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Defining Humanistic Philosophy, Pedagogy and Teaching Practices in Relation to English Language Teaching

Robert G. Emigh

The School for International Training

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FILE ABSTRACT FORM

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Year Degree was Granted: 1999

Thesis Advisor: Paul LeVasseur

Abstract:

The intention of this study was to arrive at a better understanding of how teachers define humanistic education, and how this understanding informs and influences their approaches to language teaching. The first section of this paper overviews the thoughts of three prominent humanistic educators. This is meant to serve as a grounding for the second part of the paper which reports and analyzes the results of a study of eleven practicing EFL and ESL teachers. The teachers responded to a questionnaire and submitted to an interview regarding how they viewed humanistic education and how those views translated into teaching practices.

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**DEFINING HUMANISTIC PHILOSOPHY, PEDAGOGY
AND TEACHING PRACTICES IN RELATION TO ENGLISH
LANGUAGE TEACHING**


Robert G. Emigh
B.A. Michigan State University 1978

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Teaching degree
at the School for International Training, Brattleboro, Vermont
February 1999

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This project by Robert Emigh is accepted in its present form.

Date: 2/20/99

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ERIC descriptors: Student Teacher Relationship
Teacher Attitudes
Teacher Behavior
Teaching Styles
Class Activities
Classroom Techniques
Curriculum Development

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The question was raised by Earl Stevick during a workshop he gave at the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont. I was a graduate student there and Stevick had come to the campus on that warm, New England summer day, as he does twice a year, to give a workshop for the Master of Arts (MAT) program. The situation he sketched out for us students was very straightforward and, on the surface, the question was simple; yet, underneath, the question turned out to be quite a bit deeper and more complex.

"Let's say you are at a cocktail party," Stevick began, "And you happen to overhear someone say, 'Well, he's a *humanistic* teacher.' " Stevick paused and then asked, "How would you take that? What do you think the speaker meant by *humanistic*?"

That was it: *What do you think the speaker meant by humanistic?* We then broke into groups to give our opinions and discuss the question a little. Although many in my group felt the comment was made in a very positive manner, others weren't so sure and felt the speaker might have been speaking in a negative way about the teacher. Perhaps, someone said, he was talking about a teacher who advocated a less than "rigorous" approach to language teaching (whatever "rigorous" meant). Still others weren't sure one way or the other. I was one of those who was torn. On the one hand, it seemed to me that, almost by definition, humanistic teaching must be a positive thing; yet, on the other

hand, I was aware that there were those who criticized it, ridiculing it as "touchy-feely," etc. Such widely varying responses to Stevick's "simple" question left me and others wondering what the term *humanistic* did indeed mean.

Part of the problem is that the definition to the word *humanistic*, not unlike the definition to the word *communicative*, seems to have been constructed on habitually shifting sands. Perhaps, it is a bit like a kaleidoscope in which, try as one might, no two people ever see exactly the same thing in. Something quite ironic seems to be happening too, since I doubt very few teachers would consider themselves *not* humanistic; yet, even while professing their faith, I think many teachers feel a certain uneasiness with the word humanistic. Is it the certain implied intimacy or the "touchy-feely" implications of the word? There is also the somewhat curious criticism that humanistic teachers are not demanding or rigorous enough, and that students in humanistic classes do not learn as much as those in more "traditional" classes. The criticism seems to imply that humanistic activities are superfluous or extra activities that supplement learning (or not), but, at any rate, are definitely not necessary for a well-functioning classroom. On the other hand, can we just ignore our students' feelings and emotions, or dismiss them as being incidental to the learning process? I believe this was a concern of Hawley and Hawley (1975) when they wrote,

Learning cannot be carried on in an emotion-and value-free climate...and personal growth education cannot be carried on in a vacuum of information. The two should be one.

Can cognitive learning be effective without taking into concern the affective?

Can the two, cognitive and affective, run through the classroom like parallel railroad

tracks that never touch? Perhaps, a more apt analogy would be this: Can a train run on tracks when one side of the track is submerged or buried in the ground? As important and interesting as these questions are, they are not the focus of this thesis; rather, I will be addressing what humanism means to practicing teachers. That is, how do practicing teachers define humanism and how do they implement (or not) those ideas in their classrooms?

I think we need to come to a understanding of what humanism is. Perhaps if that were clear to all, we could then begin building a more systematic approach to language teaching based on a way of thinking that was truly humanistic.

My goal then is to come to an understanding of what teachers mean by the term humanistic. My feeling is that practicing teachers should be the focus of this research, rather than "the experts," since it is the teachers themselves who deal with these problems day in and day out. And although I have not ignored what some prominent humanistic educators have written, I have focused this thesis around a questionnaire and interview that were designed to discover what practicing teachers think humanistic teaching is and how they go about applying their beliefs. This, I believe, can be a fruitful starting point for a deeper discussion of what humanism is and how we can make our classrooms more humanistic. As I said, I have not ignored some of the well-known humanistic educators and, in fact, I will begin this thesis by giving three brief sketches of my interpretation of how Gertrude Moskowitz, Charles Curran and Paulo Freire view humanistic education. I have included these brief sketches not so that we have all the answers before we begin, but as a way to ground the study in some well-circulated ideas of what humanism is. Yet, in the end, it's not the authors of books or conference keynote speakers that will decide

and define what kind of interaction—humanistic or not—that will transpire in the classroom; it will be the teacher.

CHAPTER 2

THREE FACES OF HUMANISM

Gertrude Moskowitz

In Gertrude Moskowitz's book *Caring and Sharing in the Foreign Language Classroom* (1978), the author cites the psychologist Carl Rogers (1975) on cognitive or "intellectual" learning and what is wrong with the educational system in the United States.

Each year I become more pessimistic about what is going on in educational institutions. They have focused so intently on the cognitive and have limited themselves so completely to 'education from the neck up,' that this narrowness is resulting in serious social consequences...As a consequence of this overstress on the cognitive, and of the avoidance any feeling connected with it, most of the excitement has gone out of education (p. 40-41).

For Moskowitz, this focus of education from "the neck up" is precisely the problem; she feels that educators who fail to integrate affective or emotional aspects of learning with the cognitive aspects invariably fail their students since those educators are only addressing part of the student. Moskowitz (1978) states that, "Humanistic education is concerned with educating the whole person—the intellectual and the emotional dimensions" (p. 11). Moreover, by ignoring the affective element of the classroom and only stressing the cognitive, the educator is simply not seeing the reality of her classroom. The aim of humanistic education, therefore, should be to integrate content or

subject matter to be learned with the feelings, emotions, experiences, and lives of the learners.

Moskowitz asserts that affective education is effective education. In an affective *and* cognitive classroom, students not only learn the subject matter, but learn how to development and maintain good relationships; show concern and support for one another; and become more caring, accepting, and sensitive of others. One might well argue that the above characteristics and abilities are not just supplemental benefits of humanistic classrooms, but fundamental abilities that need to be learned. In fact, Abraham Maslow, one of the founders of humanistic psychology, has stated that these characteristics form the very foundation of self-actualizing people—those people judged as living to their fullest capacities and making the best use of their potentials.

Self-actualizing people, Maslow claimed, accept themselves and others; are natural and spontaneous rather than conforming; have a mission in life and a strong sense of responsibility; are independent and look to themselves for their own growth; experience pleasurable, awesome feelings related to everyday life; have great empathy and affection for humanity; are not prejudiced; and are creative in their approach to things.

Thus, in Moskowitz's view, affective education is better education, and the one crucial element to better education—the element that according to Moskowitz is sadly missing in current education—is sharing. Moskowitz wrote sharing is multi-faceted; some things that can be shared are significant and meaningful experiences and memories, values and wishes, daydreams and fantasies and insights.

In fact, Moskowitz (1980) claims that sharing meets a deep psychological need of the students, regardless of culture.

It is through such types of communication that it has become vividly clear to me that people of all cultures do have the same basic psychological needs: the need to have close relations with others, the need to be listened to attentively, the need to know and understand themselves better, and the need to feel more positive in their outlook on life (p. 2).

From these psychological needs flow the goals of humanistic education which in Moskowitz's (1980) view are, "...to improve self-esteem, to develop positive thinking, to increase self-understanding, to build greater closeness between students and to discover strengths and goodness in oneself and in one's classmates" (p. 2).

I believe one last illustration would be useful in understanding Moskowitz's humanism and that is the Johari Window Model. The model was developed by psychologists Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham. It attempts to understand communication and Moskowitz calls it a "model for sharing."

		Things I Know	Things I Don't Know
		Arena	Blind Spot
The Johari Window Model	Things They Know		
	Things They Don't Know	Façade (Hidden Area)	Unknown

The model is divided into four parts which reflect the differing elements of communication. In the first area is information of which the speaker and the listener are

both aware of or have knowledge of, this is designated the Public Arena or just Arena. The second area is called the Blind Spot and it refers to those things which others may know about the speaker, but which he or she is unaware of. The third area, called the Façade, is the opposite of the Blind Spot, since it considers those things which the speaker knows about herself, but others do not know. In this area are things that the speaker consciously hides from the view of others. The last area is referred to as the Unknown, because it is an area of which neither the speaker knows about him/herself (at least on the conscious level) nor does the listener know about the speaker.

The key to understanding the importance of the model lies in the dynamics of the four areas vis-à-vis each other. For the developers of the Johari Window, a healthy dynamic would be one in which the second and third areas, the Blind Spot and Façade, respectively, feed into the first area, the Arena. In other words, through communication and self-disclosure the Blind Spot and the Façade shrink in size, while the Arena increases in relative size. As a result of this dynamic, the speaker becomes disposed to develop new insights into the fourth area, the Unknown, thereby even further increasing the size of the Arena.

A description of a unhealthy dynamic is exactly the opposite. The Arena becomes stagnant and devoid of growth; the Façade become larger as the speaker conceals more and more about himself and, due to lack of communication, the Blind Spot never develops the opportunity to decrease. Finally, devoid of serious communication there is never an opportunity to decrease the fourth area through insight. In *Caring and Sharing in the Foreign Language Classroom*, Moskowitz discusses the processes of healthy communication.

Humanistic communication activities help increase the Public Arena while decreasing the other three areas. It is the process of self-disclosure, of sharing oneself, that feelings of warmth closeness, and caring develop as students get to know one another at a deeper, far more interesting level, one which becomes an exciting adventure in discovering oneself and others (p. 5).

Self-disclosure and *personalization* play a critical role in Moskowitz's humanistic education. Self-disclosure for Moskowitz means far more than finding out how many brothers and sisters one has or what is their favorite hobby. Moskowitz notes that the psychologist Sidney M. Jourad studied this process of self-disclosure closely, and found that questions referring to self-disclosure could be rated according to their level of intimacy: low, medium, high. Questions which Jourad would rate low in intimacy are exactly those which are often found in a language learning classroom, e.g., "What are your favorite hobbies and interests?" "How many brothers and sisters do you have?" "Where would you like to go on a trip?" While Moskowitz does not propose revealing the most intimate details of one's life in the language classroom, she does suggest that these low-intimacy types of questions do little to foster closer bonds of understanding and empathy and awareness between students.

I would hypothesize that when teachers think of humanistic education, they generally think along the lines of Moskowitz's humanism. A humanism that is closely associated with feeling and emotions; grounded with activities that bring about self-disclosure and encourage us to reveal our emotions or something meaningful about ourselves to another person. Such activities may be emotionally gratifying and fulfilling for many people, but uncomfortable and/or ineffective for others.

Moskowitz's thoughts have been very popular in the ELT field, and her influential book, published in 1978, very successful. However, at least two decades before it was published, a man who was a Catholic priest and who had studied under Carl Rogers was developing a humanistic approach to teaching and learning languages that was quite unlike the most popular ELT approach of the time, the Audio-Lingual Method. The creator of this new approach had no former linguistic training, and although the approach, Counseling-Learning/Community Language Learning, never matched the popularity of ALM in its heyday, it is still around today. Its creator, Charles Curran, has found at least a small group of committed followers who to this day find CL/CLL relevant, meaningful and superbly humanistic. And it is to Curran that we now turn.

Charles A. Curran

Charles A. Curran was a professor of clinical psychology at Loyola University (Chicago) and was trained by Carl Rogers. And just as Rogers was disheartened by the state of education, so was Curran. Curran felt that poor learning and learning disorders stem from the depersonalization of modern education and the Cartesian emphasis on abstract intellectualism.

In his book *Counseling-Learning: A Whole-Person Model for Education*, Curran notes the considerable influence of Descartes, Kant and Newton on the history of Western education. Curran writes that Descartes, who in turn was influenced by the great advances in scientific thought of the time, introduced a strictly mechanistic idea of man

which established a dichotomy between the mind, or psyche, and the "machine-body." In this dualistic notion, the body was relegated to a subservient posture vis-à-vis the mind; in fact, the body existed purely to serve the needs of the mind. In Cartesian thought, Curran remarked, the body is to the mind what the spaceship is to the astronaut.

Layered over this Cartesian foundation of modern education is the Kantian notion of obedience as the most important virtue, and that an obedient man will obey his voice of conscience and his superiors. Children, too, must be taught to be obedient. Curran's (1972) interpretation of the effects of Cartesian and Kantian philosophy was that,

The higher thinkers, the noble minds, must train the less noble minds to obey them. They know the right thing to do because they inhabit the realms of pure thought. The lesser minds need only to receive what the higher thinkers transmit to them through a simple educational system. The extreme of this view might be expressed in the familiar words of Tennyson, "Theirs not to make reply, /Theirs not to reason why, /Theirs but to do and die" (p. 48).

The results, then, of Cartesian education were students who simply reproduced—exactly—the knowledge which the teacher had. For Curran, this was neither learning nor understanding.

Curran saw two of the great psychologists of the century, Freud and Rogers, fighting against the Cartesian influence in modern education. Curran saw Freud's therapeutic tradition and Roger's counseling tradition as attempts to break down a segmented view of man and replace it with a view of totality. Curran's own research into the learning process had led him to a similar conclusion, namely, that learning was more than just a simple, abstract, intellectual process. Some of the terms that have come to be associated with Curran and his approach are *whole-person learning* and *personalized learning* and *convalidation* and *investment*. Curran also introduced an acronym, SARD,

(or SAARRD), which represents the essential elements of learning. SARD, a four-letter word with six implications, stands for security, attention-aggression, retention-reflection and discrimination. Curran wrote in *Counseling-Learning in Second Languages* (1976) that his research showed that,

These elements were characteristic not only of the psychological atmosphere necessary to constructive, self-invested, whole-person learning, but also were fundamental to the learning process itself. Unless all these elements were in some way present, positive and consistent learning seemed not to take place (p. 6).

The first element of the acronym is *security* and it is the foundation upon which all the other elements of SARD are based. Feeling secure "frees" us to be open to the learning situation. Curran noted that we seem to learn best when we feel secure and safe and not threatened. I believe that this is the same notion that Stephen Krashen alludes to when he refers to an "affective filter" that inhibits the learning process in a language classroom.

Attention is the second element, as in "Pay attention, class!" However, Curran encourages us to look at attention in a slightly different manner; he reminds us that distraction is a basic and natural phenomena. Channel it positively, Curran counsels, set up two tasks in the classroom so that when one begins to fade, students can turn to the other. Furthermore, Curran (1976) felt that the optimum level of learning takes place at a plane between newness and boredom,

...something too new is also too strange for us to hold in memory, whereas, something too familiar can deteriorate into boredom before we can learn it adequately. What we are seeking, then, is a learning area balanced between newness and boredom (p. 7).

The second *A* in SAARRD stands for *aggression*, although *assertion* would also accurately describe this element of learning and it does not have the negative

connotations that aggression is laden with. The idea of aggression or assertion in the language classroom refers to using something you have just learned, showing it off, so to speak, to yourself, your teachers and your classmates. Assertion demonstrates that you have understood and can apply the item just taught. When this self-assertion is approved and encouraged by the teacher, Curran writes, the students grow in their sense of self-worth and esteem.

The double "R" refers to *retention* and *reflection*: retention is the "absorption" of the subject matter into oneself. Retention demonstrates a command of the item being taught; it is where the student can recall it at will. Reflection is that silent time that students must have that allows the other "R", retention, to take place. Reflection is a "learning space" that a student needs to make the material his/her own. It is an opportunity of the student to sort things out without competition with others or distractions from the other students or from the teacher.

Discrimination is the final element of SARD. It is the element of learning that allows the student to show that he/she has a mastery of a language; at this point, the student can clearly discriminate the sounds he/she is hearing, the meanings of words and grammatical usage.

Much like the boughs of a tree that branch off from the trunk, so do the six principles of CL-CLL branch off from, and build upon, the trunk of Curran's humanism which is SARD. The principles are enumerated in *Education in a New Dimension* by Jennybelle Rardin, a close associate of Curran's, and identify key elements of Curran's humanistic thought. The six principles are the following:

- *Whole-Person Learning*

Whole-person learning concerns the broadening of learning so that, instead of being an exclusively abstract endeavor, it includes the emotions—the whole self. In order for a person to personally invest in what he/she is learning the head and the heart (the intellect and the emotions/instincts) must be fully engaged.

- *Engaged Inter-Dependent Learning*

Rather than attempting to be an objective, uninvolved, unattached observer who sits at his/her desk in the corner, the CL-CLL teacher needs to realize that the teaching-learning process is an interdependent one. Thus, when teachers and learners “take the risk” and become fully engaged in an independent enterprise, that enterprise becomes a truly creative experience for everyone in the classroom. In doing so, Curran writes a “core value of the humanistic tradition can be restored.”

- *Uniqueness in the Learning Process*

Tranel et al., in *Education in a New Dimension* (1988) ask, “Is the teacher’s task merely to pass on predigested information, to simply replicate or clone himself in the student, or is it to truly nurture the creative talent of the student so that he can integrate the material and develop it in his own unique way?” (p. 19) Clearly, Curran believes the latter, and that each individual must be regarded as a unique and valued individual for an authentic learning community to exist.

- *Learning as a Process*

In the Cartesian approach, learning had fixed steps that were predetermined and whose outcome was predictable. The learning was analogous to following a

mathematical formula: one followed the required steps and each one equally received the end result. Each student learned precisely the same things in the same manner, and the outcome was never in doubt. *Learning as a process* concerns the belief that learning is much more than the final product, that it is indeed the *process*—the road that leads to the final product—that sets humanistic education apart from other approaches to education. This is not to mean that humanistic education sets no goals or has no ideas of the what the final destination should look like; rather, it means that each learning journey is a unique enterprise and what we, as teachers, need to realize is that flexibility is often what makes the trip a pleasure.

- *A Learning Relationship in Trust*

The notion that there must be trust between teacher and student might seem like a truism. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a class at an elementary level without this basic trust; yet, at higher levels this seems to often be replaced with skepticism and mistrust. The influence of Descartes philosophy with its “methodic doubt” and the “putting-into-question” everything attitude has cast shadows on the integrity of this basic relationship. The learner questions the knowledge or credibility of the teacher and the teacher questions the students sincerity for being in the class. Thus, without trust the relationship between teacher and student breaks down. Trust, then, is a core ingredient in the learning equation and it is essential for the teacher-learner relationship to be fulfilled and for significant learning to take place.

- *Equality of Persons*

According to the Cartesian paradigm, the very nature of a teaching process establishes a situation of inequality, i.e., the teacher is the knower, and therefore superior, and the learner is inferior. A humanistic teacher, however, recognizes each person brings something to the learning process: His or her life experience, for example, and his/her unique and particular way of learning. By showing respect for this and by also becoming a learner, too, along with his students, the teacher conveys deep regard for his students as individuals.

Robert Blair (1982) once described Curran the following way,

In his philosophy of holistic learning and education as well as in his blaming the traditional, depersonalized methods of instruction for causing learning pathologies, Curran is at one with other proponents of humanistic education, but in his prescriptions of what to do to promote optimal, joyful, therapeutic learning, he is unique.

Curran's approach to language learning is clearly unique and humanistic; those exact words could and have been used to describe the last educator to be profiled here, Paulo Freire.

Paulo Freire

The pedagogy of the oppressed, as a humanist and libertarian pedagogy, has two distinct stages. In the first, the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation. In the second stage, in which the reality of oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation.

—Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970)

After reading a passage like the one above, one might suspect that Paulo Freire has little in common with Gertrude Moskowitz and Charles Curran regarding humanistic philosophy. At first glance, it would even appear as if they were writing on different topics altogether; the tone of Freire's writing, for example, is quite different than that of Moskowitz's or Curran's—even their vocabulary is different. While Moskowitz and Curran often explain their humanistic philosophy in the language of the psychologist, Freire's vocabulary seems much closer to that of the political scientist, if not the revolutionary. Thus, on the surface, the content of Freire's thought appears to be quite different than that of Moskowitz's or Curran's; yet, are the two approaches substantively different or are they simply occupying different positions on single continuum of humanistic thought? Let us take a closer look at Freire's philosophy to see.

A good place to begin might be with an anecdote that Freire relates in his seminal work, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. The anecdote concerns a farmworker—what Freire calls a “peasant”—who was shown a picture and was asked to describe what he saw in it. Freire used pictures of abstract scenes as “codes” to engage his learners; the pictures depicted situations which were in some way problematic for the farmworkers. In

“decoding” the abstract pictures, the farmworkers began moving from the abstract to the concrete. The *abstraction* is the representation of an anonymous situation in the picture; the situation is detached in the beginning: there is no date, no time, no names. As the group discussion of the picture progresses, the peasants slowly begin to see the anonymous, abstract picture becoming real. The situation in the picture begins to become *concrete* because the peasants begin to see themselves and their friends and family in the picture—it is no longer anonymous. This movement, then, from the anonymous abstraction to a concrete reality is one of the first—and most crucial—steps in the peasant’s growing awareness of his or her problems. This is a phenomenon that Freire calls *conscientização*, a deepening attitude of awareness, which he believes is a necessary step before the farmworker can begin to take concrete *actions* to improve his or her situation.

However, on this day when the farmworker was shown the picture, he responded not by “decoding” it, but by turning to the literacy instructor and suggesting, “Why don’t you just explain the pictures first? That way it’ll take less time and won’t give us a headache.”

This anecdote is particularly enlightening on more than one level. First, it illustrates the degree of self-depreciation that the farmworkers in the northeast of Brazil had (have). It is indeed hard to imagine a person whose self-esteem is so low that he or she needs to be told what is in a picture that he/she is fully capable of seeing for him/herself.

Dehumanization is a “concrete historical fact” Freire (1970) states and it is a result of the social, economic and psychological dynamics of the oppressor class vis-à-vis

the oppressed class. Thus, Freire (1970) believes that the low self-esteem of the farmworkers is a direct result of their interaction with their oppressors, i.e., their bosses.

Self-depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from their internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them. So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything—that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive—that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness (p. 45).

Although Freire does not specifically mention it, I believe the farmworker's response also illustrates his orientation toward learning and his idea of what the relationship should be between the teacher and the student. It would appear that this farmworker felt there must be a right and a wrong answer to the question his instructor was posing, and that, furthermore, the teacher always knows the correct answer. (It is interesting to note the similarity here with Curran's ironical remark, "We say people have 'problems.' Problems have answers, and answers are often in the back of the book.") If this indeed was the orientation of the farmworker toward education, then his reaction is not surprising at all. He may well have been thinking, "What is the point of discussion, if our teacher already knows the answer?" The farmworker might have reasoned, and not without justification, that a discussion would only serve to expose his inadequacies and lack of knowledge.

This then leads us to the question of how we view pedagogy—our philosophy of education—and it brings us to a concept that has become closely associated with Paulo Freire: the banking system of education. The banking system of education is one in which "the scope of action allowed to the student extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits." In other words, the teacher, who is the knower, "deposits" bits of knowledge into the learner. The learner's role is passive: he/she listens, incorporates,

systematizes the information and, when the test is put in front of him/her, he/she regurgitates the information in a fashion that will please and satisfy the teacher/knower. (Again, note the similarity to Curran's humanism as expressed by Tranel, et al., in *Education in a New Dimension* (1970) that was referred to in the previous section: "Is it the teacher's task merely to pass on predigested information, to simply replicate or clone himself in the student, or is it to truly nurture the creative talent of the student so that he can integrate the material and develop it in his own unique way?" (p. 19) However, Freire goes a step farther by adding an explicit political dimension to the role of education. Freire (1970) states that banking education serves the political interests of those in power.

The capability of banking education to minimize or annul the students' creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressor, who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed (p. 54).

Furthermore, Freire (1970) believes that the oppressors use, in conjunction with banking education, other tools to stifle dissent and pacify the people. One of these "tools" is "...a paternalistic social action apparatus, within which the oppressed receive the euphemistic title of 'welfare recipients' " (p. 55).

One would imagine that the intention of this "paternalistic social action apparatus" is to "soften" the economic injustices inflicted on those at the bottom of the social and economic ladder. And although one might debate the various possible motives behind the establishment of such an apparatus, it would appear that to Freire the oppressors' motive is clearly one of self-preservation, rather than beneficence. Another tool of the elite that Freire (1970) discusses is a dynamic which focuses on the middle classes, although to some extent it pervades all of society.

...at a certain point in their existential experience the oppressed feel an irresistible attraction towards the oppressors and their way of life. Sharing this way of life becomes an overpowering aspiration...This phenomenon is especially prevalent in the middle-class oppressed, who yearn to be equal to the 'eminent' men and women of the upper class (p. 44).

A critic might question the legitimacy of Freire's claims and assert that perhaps Freire is overstating his case. However, Freire (1985) counters, "It would be extremely naïve to expect the dominant classes to develop a type of education that would enable subordinate classes to perceive social injustices critically" (p. 102).

Rejecting the banking system of education, Freire puts forth an approach to learning which involves a focus on problem posing. In this approach the educator is responsible for helping to discover meaningful topics which are relevant to the students, Freire calls these topics *generative themes*. Generate themes, in turn, assist the students to become more aware of the oppressive elements of society and its injustices, and allow the students to see the possibility of transforming their reality. Freire (1970) uses the term *conscientização*, which he describes as "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (p. 17).

In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation (p. 64).

While the banking system suppresses creativity, problem-posing allows it to blossom. Freire (1970) contrasts banking education with his problem-posing approach.

Whereas banking education anesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the submersion of consciousness; the latter strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality (p. 66).

For Freire, education leads to either domestication or freedom. If it leads to domestication, as in the banking system of education, our concept of history will either be mechanistic or fatalistic. A mechanistic concept of history, in Freire's view, is where the present is something which should be "normalized," and the future is just a maintenance of the status quo—a re-run of the present. The fatalistic view is when the "political illiterate" perceives the future as something that not only is the same as the present, but as something that is also pre-ordained or pre-established. It is as if the future has already been written out and it is only up to him/her, the farmworker, to fulfil the role he/she has been cast. Both of these visions negate in people an essential aspect of Freirean thought, which is *praxis*. Praxis consists of two elements: reflection + action. Both elements must be present for praxis to occur. If only one of the elements is present the other suffers greatly. Reflection without action becomes "idle chatter" and loses any ability to transform the world. By the same token, action without reflection is converted into what Freire calls "activism"—action for action's sake. For Freire, both forms are inauthentic and incapable of bringing about true transformation. Yet, reflection *together* with action triggers authentic dialogue and authentic dialogue can change one's existence. Praxis changes one's life through its dialectical nature. Freire (1985) writes:

The act of knowing involves a dialectical movement that goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to a new action (p. 50).

Praxis is the unique element of being human to Freire (1970) and the basis for our history.

Only human beings are praxis--the praxis which, as the reflection and action which truly transform reality, is the source of knowledge and

creation. Animal activity, which occurs without a praxis, is not creative; people's transforming activity is (p. 81).

It is only through praxis that men and women can meaningfully transform their reality into something more human and better. Through the problem-solving approach, or what has been called the Participatory Approach, human beings first become aware of their own particular situation and then they begin to see their lives not fatalistically or with resignation, but as something they have control over and something which they can, through exertion of their will, transform.

Finding Common Themes

It may be worthwhile to pause here for a moment and reflect back on the three educators we have just discussed. What do they have in common, and how do their thoughts and ideas differ? Are we justified in classifying them together as, perhaps, the three most influential humanistic educators? Or is the nature of their thought so different that we must conclude they do not belong together on a single continuum of humanistic thought?

As I stated in the beginning of the chapter, their words *are* different. Moskowitz and Curran use a different language to express their ideas than Freire does. The language of Moskowitz and Curran comes from the field of psychology, while Freire's language comes from the field of political science. And just as the field of psychology looks inward, the thought of Moskowitz and Curran tends to look inward too; conversely, the field of political science looks outward, and, in my opinion, so does Freire's philosophy. Moskowitz's reference points are Maslow's self-actualizing man and Luft and Ingham's

Johari Window; both of these psychological frameworks are ones that look inward to a significant degree before looking outward. Curran, too, focuses inward. The phrase “whole-person” explicitly refers to the cognitive and the affective aspects inside us all. Reflection, although sometimes done in groups, is generally a solitary and inward-looking action. This is not to say that Moskowitz and Curran look *only* inward; in fact, community plays a very significant role in the thinking of both of these educators. However, in discussing community, they do so without putting forth an explicit political framework in the way that Freire does.

The words that appear frequently in Freire’s works—*oppression*, *dehumanization*, *praxis*—tend to be words from a political context. They are terms that define, explain and shape the relations between people. Of course, Moskowitz’s and Curran’s thought will change the nature of people’s relationships with each other too; conversely, Freire’s term *conscientização* is a process of growing awareness which is, in part, an inward-looking process. Therefore, in some ways, the thoughts of the Moskowitz and Curran and the thoughts of Freire complement, rather than conflict with, one another.

In fact, there are many ways in which these three educators are similar: all three are in agreement that there are serious flaws with the educational system; all three find that what is lacking in education is a validation of the learner as an individual; and all three focus on ways to validate and improve the quality of life of the learner. In the end, I would assert that Moskowitz, Curran and Freire occupy different positions on a *single* continuum of humanistic thought, and they only differ by the manner with which they express themselves and the framework through which they see humanism.

CHAPTER 3

STUDY OF PRACTICING ESL/EFL TEACHERS' VIEWS OF HUMANISTIC TEACHING

Research Questions

The goal of the study was to discover the views of practicing ESL/EFL teachers towards humanistic teaching. Toward this end, I devised three research questions:

1. Do practicing ESL/EFL teachers see humanistic teaching in a positive, negative or neutral light? How do they define humanistic teaching?
2. Do the teachers consider their own teaching humanistic? If so, how humanistic would they characterize it?
3. What kinds of activities do the teachers consider humanistic? What kinds of activities do they consider *not* humanistic?

In the first research question, I refer back to Earl Stevick's question with which I began this paper: What do you think the speaker meant by *humanistic*? Is the notion of humanistic teaching regarded today as something positive, negative or neutral? The participants' response to this question led directly to the next question, which asked them to define humanistic teaching. In this question, I simply was looking for a definition of humanistic teaching that came from ESL/EFL teachers themselves. It would have been quite easy to find a definition of humanistic teaching somewhere, but that seemed less important to me than finding out how practicing ESL/EFL teachers defined it; after all, it

is those teachers who are actually implementing the theories of how a humanistic (or not) classroom should function.

The second research question asked the participants for a self-evaluation: did they consider their teaching humanistic? And, if they did, to what degree did they consider it humanistic?

The final question concerned how teachers apply humanistic philosophy in the ESL/EFL classroom. Therefore, I asked the participants to report activities they would consider humanistic, and others they would consider *not* humanistic. I also asked them to rank specific ELT activities and techniques in terms of their humanistic value.

In the process of studying the questions above, I also discovered a number of what I shall call “minor findings.” These findings relate to how the participants view—in terms of humanism—their ESL/EFL textbooks; different approaches to teaching ESL/EFL; and some of the prominent figures in the ELT and related fields.

Method

Materials

I prepared two questionnaires for the study. The first one, which I called the “preliminary questionnaire,” had only two questions: the first question asked the respondents how humanistic they considered their teaching to be; the second question inquired if they would be willing to take part in a longer and more comprehensive questionnaire. The purpose of the preliminary questionnaire was two-fold: the first reason was to get a broad sampling (it was distributed to about 80 teachers) concerning the degree to which teachers consider their teaching humanistic. The second reason for

the preliminary questionnaire was to recruit potential teachers for the more comprehensive questionnaire.

The second and more comprehensive questionnaire had three parts. The first part explained the purpose and origins of the questionnaire. The second part consisted of 18 questions that asked participants to respond to various aspects of humanistic teaching. And the third part sought information about the participants' educational and teaching background.

The last element of the materials was the interview or follow-up e-mail. Each participant who lived in the same city as the author was given an oral interview. The purpose of the interview was to clear up any unclear responses from the questionnaire, and, at the same time, allow the teacher to expand on any aspects of humanistic teaching which he/she cared to. I also feel the oral interview was important in that it gave the author a chance to interact personally with the participants of the study. For those participants who lived outside of the author's immediate vicinity, questions were e-mailed as necessary.

Subjects

The participants of this study were eleven practicing teachers of English to speakers of other languages. The teachers came from widely ranging backgrounds, had distinctly different teaching environments, and characterized themselves in three different ways as to how humanistic they considered their teaching.

Regarding their educational backgrounds, three teachers had no previous ESL/EFL teacher training before they became ESL/EFL teachers (with the exception of

teacher training courses provided by their schools); three teachers had a Bachelor of Arts degree in English, languages, or TESOL; and five had Master of Arts degrees in TESOL (Table 1). In terms of teaching experience, one teacher had taught five years or less; five had taught from 6-10 years; two from 11-15 years; two from 16-20; and one had taught more than 20 years (Table 2).

TABLE 1

Educational Background of Participants

<u>No previous English/TESOL background (3)</u>	<u>B.A. in English, Languages or TESOL (3)</u>	<u>M.A. in TESOL (5)</u>
AR MW SU	BA CT IA	JD DS MB JB RS

TABLE 2

Experience in Teaching ESL/EFL (in years)

<u>0-5 (1)</u>	<u>6-10 (5)</u>	<u>11-15 (2)</u>	<u>16-20 (2)</u>	<u>More than 20 (1)</u>
JB	MB AR DS SU RS	CT JD	BA IA	MW

There was also diversity regarding the type of institution where the participants taught ESL or EFL, and the country where the institution was located. Three of the participants taught EFL at private English schools; five taught EFL at bi-national centers (one teacher was currently teaching at both a private English school and a bi-national

center); four participants taught ESL or EFL at colleges or universities; and one taught in an adult ESL education setting (one teacher was currently teaching at both a university and in adult education) (Table 3). A total of four participants were from ESL settings, and seven were from an EFL environments (Table 4). The majority of the participants taught in Brazil (five); the other participants taught in Canada (two); the United States (two); Japan (one); and Peru (one) (Table 5).

TABLE 3

Teaching Environment of Participants

<u>Private English School (3)</u>	<u>Bi-National Center (5)</u>	<u>Community College/ University (4)</u>	<u>Adult Education (1)</u>
MW SU IA*	AR BA DS CT IA*	JD MB RS JB*	JB*

* Teaches in more than one ESL/EFL environment.

TABLE 4

ESL or EFL Setting

<u>ESL (4)</u>	<u>EFL (7)</u>
JD JB MB SU	AR BA CT MW IA DS RS

TABLE 5

Country of Teaching Institution

<u>Brazil (5)</u>	<u>Canada (2)</u>	<u>USA (2)</u>	<u>Japan (1)</u>	<u>Peru (1)</u>
AR BA CT MW IA	MB SU	JD JB	RS	DS

Finally, the participants surveyed had different characterizations of themselves in terms of how humanistic their teaching was. A factor in selecting teachers to do the comprehensive questionnaire was to get a similar distribution—in terms of how humanistic the teachers viewed their own teaching—to that of the more widely distributed preliminary questionnaire (Table 7, p.39). Therefore, of those teachers who completed the comprehensive questionnaire, two considered their teaching to be “very humanistic”; six to be “fairly humanistic”; and three to be “somewhat humanistic” (Table 6).

TABLE 6

Participants’ Attitudes Toward Humanistic Teaching in Comprehensive Questionnaire (N=11)

1 very <u>(2)</u>	2 fairly <u>(6)</u>	3 somewhat <u>(3)</u>	4 a little <u>(0)</u>	5 not at all <u>(0)</u>	F/NF <u>(0)</u>	NF <u>(0)</u>
MB JD	JB BA AR SU IA RS	DS MW CT	—	—	—	—

“F/NF” means “I am familiar with the term humanistic teaching, but not familiar enough to characterize my teaching.”

“NF” means “I am not familiar with the term humanistic teaching.”

Procedure

I distributed the preliminary questionnaire to each of the teachers at the two institutions (a bi-national center and a private English school) where I teach at in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. There is a total of about 65 teachers working at the two schools. I also e-mailed about 15 practicing ESL/EFL teachers who were working towards (or had already completed) their Master of Arts degree in TESOL from the School for International Training (SIT) in Brattleboro, Vermont. In addition, a colleague from Canada distributed the questionnaire to three teachers at his school.

From those who indicated on the preliminary questionnaire that they would be willing to respond to the more comprehensive questionnaire, I chose 17 teachers who represented the best cross-section of teachers in terms of education, experience, current teaching environment and disposition towards humanistic teaching. I sent out the comprehensive questionnaire to those 17 teachers; of those 17 questionnaires, 11 of the questionnaires were completed in a timely fashion and returned to me. It is on those questionnaires which this study is based. After the comprehensive questionnaires had been returned, I conducted the interviews and sent, as necessary, the follow-up e-mails.

Findings

General attitude towards humanistic teaching

Intuitively, I felt that most teachers would regard humanistic teaching in a positive light; yet, I was surprised by how strongly the study showed this positive nature was. Ten of the eleven participants responding to the questionnaire felt the term “humanistic teaching” carried positive connotations (three wrote “very positive,” one wrote “positive—mine; negative—some others I’ve heard”) The one participant who wrote “negative” explained in the follow-up interview that she had been thinking of students who are first exposed to humanistic teaching techniques and who may wonder about their validity. The participant said the student may ask, “What does this have to do with language?” The participant went on to say that that was why teachers need to take some care when they introduce humanistic teaching techniques in their classrooms for the first time. When she was asked what her personal view of humanistic teaching was, she responded “very positive.”

Concerning the teacher at the fictional cocktail party who is referred to as a “*humanistic* teacher” (Earl Stevick’s question with which I began this paper), all eleven of the participants responded in a positive way when describing what they think the speaker meant by humanistic. Typical responses were the following:

AR: I would infer that this teacher is understanding, empathetic, a good negotiator and listener...

MW: I would infer that he was not only concerned with knowledge acquisition, but also with his students as human beings.

IA: I’d say that teacher is someone that cares, someone that tries to make the positive of each person flourish.

Defining humanistic teaching

In analyzing participants' responses to the definition of humanistic teaching, I was able to separate out of the data five distinct elements of what humanistic teaching is for them. The five elements are the following:

1. Respect for the student as an individual and a human being, as well as respect for the student's culture.
2. Awareness of the student's emotional needs, in addition to his/her cognitive needs.
3. Creating a curriculum design that reflects the student's interests, and, at the same time, accommodates for different learning styles.
4. Empowering the student, both linguistically and in terms of personal growth.
5. Providing a level of personal involvement that is usually not seen in a more "traditional" classroom.

Concerning the first element, 10 out of the 11 participants commented in some form about respect for the student as an individual and as a human being as being an key element of humanistic teaching. Two of the participants, both from ESL settings, commented on respect for the student's culture as well.

MB: Seeing students as individuals, seeing their needs as individual and teaching to that student and that need rather than to a goal that may or may not reflect those two things.

DS: [Humanistic teaching is] treating students as human beings, using empathy to try and understand the process they are going through individually.

JD: [Humanistic teaching] reflects the interests and values of the members of the class, not only as individuals, but also as members of a culture. In an ESL class, where students bring many different first cultures with them, it seems especially valuable—essential, really—to respect the connection between language and culture, between learning a second language in the context of the second culture through the filter of the native culture.

A second element of humanistic teaching that the participants commented upon concerned the importance of recognizing the affective part of their students: how the students *feel* in the classroom. Clearly, to the participants in the study, humanistic teaching merged the affective element with the more traditional cognitive element of the classroom. A humanistic teacher, as one of the participants said, "...can work both sides: cognitive (intellectual) and affective" (CR).

JB: As any education **MUST** take into account the inner workings of their students. Any teaching will be an interaction of the content to be learned and the personality of the students.

BA: [Humanistic teaching takes into account]...students' needs, wishes, their life experience, home background, memories, worries, dreams, anger, moods.

RS: The teacher would be concerned about how students "felt" in his or her classroom, that students would be talking about how they "felt" in his or her classroom, that the teacher would be listening to the students talk about how they "felt."

IA: Emotions play a very important role in the learning process. Therefore, a humanistic teacher will take that into account and take profit from it.

The third element of humanistic teaching concerned creating and developing a curriculum that reflected the interests and values of the students. To create a "humanistic curriculum," the teacher needs to be flexible and needs to alter existing material as necessary to best serve the students' particular needs and interests. "Student-centered" and "interactive" were words the participating teachers frequently used to describe this humanistic curriculum. Also, teachers mentioned "feedback" as an important element of the humanistic classroom. Finally, a humanistic curriculum accommodates the various learning styles of students.

JD: [A humanistic teacher] designs a curriculum that reflects the human interests and values of the students, puts a high priority on interactive learning, solicits feedback from students on activities and materials used in class.

JB: [A humanistic teacher] alters curriculum to best suit students needs at that moment. Uses contexts that are familiar to students when teaching. Includes students in curriculum goals and objectives. Student learning styles are assessed and taught to as possible. Schedules regular feedback sessions.

MB: [A humanistic classroom is a] student-centered classroom, [a humanistic teacher is] kind, interactive with students. Does not simply photocopy pages and distribute them.

“Empowerment” of the students was the fourth element of humanistic teaching.

There appeared to be two aspects of humanistic language teaching that could be termed “empowerment.” Eight of the participants said humanistic teaching moved the student towards proficiency and self-sufficiency in the use of the language. Here, empowerment meant being able to function independently and being able to use the language to meet the students’ needs in the “second” country.

JD: ...one of my hopes as a teacher is to give every student a chance to shine—in English, of course! Speaking idealistically, I’m trying to help students find their voice in a second language...

For five of the participants, empowerment also reflected on personal growth and development. It seemed to include broadening and enriching one’s horizons through exposure to a different culture and through examination of one’s own values. This seemed particularly true in the EFL environments; perhaps, this was the case because the immediate language needs are generally less pressing in an EFL setting.

BA: [A humanistic teacher] is concerned not only with the cognitive or intellectual part of learning but also with the learner’s personal development.

The last element in humanistic teaching was a level of personal involvement that went beyond that of the traditional classroom. Humanistic teaching seemed to imply a breaking down of the traditional roles of teacher and student, knower and learner; a breaking down of the distance that separates the teacher from the student. One participant said that a humanistic teacher works to establish a “good rapport” (AR) with her students; another said, simply, that a humanistic teacher is “kind” (MB). One participant wrote,

CT: [A humanistic teacher] has a healthy relationship with students [and] isn't afraid of involvement.

I also asked the participants for words they associated with humanistic teaching. The most frequently cited word was *understanding* (5 times). Five other words or concepts were mentioned three times: *empathy*, *flexibility*, *sharing*, *friendliness*, *feelings/emotions*.

In conclusion, there were five elements that the participating teachers felt most important in defining humanistic teaching: respect for the individual; awareness of a student's affective needs; creating a curriculum designed to meet student needs and to accommodate different learning styles; empowering the student both linguistically and in terms of personal growth; and, finally, providing a higher level of personal involvement. Furthermore, the word most participants associated with humanistic teaching was *understanding*.

What humanistic teaching is *not*

Before moving on to the second research question, it might be helpful to understand what the participating teachers viewed as *not* humanistic. Eight of the participants indicated that various aspects of the “traditional” classroom and curriculum are examples of what is *not* humanistic teaching. That is to say, a classroom that is teacher-centered, has a fixed curriculum, is material-oriented rather than student-oriented, and includes tests for purposes of assessment. Some of the participants defined what humanism is *not* in this way:

- CR: Belief that the teacher is the center of attention and he is the most important person in class.
- JD: Teaching grammar, vocabulary or idiom without context...sitting in straight rows with teacher in big desk.
- SU: Teacher-centered, memorization, test-oriented, non-practical.
- JB: Curriculum is set before teacher meets students. Curriculum is fixed and covered regardless of student needs. Student learning styles are not considered.
- MB: Punishment, competitiveness.

I have sometimes heard humanistic teaching described as “touchy-feely” and “soft” (“soft” in the pejorative sense, meaning “not rigorous”); however, at least two of the study’s participants did *not* seem to hold that opinion. When asked “What are *not* some of the elements of humanistic teaching?” and “What are some words you do *not* associate with humanistic teaching?” the two responded in the following manner:

- AR: Too permissive. A psychological session.
- DS: Touchy-feely. Sympathy...Being overly accepting (so open-minded that one’s brains fall out).

Words that the participants associated most with a classroom that was not humanistic were *judgmental, rigid, teacher-centered/directed* (cited three times each) and *tests, irrelevant/ meaningless, lecture, memorize* (cited two times each).

Assessing participants' teaching in terms of humanism

The teachers surveyed had different characterizations of themselves in terms of how humanistic their teaching was (Table 7). In the preliminary questionnaire (which I refer to because it had a larger distribution), seven participants (23.3%) said their teaching was "very humanistic"; twelve (40%) said their teaching was "fairly humanistic"; nine (30%) responded that their teaching was "somewhat humanistic"; one (3%) said his teaching was a "little humanistic"; and one (3%) said that she was "familiar with the term humanistic teaching, but not familiar enough to be able to characterize her teaching." None of the respondents of the preliminary questionnaire characterized his/her teaching as "not humanistic," nor did any report that he/she was "unfamiliar with the term humanistic teaching."

Thus, nearly two-thirds (63.3%) of the thirty teachers surveyed in the initial questionnaire characterized their teaching as either "very" or "fairly" humanistic, while only one-third (33%) felt their teaching was "somewhat" or "a little" humanistic.

Table 7

Self-Appraisal of Attitude Toward Humanistic Teaching from Preliminary Questionnaire (N=30)

1 (Very <u>humanistic</u>)		2 (Fairly <u>humanistic</u>)		3 (Somewhat <u>humanistic</u>)		4 (A little <u>humanistic</u>)		5 (Not <u>humanistic</u>)		<u>E/NF</u>		<u>NF</u>	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
7	23	12	40	9	30	1	3	0	0	1	3	0	0

An interesting aspect of this self-appraisal was that there appeared to be little correlation between how a participant evaluated his or her teaching in terms of humanism, and whether he or she viewed the term “humanistic teaching” in a positive, negative or neutral light. As discussed earlier in this paper, nearly all of the teachers regarded the term “humanistic teaching” as something positive, and even those who regarded their teaching as “somewhat” or “a little” humanistic still regarded humanistic teaching in a positive light.

Defining activities that are humanistic

In response to the third research question, participants in the study indicated a wide variety of activities that they considered humanistic; however, in analyzing those activities, I have found that they can be grouped into three categories:

- 1) Sharing or self-disclosure activities
- 2) Empowerment activities
- 3) Relaxation activities

Furthermore, there were two kinds of activities cited that were more general in nature.

They are listed below:

- 1) Activities that relate to learner styles
- 2) Feedback activities

Let us look a little closer at the first set of activities that were cited by the participants: sharing, empowerment, and relaxation activities. Earlier in this paper we discussed Gertrude Moskowitz and some of her ideas on humanistic teaching: *sharing*, perhaps more than any other word, best summarizes the kinds of activities she suggests for the ESL/EFL classroom. The participants in this study appeared to be in agreement with that sentiment. Activities were cited which shared the learners' feelings, memories, opinions and values. A sampling of those activities are cited below:

- *Sentence completion activities which focus on the affective.*
(“I feel happy when _____” or “I feel good when _____.”)
- *Values clarification activities.*
(There are many example of these in Gertrude Moskowitz’s *Sharing and Caring in the Foreign Language Class.*)
- *Codes and catalysts.*
(See Freire, See Part I of this paper; also, “Problem Posing Can Help Students Learn: From Refugee Camps to Resettlement Country Classrooms” by Nina Wallerstein).
- *Interviews.*
- *A “Find Someone Who...” activity.*
(Find someone who... likes to surf... has broken a bone... etc.)

Empowerment was the second type of activity that was frequently mentioned. The empowerment activities were focused in two areas. The first area involved helping the student to become a more independent and self-sufficient language learner; that is, to be more aware of his/her ability to help him/herself in regards to language learning. Process writing, which helps to raise student awareness of his/her writing strengths and

weaknesses, and the reader response theory, which allows students to analyze the content of written texts and attach their *own* meaning to them, would be examples of techniques which assist the student to become a more self-sufficient and independent language learner.

The second area of empowerment activities were ones directed at aiding the learner to overcome personal or community problems, including problems of a political nature. Paulo Freire's "codes and catalysts," which are discussed in Part One of this paper, are good examples of these kinds of activities. Generally speaking, empowerment activities in some way work to help the student gain control over his or her own life. These kinds of activities are very student-centered. Although the teacher has a clearly defined role in each of them, it is clearly the role of a facilitator or helper, rather than a leader. Some of the activities that empower students in this way are cited below:

- *Codes and catalysts.*
(See Freire above).
- *Reader response theory.*
(See the article "The Transactional Theory: Against Dualisms" by Louise M. Rosenblatt).
- *Process writing.*
(See, among others, Ann Raines' *Techniques in Teaching Writing*).
- *Student-produced video or readers.*
- *Teaching students learner strategies.*
- *Values clarification activities.*
(See Moskowitz above.)

The last type of activity that the participants cited was relaxation activities. Relaxation activities are often used as "ice breakers," for example, to acquaint students with each other at the beginning of the semester. Relaxation activities can also be used before any activity to create, as one participant wrote, "relaxed, comfortable conditions

for acquisition to occur” (DS). Activities of this type included “Find Someone Who...” and drama activities (examples of drama activities can be found in Alan Maley and Alan Duff’s *Drama Techniques in Language Learning*). Counseling-Learning/Community Language Learning was cited as an *approach* to language learning which is concerned about how relaxed the students are.

It should be noted that in categorizing these humanistic activities a good deal of overlapping frequently occurs. For example, an activity that involves “values clarification” (a typical kind of values clarification activity might involve students in groups discussing and then drawing up a list of five personal qualities that they consider the most important in others and themselves) could certainly be considered a “sharing” activity, while at the same time one could consider it an “empowerment” activity in that it might play a role in helping the student to overcome or better understand a personal or a political problem. In many cases, an activity could be classified under two or more categories. Now we will turn to the “general” activities that the participants considered humanistic, of which there were two: learner styles and feedback.

In one sense, these two activities can be superimposed over almost any of the other activities. Feedback, for example, can be superimposed over any activity in order for the teacher to discover how the students feel about and what they learned from a particular activity. Participants mentioned both “on-going feedback” and “structured feedback” as activities they would consider humanistic. On-going feedback is a kind of assessment by the teacher that occurs *while* students are involved in a learning task; the assessment includes if, what and how the students are learning what has been put before them by the teacher. On the other hand, structured feedback is a separate activity in

which the teacher directly elicits information from the students concerning a previous learning activity.

Likewise, teaching to different learning styles can be superimposed over many of the activities mentioned. Learning styles refers to individual preferences and tendencies for how one engages in the learning process. One student, for example, may be more visually-oriented, while another might depend more on his or her auditory skills; one student may have a high tolerance for ambiguity, while another has a low tolerance; one student may like working in groups, while another prefers working things out alone. Therefore, a humanistic teacher would understand that a visually-oriented student might respond better to a code or a catalyst that involved a simple drawing; on the other hand, a student who depends more on his or her auditory skills might respond better to a recorded dialog or a piece of music. A humanistic teacher, then, would take into account these differences when planning his or her class.

There were also three participants in the study who felt that, on the whole, the activities themselves were neither inherently humanistic or non-humanistic; rather, it was how the teacher presented the activity that made it humanistic or not. Interestingly enough, one of those participants had characterized his teaching as somewhat humanistic, another as fairly humanistic, and the last as very humanistic.

DS: (characterized his teaching as “somewhat humanistic”) I can’t think of specific activities which are inherently “humanistic” or not humanistic for me. It seems it is how I approach most activities. It seems to be influenced by the students as well. In my opinion, a role-play may be fun for some students, and very humanistic, and for others it is threatening and overwhelming and in-humanistic for others. And this could vary depending on how I approach it, my attitude and the way I present it.

JB: (characterized his teaching as “fairly humanistic”) I don’t believe the activity or technique to be humanistic as much as what leads the instructor to chose it.

MB: (characterized his teaching as “very humanistic”) I think most activities CAN be made humanistic if the approach is allowed to be humanistic. It is the giving over of the control/purpose to learning to the students that creates humanism and not necessarily the activity.

Regarding activities that the respondents considered *not* humanistic, three participants cited “drills,” which included “mechanical exercises” and “Q and A requiring repetition and patterning.” Two other respondents said that it was “teacher-centered” activities. Another participant identified multiple choice tests and listening cloze exercises. Finally, one teacher responded:

MB: Telling the students the “right” answer... Asking if students understand without taking the time to see if they really do.

Teachers and their textbooks

One of the minor findings of this study was that respondents clearly found their textbooks less than ideal in terms of being humanistic, and all of the participants mentioned using supplemental material and/or adapting the given material. Only one of the teachers surveyed characterized his/her textbook as very or fairly humanistic; two participants said their textbooks were *not* humanistic. At least six of the participants’ responses indicated a lack of enthusiasm for their text. For example, in response to the question, “Do you feel your textbook(s) is humanistic?” one teacher wrote “Neutral,” another “Minimally, but sometimes insensitive.” Two other participants responded this way:

JB: In itself it is not really humanistic, but allows one to use it as a springboard to more personalized language.

AR: I don't consider it a humanistic book, even though the topics presented in each unit give room for you to supplement with extra humanistic activities.

One teacher related a situation that had occurred in her ESL classroom where they had been using a text she considered "minimally" humanistic. The teacher explained that the book had "good intentions" and exploited partner and small group activities and used writing suggestions that have the students draw on personal experience. But, as she unfortunately found out, on a deeper level, the text included parts that were extremely insensitive to the feelings of some of the students.

JD: For example, there's [a reading passage] on illegal "aliens" (as if they were from Mars) who are being hunted down by the police. One Japanese student came to me in tears after class. She'd been having some difficulty in changing her visa status and was afraid that she might become illegal in the process and be thrown in jail or thrown out of jail! Another student in the class said, "I don't think this is a very good subject for this class." The students went on to talk about how the passage made them feel unwelcome and put down, even though they were "legal."

My tentative conclusion, then, based on the participants' responses, is that ESL/EFL texts are not as humanistic as they could be, and that teachers find they must supplement, expand, and adapt their course text to meet their humanistic objectives.

Approach and Name Assessment

Another minor finding of the study concerned the participants' assessment of the different approaches to teaching English as a second/foreign language and of educators and other prominent figures in ELT and related fields. Participants found Counseling-Learning/ Community Language Learning (CL-CLL) and Paulo Freire's Participatory

Approach were the most humanistic approaches, while the Audio-Lingual Method the least humanistic (Table 8). Meanwhile, Paulo Freire, Gertrude Moskowitz and Charles Curran were cited as the most humanistic educators, while B.F. Skinner was considered the prominent figure least humanistic (Table 9).

There were also two interesting and somewhat ironic aspects of the approach and name assessment. First, although many of the participants used language very similar to that which Moskowitz uses in describing and defining humanistic teaching, almost half (5 of 11) of the participants had little or no awareness of her views and writings. A second interesting point was that although all eleven of the participants knew of Paulo Freire (and assessed him very highly in terms of humanism), less than half (5 of 11) knew of the ELT approach that is based on his pedagogic philosophy, i.e. the Participatory Approach. Furthermore, all of those who were aware of the Participatory Approach were graduates or candidates of a Master's degree program.

TABLE 8

Approach Recognition and Evaluation
(1=very humanistic/5=not humanistic)

<u>Approach</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>F/DK</u>	<u>NF</u>
CL/CLL	4	5	0	0	0	1	1
Participatory Approaches	3	2	0	0	0	1	5
Natural Approach	2	5	3	0	0	1	0
Suggestopedia	2	4	2	2	0	0	1
Silent Way	2	3	3	1	0	1	1
Total Physical Response	0	2	2	3	2	0	1
Audio-Lingual Method	0	0	0	2	8	0	1

“F/NF” means “I am familiar with the term humanistic teaching, but not familiar enough to characterize my teaching.”

“NF” means “I am not familiar with the term humanistic teaching.”

TABLE 9

Name Recognition and Evaluation
(1=very humanistic/5=not humanistic)

<u>Name</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>F/DK</u>	<u>NF</u>
Paulo Freire	9	2	0	0	0	0	0
Gertrude Moskowitz	6	0	0	0	0	2	3
Charles Curran	4	4	0	0	0	1	2
Georgi Lozanov	2	3	2	2	0	1	1
Earl Stevick	3	1	1	0	0	3	3
Stephen Krashen	2	0	3	0	0	3	3
Caleb Gattegno	2	3	3	1	1	3	1
Noam Chomsky	0	1	1	1	1	6	1
Robert Lado	0	0	0	1	1	4	5
B.F. Skinner	0	0	0	1	6	3	1

“F/NF” means “I am familiar with the term humanistic teaching, but not familiar enough to characterize my teaching.”

“NF” means “I am not familiar with the term humanistic teaching.”

Conclusions

A number of studies in the field of cross-linguistic/cultural research have shown that the participants of a study tend to accommodate their views and opinions with the perceived values of the investigators (Bond 1986, and others). In doing this study, I felt that I had to be aware of and not ignore the possible effects of a similar type of accommodation; that is, since the study was on humanistic teaching, I had to be careful that my participants were not accommodating their views and opinions of humanistic teaching to what they felt to be my values towards the subject. At the same time, in

correspondence with my advisor, he brought up another pertinent point, which was, "Is there anyone who considers their teaching non-humanistic?" The very word *humanism*, not unlike the words *earth* or *environment* or even *mother*, seems inherently good and wholesome. These kinds of words seem to be infused with positive connotations. This situation is not unlike one which took place in a scene from the movie *Roger and Me*. In the scene, a beauty pageant contestant was asked which social programs she supported. Her unsteady response was, "I am in favor of...*employment*." Well, yes, indeed, the question is, how could anybody be against it? Similarly, in my questionnaire and during the interviews, I had to be careful I wasn't asking my participants to be opposed to "employment." While I am not sure that I completely overcame these two dynamics, I feel confident that the conclusions I have drawn from the participants of the study do indeed represent their individual beliefs.

The first conclusion, in response to Earl Stevick's question asked in the introduction of this paper ("What do you think the speaker meant by *humanistic*?"), is that participants unquestionably regard humanistic teaching in a *positive* light and a teacher who is described as a humanistic teacher is undoubtedly on the "right track." He/she is kind, and concerned not only with the learning, but also with the well-being of his/her students.

The second conclusion concerning the definition of humanistic teaching can be subdivided into three parts: 1) Participants identified five key elements of humanistic teaching: respect for the individual; awareness of student's affective needs; creating a curriculum designed to student's needs and one which accommodates different learning styles; empowering the student both in linguistics terms and in personal growth; and

providing a higher level of personal involvement. 2) The word most of the participants associated with humanistic teaching was *understanding*. 3) Ideas that are sometimes circulated regarding humanistic teaching and its drawbacks, e.g., it is “touchy-feely,” it is “soft” education, etc., were dismissed by those who addressed them in the study as having nothing to do with humanistic teaching.

The third conclusion of the study is that a significant number of practicing ESL/EFL teachers view their own teaching as humanistic. The study found that two-thirds of the teachers who responded to the preliminary questionnaire considered their teaching either very or fairly humanistic. It also found that even those who do not consider their teaching especially humanistic (fairly or little) seem to hold humanistic teachers and humanistic teaching in high regard.

The final conclusion of the study is that most of the ESL/EFL classroom activities that were considered humanistic can be placed in one of three categories: sharing/self-disclosure, empowerment, or relaxation. Feedback activities and those activities that relate specifically to learner styles also play significant roles in a humanistic classroom.

In addition, the study showed that while the participants embraced humanistic teaching and felt it a positive force in their teaching, many were not aware of, or did not know well, some of the most prominent figures associated with humanistic teaching, such as Gertrude Moskowitz. Yet, ironically, many of the participants’ definitions of humanistic teaching mirrored that of Moskowitz’s (discussed in Part One of this paper). Furthermore, excluding those participants who are or have been involved in a Master’s degree program, none of the participants appeared to be aware of the approach to

teaching EFL that is based on Paulo Freire's philosophy of education, the Participatory Approach.

Implications of this study

It would appear that participants of the study, despite embracing humanistic teaching and having a great deal of respect for humanistic teachers, do not have all the tools that are available to them to help them to become fully effective humanistic educators. Therefore, as a recommendation, I would strongly encourage any teacher training program—whether it be at the college or university level, or at the teacher's place of work—to include the teaching of approaches that deal most specifically with humanistic values, that is, Counseling-Learning/Community Language Learning and the Participatory Approach. These two approaches, according to the participant teachers who were familiar with them, are the most humanistic we have. We should study them, as well as the ideas of Gertrude Moskowitz, in greater depth and detail. According to the study, they are the direction which we—as practicing ESL/EFL teachers—are striving to go in, both as a humanistic teachers, and teachers who value and respect other humans.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE ON HUMANISTIC TEACHING

I. Why this questionnaire?

The reason that I decided to do this questionnaire is that I found I had some trouble defining what exactly humanistic teaching is. I felt that if I had this problem, some other teachers probably did too. The result was to devise this questionnaire with the intent of finding out how practicing EFL/ESL teachers actually define humanistic teaching and how they go about implementing (or not) humanistic teaching practices.

I suppose I could have found a definition of humanistic teaching somewhere, but that seemed far less important to me than finding out how practicing teachers themselves actually see and interpret humanism and humanistic teaching practices. Thank you in advance, your involvement means a great deal to me. I appreciate it very, very much.

II. The questionnaire

1. Do you consider yourself a "humanistic" teacher (however YOU define that word)? Please place yourself on the continuum below, with "1" being very humanistic and "5" being not humanistic.

1	2	3	4	5
very humanistic				not humanistic

2. Do you feel that the expression humanistic teaching has positive, negative or neutral connotations? Please explain.
3. If you were at a cocktail party and you overheard someone saying, "Well, he's a *humanistic* teacher..." What kinds of things would you infer about this teacher?
4. If you were at a cocktail party and you overheard someone saying, "Well, he's a *humanistic* teacher..." What kinds of things would you infer about this teacher?
5. In your opinion, what are some elements of humanistic teaching?
6. In your opinion, what are NOT some of the elements of humanistic teaching?
7. Do you feel your textbook(s) is humanistic? Why or why not? (Please give some examples of why you think so).
Textbook 1: title/author, examples
Textbook 2: title/author, examples
Textbook 3: title/author, examples...

8. Do you ever replace or supplement textbook activities with your own activities? Do you consider these replacement or supplementary activities humanistic? What are some of the reasons you choose to use them?
9. What are some reference books that you consider humanistic?
10. Are you familiar with any of the following people? If yes, do you consider them, or their approach to learning, humanistic? Please rate them on the continuum below from 1 to 5 with "1" being very humanistic and "5" being not humanistic. "NF" means I am not familiar with this person; "F/DK" means I am familiar with the name, but I don't think I know enough about him/her to make a judgement.

- B. F. Skinner

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
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- Robert Lado

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
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- Noam Chomsky

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
----	------	---	---	---	---	---

- Charles Curran

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
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- Caleb Gattegno

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
----	------	---	---	---	---	---

- Georgi Lozanov

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
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- Paulo Freire

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
----	------	---	---	---	---	---

- Earl Stevick

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
----	------	---	---	---	---	---

- Gertrude Moskowitz

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
----	------	---	---	---	---	---

- Stephen Krashen

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
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11. Are you familiar with any of the following approaches to teaching ESL/EFL? If so, could you rate them on the continuum from 1 to 5 with "1" being very humanistic and "5" being not humanistic. "NF" means I am not familiar with this approach to teaching languages; "F/DK" means I am familiar with the approach, but I don't think I know enough about it to make a judgement.

- Audio-Lingual Method (ALM)

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
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- The Silent Way

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
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- Counseling-Learning/Community Language Learning (CL-CLL)

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
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- Suggestopedia

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
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- Participatory Approaches

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
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- The Natural Approach (Communicative Approach)

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
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- Total Physical Response (TPR)

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
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12. Are you familiar with any of the following language learning techniques/activities? If so, could you rate them on the continuum below with "1" being very humanistic and

"5" being not humanistic. "NF" means I am not familiar with this kind of technique/activity; "F/DK" means I am familiar with this kind of technique/activity, but I don't think I know enough about it to make a judgement.

- a substitution drill

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
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- a transformation drill

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
----	------	---	---	---	---	---

- a role play

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
----	------	---	---	---	---	---

- an information-gap activity

NF	F/DK	1	2	3	4	5
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13. Could you tell me of some techniques/activities that you have used, or are aware of, that you consider humanistic?

14. Could you tell me of some techniques/activities that you have used, or are aware of, that you consider NOT humanistic?

15. What words do you associate with humanism and humanistic teaching?

16. What are some words you would NOT associate with humanistic teaching?

17. What do you think is the difference between humanistic teaching and teaching that is not humanistic?

18. What is the most important thing for a humanistic teacher to remember?

III. About you

English background: Are you a native English speaker?
 (If you answered "no" to the previous question) How many years did you study English at a school or institute?
 Do you have any proficiency certificates (Cambridge, Michigan, etc.)?
 Have you ever traveled or lived in an English-speaking country?
 Which country and for how long?

Education:

What was the last grade you completed in high school/college?
What was your major area of study?

Teaching:

Where do you teach (city/state/country)?
How many years have you been teaching?
What kind of institution do you teach at (private English school,
bi-nation center, public school, college or university)?

Word Association Table 1

What are words that you associate with humanistic teaching?

<i>n</i>	<i>descriptive word/term</i>
5	understanding
3	empathy, flexibility, sharing, friendliness, feelings/emotions
2	treating as human beings, respect, support, acceptance, caring, feedback, discovery, student-centered
1	functionality, creating comfortable conditions, low anxiety, awareness, realistic, mutuality, positive, interactive, cooperative, personal experience, sympathizing, integrating, interacting, growth, sensitivity, potential, encouraging, learner-centered, dynamic, values, group and pair work, relevant, trust, healthy atmosphere, impartiality, involvement, communication, reflection, non-judgmental, empowering, interest, learning, problem solving

Word Association Table 2

What words do you *not* associate with humanistic teaching?

<i>n</i>	<i>descriptive word/term</i>
3	judgmental, rigid, teacher-centered/directed
2	tests, irrelevant/meaningless, lecture, memorize
1	overbearing, rude, objectifying, negative tension, one-way, teacher talking down to student, textbooks, pressure, denial, selfishness, fixed, cover material in class, imposition, invasion of privacy, punishment, competitiveness, authoritarian, hierarchical, obligation, discipline, curriculum

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