familiar to them from everyday experience, or is easy and straightforward enough to be grasped independently with only a facilitator standing by—then for “educational” purposes we have a bad curriculum, one that should be discarded. Parents should be outraged if the learning their children are required to do is not strange to them and does not challenge them, and if this learning does not require the activities of teaching. What reasons could possibly justify a school property tax out of which teachers are hired and pedagogical materials purchased; or a law, no less, that compels youngsters to attend school day in and day out, if their time is squandered on the familiar, the trivial, or the easy? Unless in the schooling process youngsters are taught the more complex factual and conceptual material necessary for their “education” and growth as persons, compulsory schooling is an economic and moral outrage.

To the extent that “we facilitate learning, we don’t teach” opposes the intervention of teaching in any significant and sustained sense, facilitating per se is manifestly not what we need in our schools. It has a role, to be sure, but it is secondary to actual teaching and should be firmly kept in that perspective. Problems are created when, on the basis of either-or reasoning, facilitating is happily taken to extremes and teaching pushed to one side, if not over the edge, on trumped-up charges that it is outdated, useless, heavy-handed, authoritarian, or whatever. It is not nearly enough that we have teachers who care about children and are skilled at creating amicable learning environments. The time has come for a renewed understanding and dedication to teaching and its activities, and to a knowledge and understanding—both logical, in the sense of having at least a moderate comprehension of the basic disciplines of thought relevant to

schooling and its purposes, and psychological in the sense of knowing about children and their ways of learning—that teachers need in order to teach worthwhile learning competently.

Canadian universities have recently been criticized (for different reasons) for not giving sufficient attention to teaching (Smith, 1991). It would be a tragic irony, and worse, were teachers in Canadian schools to give it too little, foolishly thinking there is a greater and more urgent value in “facilitating learning” than in actual teaching.

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