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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★★ EDUCATION

Source-Full Intelligence: Understanding Uniqueness and Oneness through Education

Coomi Vevaina
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A strong proponent of learner-centric education, Coomi Vevaina considers it long past time for radical change in our traditional educational systems. She provides an outline and an explanation of her theories for change in her new book, *Source-Full Intelligence*.

With doctorates in both literature and education, Vevaina is an internationally acclaimed educator, speaker, author, and storyteller. Voted Best Teacher of English in India, she not only heads the English Department at the University of Mumbai but also works within the community, incorporating her interests in spirituality and storytelling into her curriculum and day-to-day life.

Vevaina believes that today's students are stifled by traditions of teaching instituted long ago to reflect the priorities, needs, and views of far different eras that no longer exist. "Children today have all the information they could possibly want, available on computers, iPhones and other electronic devices," she explains. "Is it realistic to expect them to 'pay attention,' learn and recall the often irrelevant things we teach in schools?"

According to Vevaina, educators today should encourage empowerment through a balance of both logical and intuitive thinking. She stresses that the intuitive component has been so effectively ignored—and even more so, quashed—in favor of logic that the power of the imagination to create has been dangerously thwarted. She proposes that when teachers focus on learners as individuals, they enable their students to develop both parts of their brains, the logical and the creative. This not only *allows* students to actively participate in the teaching-learning process but actually *invites* them to do so.

Vevaina's theories are certain to appeal to any parent or teacher who has watched a child lose interest in learning within the traditional classroom environment. She links this loss of interest, this boredom, to the very basic sense of alienation that plagues modern-day society and results in self-destructive behavior, violence, and other ills that contribute to the general sense of "cultural malaise." Any educator comfortable with the status quo, satisfied with teaching the same lesson plan the same way, year after year, will undoubtedly be less enthusiastic about her ideas.

Throughout her book, Vevaina quotes philosophers, psychologists, behaviorists, educators, writers, social critics, and more. Her bibliography reads like a *Who's Who* of great thinkers, not all of them contemporary. She draws thoughtfully and convincingly from the creative minds of many, reflecting on a wide range of sources, from the poetry of William Blake and Alfred Lord Tennyson to the theories of Carl Jung and Jean Shinoda Bolen and the educational philosophies of Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner.

Vevaina writes clearly and well, displaying a great passion for and a superb understanding of her topic. She adequately defines all the terms she uses, and where applicable, she provides graphs and illustrations to further clarify her position. By including sample teaching-learning exercises that follow her essential concepts, she allows readers to comprehend and readily apply her step-by-step process of making lesson plans relevant to students in today's world.

Source-Full Intelligence offers a thought-provoking, innovative view of education, and Vevaina's methods for effecting change are decidedly inspiring. While the changes she proposes are potentially feasible and many of the theories she proposes have clear merit, a complete overhaul of the educational system is not going to happen quickly. Step by step, however, using ideas from the minds of educators like Vevaina, it may indeed be possible to awaken the lurking passion to learn within the youngest members of contemporary society. Her theories about how to accomplish

this are well worth consideration.
CHERYL HIBBARD (May 30, 2013)

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