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The Tact of Teaching

The Meaning of Pedagogical Thoughtfulness

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Cover photo: Ghirlandajo (1448-1494), *Grandfather and grandson*. In
discussing this well known painting by Ghirlandajo, Klaus Mollenhauer says:
"The sceptis of the grandfather and the glance of the child—questioning and
full of trust—stand in a certain relation to each other. It expresses an open,
uncertain future, and a waiting for knowledge that is passionately desired, to
become 'grown-up.' Between child and grandfather there lies a life of
development, learning, and formative growth. In their loving relation they are
together and true to each other, but with respect to the future, that they
anticipate in accordance with their own abilities and possibilities, they are
separated from each other." (Mollenhauer, K. 1983. *Vergessene*
Zusammenhänge. München: Juventa Verlag, p. 95).

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to Judith, Mark and Michael

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PEDAGOGICAL TACT

How Does Pedagogical Tact Manifest Itself?

What does pedagogical tact look like? How and where can we see pedagogical tact at work? These are difficult questions. It may not always be easy to tell genuine tactful actions from artificial, feigned, false forms of behavior that do not seem motivated by an authentic interest in children's welfare. Children often can tell the difference quite accurately between teachers who are "real" and caring and those who are "fake" and not truly interested in them.

Pedagogical tact manifests itself primarily as a mindful orientation in our being and acting with children. This is much less a manifestation of certain observable behaviors than a way of actively standing in relationships. Nevertheless, there are ways of describing how tact manifests itself in our pedagogical being and acting. The following sections suggest that tact shows itself as a holding back, as an openness to the child's experience, as attunement to subjectivity, as subtle influence, as situational confidence, and as an improvisational gift.

Tact shows itself as holding back

Sometimes the best action is non-action.

A couple of months ago Cornelia was absent from my English class. It is sometimes hard for a teacher to remain open and friendly to a student who one suspects is skipping class. Then I happened to see Cornelia with her friend Melanie in the hallway during a break and I asked her why she had not been in class that morning. She gave me an innocent look and said, "Melanie was

not feeling very well and I decided that I should stay with her." As a teacher I just bristled with exasperation and I was about to retort with a snide remark and disciplinary action. But instead I turned to Melanie and asked, "Are you all right?" She said, "Yes," but it was obvious that something was bothering Melanie, so I put my arm around her and asked if she needed my help. Melanie said again that she would be all right, but I saw that she obviously was on the verge of tears. I had held back any remark to Cornelia, and at that moment the bell sounded for the next period.

Later in the day when I had almost forgotten the incident, the fourth period students entered my class. Melanie is in this group. As she passed me my first inclination was to ask her how she was. But there was something in her demeanor that made me hold back. I observed her indirectly to gauge her state. During the lesson that followed Melanie acted as if she would rather not acknowledge the incident of that morning. So on a hunch I let it pass and decided to pursue it no further. It is significant that since then Melanie has been a different student in my class. Before the incident her behavior used to be somewhat sour, uncooperative, and generally uncommunicative. But since my showing of concern for her, it appears as if there has grown up a new unspoken understanding between us. This new attitude has had a positive effect on her learning. So tact includes a sensitivity for knowing what to pass over, what to leave unsaid, when not to step in, when "not to notice" something.

A special form of holding back consists in patience, the ability to wait with equanimity. Indeed, patience has been described as a fundamental virtue that every teacher and every parent should possess.⁶¹ Patience enables the educator to bring the child into harmony with the course of time required to grow or to learn something. When expectations and goals have been set at appropriate levels, patience allows us not to worry or to give up when they are not fulfilled, when more time is needed or when other approaches need to be tried.

In our western culture parents and teachers tend to be proud and happy when the child progresses beyond expectations and learns to do things much earlier, faster, or better than one would ordinarily anticipate. It is in the nature of childhood that the child wants to grow and become more independent. And it is

in the nature of pedagogy that parents and teachers want the child to grow, to make progress, to learn. So rather than holding back, the adult is sometimes inclined to push and force things a little. It is very difficult to know when to hold back and to wait. For example, adults know that most children will learn to read quite readily by the time they reach school age. But the adult also knows that with a bit of pushing many children may be able to read sooner, and with a lot of pushing some children may even learn to read at a surprisingly early age. Much in a child's development cannot be forced, and requires patience of the adults. But, because it is possible to speed up to some extent the rate at which children learn and mature, it becomes very tempting to hurry things along that really ought to be given their own space and time.

It is often terribly trying for an adult to hold back when the child does not seem to know how to do something, when the young person does something wrong at first, or when the student does something so agonizingly slowly. The adult becomes exasperated and is inclined to intervene, to "help," when the child should or may want to deal with the situation himself or herself. Or the adult offers to do it for the child ("here, let me tie your shoelaces!") when the child really needs to figure it out, to learn and to practice. Of course, from the child's point of view the adult is always in a hurry. And the adult cannot understand how the child just seems to dawdle when there are other more important things that need attention. The same thing often happens in the classroom. Although quite a few children have not yet quite understood or mastered a new concept or skill, the teacher cannot wait, wants to move on, and imposes a test as a result of which many children will learn the meaning of failure, poor performance, and low self-esteem.

A tactful understanding of when to hold back, when to pass over things, when to wait, when "not to notice" something, when to step back, rather than to intervene, draw the attention, or interrupt, is a gift to the child's personal development. Of course, there are situations where the right and tactful thing to do is to act in a manner that is forthright and direct; for example, when a class is out of control or when there is too much risk and danger in a certain situation. Sometimes it would not be tactful to hold

back, to pass over things, as when a child needs to face something directly, or when the child clearly is in need of help or feedback.

Moreover, it would be wrong to pass over everything, to refuse to step in when the adult's active involvement is necessary. Some teachers or parents are practically indifferent to what their children do. They may be inclined to hold back from direct involvement all the time, thereby stepping completely out of the pedagogical relation with young people. For example, there are teachers who pride themselves on letting the children make all decisions for themselves. Similarly there are "permissive" parents who simply refuse to recognize the need for any guidance, direction, involvement, constraints, demands, or commitment on their part in the daily experiences or life decisions of their children. They pride themselves on allowing their children total "freedom." But freedom that knows no boundaries or standards is not real freedom.

Tact shows itself as openness to the child's experience

Always ask first: What is this experience like for the child?

During the day seven-year-old Willy is a wizard on the skateboard and he does daring tricks even though he already has suffered several bruises and stitches. Among his friends Willy is admired for his guts and ability. He clearly is a kid who is not overly fearful. But during the evening, when it gets dark, Willy is afraid to go up to his bedroom by himself to put on his pajamas. His parents have noticed this. Even though they wish he would conquer his fear of darkness, they remain patient and understanding. They are tactful parents who sense that Willy's fear of the dark is objectively ungrounded but that subjectively the experience is real for the child. The parents do not want to close themselves off from the possibility of understanding the child's experience for what it is. Moreover, they realize that for many adults, too, the dark has threatening qualities. So it is now up to the parents to decide upon a course of action for helping Willy face his fears

and overcome the conflicts from them. For this they need to remain open to the meaning of Willy's experience for Willy.

It is not always easy to stay open toward young people. Lauri's language arts teacher is taken aback by the dark images, the rebelliousness, the deep hatred, and the blaming that pervade all of Lauri's creative writing assignments. Most ninth grade teachers have no use for Lauri, who dresses unconventionally and who defies the school policy of no smoking by smoking in the washroom. But the language arts teacher cannot help but feel that being judgmental toward Lauri is wrong. Somehow, Lauri seems to feel that her language arts teacher is on her side: One morning she approaches the teacher and asks if she would be willing to read her poetry. The teacher would be pleased to and takes the student's folder home. What she finds is writing that gives evidence of adolescent morbidity and conflict, but the poems are also exceptionally eloquent and powerful. Here is a girl who writes because she must write, both for personal and artistic reasons. Even though the teacher feels that she does not really understand Lauri, she nevertheless knows that she should remain open, supportive, and sympathetic to her.

Hank's parents have requested an interview with the teacher and the school principal. They are concerned that Hank, who is only ten years old, is more preoccupied with friends who are already into girls and street life than with his school work. They explain that Hank is very concerned with his "looks," that he is unhappy when his friends do not seem to consider him "cool" because his parents impose certain restrictions. And he wants to do things that seem inappropriate or premature for his age — such as roaming the streets during the evening, spending money in the arcade, hanging on the phone with girls, watching videos that contain violence and sexually explicit material. The teacher and principal know what Hank's parents are talking about. They see the pressures that peer groups put on children. It is very encouraging that Hank's father and mother are not simply rejecting Hank's behavior. The parents must try to maintain an open relationship with him. The teacher recommends that the parents talk frequently with Hank for them all to explore and remain in touch with each other's feelings. Hank is a sensitive boy who wants to hurt neither himself nor his parents. By re-

maining open to Hank's experience, rather than simply criticizing and censuring his behavior the parents can try to encourage positive friendships. It would also be helpful for the parents to involve Hank more with the family, to spend time together and to do things as a family.

To be open to the child's experience means that one tries to avoid treating situations in a standard and conventional manner. It means that one tries to see past the adult's — teacher's and parent's — perspectives on the child's experience.

Fact shows itself as attuned to subjectivity

Try to treat the other as a subject rather than an object.

A teacher talks about the effect of enrollments on her ability to remain attuned to the subjectivity of each child: "I started in September with twenty-two students in my sixth grade class; now I have thirty-one students and I really notice the difference. Whereas before I could deal with the antics of Chrissy, one of the students with behavior and learning difficulties, I find that with the number of kids I have now I am much less tolerant of her. I am less inclined to consider her needs and in what way I can turn Chrissy around to more cooperative and productive relations in class. Instead, I know I show less tolerance. I tend to see and deal with Chrissy's behavior more in purely management terms. My concern becomes now: How can I keep her quiet? For example, I know she was upset with something yesterday and I guess it has to do with stuff that happens at home. But rather than try to catch her and take her aside, all I can do now is discipline her. It makes me feel bad because I know that with some understanding she can do better and she would do good work...."

A student complains, "Why do I have to take this stuff? I want to go into engineering and I don't see any point in learning English grammar. I don't aspire to become a writer. This is just one big pain!" Another student gripes, "Why are we doing these math problems? I have absolutely no use for all these exercises. Even my father says that he has forgotten how to do high school mathematics." For teachers it may be frustrating to deal with

"Why do we have to learn this?" questions. Some teachers say: "We have to do this because it is required by the curriculum." Or, "You have to know this because it may be on the exam." Or, "You need it to get into college." These are ready responses. But they are also weak responses since they merely defer to the authority of the curriculum, the exam committee, or the university entrance committee. These answers are not sensitive to the fact that for these students some of their learning experience still remains meaningless and even frustrating. Some teachers may try to justify grammar rules or math questions by appealing to their application or to their relevance to the ideal of becoming an educated person. But even pragmatic or idealistic answers may not satisfy reluctant students. In a sense all these responses are insensitive to the students' subjective experience of the curriculum. In contrast, pedagogical tact would aim to help the students develop an intrinsic interest in all aspects of language or mathematics. But if that is not possible, then a tactful response to the question, "Why do we have to take this stuff?" would at least try to be responsive to the student's subjective experience of the learning itself.

An underlying metaphor for teaching suggests that, in order to come to school and learn new things, students need to cross barriers (for example, a street) to get over to the teacher's side (the school). But a teacher who is closed to the child's experience may not be aware that the student is still trying to understand things "from the other side of the street." Many teachers simply expect the students to come over to where the teacher stands. These are teachers who stand in front of the class explaining things; their attitude is that it is up to the students to "get" the explanations. If they do not get it, then tough! However, students may have difficulties, lack interest, or simply not know how to cross over to the teacher's side. The teacher seems to have a certain view, passion, conception of the subject matter, and seems to expect that the student has the same experience of the subject as the teacher does. But what the teacher forgets is that learning is always an individual affair.

A tactful educator realizes that it is not the child but the teacher who has to cross the street in order to go to the child's side. The teacher has to know "where the child is," "how the child sees things," how it is that this student has difficulty crossing the street to enter the domains of learning. The teacher has

to stand beside the child and help the child locate places to cross over and find means for the child to successfully get to the other side, to these other worlds. In this gesture lies indeed the meaning of *educare*, "to lead into" the world, the world of increased awareness, responsibility, growth, and understanding.

Tact shows itself as subtle influence

We are always under the influence.

Jason is a big fellow. When he walks into class he seems out of place, as if the classroom should be a bar or pool hall. His swaggering gait and his muscular physique suggest a maturity beyond his age. There is no denying that Jason nurtures a "cool" image of himself. The English teacher likes Jason, although she wonders sometimes how this tough kid puts up with the poetry lessons and the sometimes emotionally stirring discussion that follows. The teacher pulls Jason into the lesson, but cautiously so as not to force him to act out of character. Usually Jason sits rather quietly in his undersized desk, not very communicative, but not disruptive either. On account of his spaced-out behavior at times, the English teacher had first suspected that Jason was doing drugs. But when she had a talk with him recently Jason explained that he had been working late hours as a short-order cook in a local restaurant. They talked a bit more and Jason indicated that he needed this part-time job to save for a motorcycle. According to other teachers, Jason is just sitting out his time in school. He rarely does any homework. As soon as he can he will be quitting school to become a truckdriver.

One day before class, Jason walks in early, stomps a bit awkwardly around the teacher. Obviously he has something on his mind. "Uh, look, I wrote this," he says, pushing a piece of paper on her desk. It is a poem. The teacher is surprised at its quality. "This is very good Jason, I like the imagery." "Well, I like writing poetry," says Jason, "I've been doing it for a while . . . since I started taking your class." And then he adds, sort of casually, "Maybe you can put it up." The teacher has been posting selected student work in the hallway on a large board. As a former elementary school teacher she has been pleased to see how keen

high school students are to find their work displayed. It is not only in elementary school that kids like to see their work. For Jason to suggest that she display his poem surprises her. She is surprised that Jason cares about things like that. But she is happy to comply. Later in the day she notices Jason with a friend. He's pointing to the wall: "That poem over there, it's mine."

Sometimes teachers do not realize how they do influence students, even those from whom they least expect it. The influence may be so subtle that in the thick of everyday life we teachers do not ourselves notice it, until it is brought home to us by a surprising incident or recognition. What accounted for the subtle influence? Was it the special attention in the one-to-one talk that the teacher had with Jason? Was it her sensitivity and her careful treatment of Jason in the conduct of the poetry classes? Was it the climate she created with the students' work on the walls? Perhaps it was all of these or perhaps something else. We see tact in this teacher's style and in her response to Jason. Even when Jason gives her the poem the teacher seems to realize that when a poem comes unexpectedly like this you need to accept it happily. This is not the time to say: "Oh well, Jason, you made some spelling mistakes here." Or "Jason, the ending is not quite right, you should change the last lines." The teacher knows that there will be opportunity later to help Jason improve his poetry. Initially, she may try to give him some insight in a roundabout way into ending poems, by treating it as a general topic in class. In this way again she may be able to influence Jason subtly to develop his skill and understanding of poetry writing without prematurely singling his work out and criticizing it. Jason also shows us how easy it is to misjudge a child or young person. There are ways to "touch" students even when others may have given up on them.

Tact shows itself as situational confidence

There is a good tone for every situation.

"How envious I am of her," says one teacher about another, "somehow she always finds the right tone with every student or class." This remark betrays as much a feeling of insecurity as of

incompetence. No matter how well teachers may have planned for a class or a situation, it seems that there is always an element of uncertainty about any teaching situation.

The class is involved in a variety of projects in the science lab. The teacher is moving amongst the students, raising a question here, giving encouragement there, and providing assistance where requested. There is a pleasant hum of productive activity in the room. The teacher feels joyful . . . until Jack noisily walks into the room. He's late but he makes no attempt to be unobtrusive. Before too long he has disrupted several groups of kids. "Here, Kathy, I brought you your homework," he calls as he flings a condom in her lap, "I'll help you with sex if you help me with math." Kathy shrieks at him and the rubber thing ends up in the middle of another group of kids. There is laughter and the object is airborne again, propelled like a deflating balloon. It is amazing how rapidly a positive learning situation can deteriorate into chaos. The teacher calls, "Quiet, class. Order. Order!" but to no avail.

This kind of situation is probably the terror of many a beginning teacher (and some experienced ones as well). It is a challenge to meet unpredictable situations with confidence. The possibilities are numerous: a student who talks back in a taunting and disrespectful manner; a whole class out of control; students who refuse to do what they are asked; a child who overreacts to something with a bout of hysteria. It is in situations like these that the teacher needs to be able to demonstrate confidence and tact.

A teacher who is generally tactful has learned to trust himself or herself in ever-changing situations and circumstances. And, most important, such a teacher communicates this confidence to the students. Of course, there are teachers who seem to show a lot of confidence in their ability to deal with situations, but the students somehow know that this confidence is fake or false. Fake confidence is fragile and easily torn by conflict or serious resistance. False confidence is unfounded since it claims substance where there is emptiness. It is very difficult for a teacher to fake confidence or to keep coasting on false confidence for any length of time. In either case the substance that is missing is a thoughtful tact that grants a teacher trust in self, and the trust of the students.

Of course, there are ways of handling social situations

through intimidation, domination, and the authoritarian exercise of power. Teachers who deal with situations on the basis of these may have trust in self, but they do not receive trust from their students. And relations between adults and young people not built on trust have thereby forsaken their pedagogical legitimation.

Tact shows itself as improvisational gift

To teach is to improvise.

"This is what I will do to him if I see my father again," says Martin, and he throws some ugly punches with his fists. "I hate my father." When Martin came to kindergarten in September he was an angry and uptight little boy. The teacher learns by the grapevine that Martin's father has left wife and family for another woman, and soon after that Martin's mother had sought refuge for her feelings of loneliness in a close-knit religious group. However, her new-found faith no longer allows her to practise birthday celebrations, special festivities, and Christmas ceremonies. And life at home has become difficult economically and draining emotionally. Martin seems to blame his father for all that has gone wrong in his young life. Even in school Martin quickly turns resentful when things do not go his way. The teacher feels that Martin is vulnerable and she goes out of her way to make life at school supportive and relevant to Martin's interests.

In a few days it will be Father's Day and children are making special cards and gifts for their daddies. Celebrations like this pose difficulties for teachers since various children live without their fathers. However, Martin seems to be determined to make a Father's Day card for someone. Later in the day the teacher is surprised by a stranger identifying himself as Martin's father. Would he be allowed to spend the afternoon with Martin at school? The teacher says that the school values parental involvement and she walks the man into the playroom where Martin is busy. Inwardly the teacher is worried about Martin's reaction to an encounter with his father. But she senses that the experience may be good for him. When Martin sees his father he stands up abruptly; then he freezes and turns very pale. The father stands there too, awkward, uncertain now about his presence. "Hi, Mar-

tin," he murmurs softly. "I wanted to see you." But Martin stands immobile. The tension seems unbreakable. Then the teacher whispers into Martin's ear, "What about your beautiful Father's Day card?" Martin turns around, picks up the card and reaches it over to his father. The latter takes Martin's hand. And the next moment Martin clutches his father's big frame. There are lots of mixed emotions. But all the anger seems to have dissipated from his small body.

Of course, the teacher is not kidding herself. This is not just a simple story with a happy ending. How will Martin's mother react when she hears about the visit? And will the father prove dependable for his son? But the teacher has made a resolve to take the mother aside and talk with her about Martin's need. Maybe the father can become a continuous presence again in Martin's life. To attempt to help bring that about is the teacher's intention. Maybe she can invite the father to visit Martin regularly at school. Much may depend on the way her discussion with the mother turns out. For that the teacher will again have to demonstrate improvisational ability about what to say, how to say it, what to do.

Teaching children or young people is difficult, not merely because teachers are constantly busy and they have to act; it is difficult because teachers continually have to act in ways that are pedagogically tactful. A teacher who is more than a mere instructor is constantly required to know instantly what is pedagogically the right thing to say or do. In other words, like the jazz-musician who knows how to improvise in playing a musical composition (and thus charm the audience), so the teacher knows how to improvise the curriculum pedagogically (for the good of the students). The jazz musician's criteria of goodness are aesthetic, while the educator's standards of goodness are pedagogical. And, of course, another difference between jazz and education is that music is an artistic performance, while teaching is a pedagogical activity.²²

What Does Pedagogical Tact Do?

Pedagogical tact is a form of acting educationally. It refers to the ways mothers and fathers can act with their children. It describes the ways that educators can act in teaching/learning relations.

Pedagogical tact portrays the ways any adult can act pedagogically with young people. In acting pedagogically the student is influenced, but if this influence is mediated by tact then it is not authoritarian, controlling, dominating, or manipulative in exploiting the child or making the young person dependent and powerless. *Tact* is not a value-neutral term. And *pedagogical tact* too is governed by normative sensitivities. Whatever we do as parents or educators, our pedagogical actions are always informed by normative intentions: We always intend to act in ways that are good for those children or young people for whom we bear some responsibility.

What does pedagogical tact do? Pedagogical tact does what is right or good for the child. But how do we know what is the right or good thing to do? If one cannot go up to the abstract level of moral or critical theory to answer this question in a general manner then one needs to go down to the concrete level of everyday experience to observe what tact does in specific situations or particular circumstances. We know from our experience of living with children what kinds of actions lie in the sphere of pedagogical tact. In the subsequent sections it is suggested that pedagogical tact does the following: preserve a child's space, protect what is vulnerable, prevent hurt, make whole what is broken, strengthen what is good, enhance what is unique, and sponsor personal growth.

Tact preserves a child's space

Growth and learning require space.

Corey completely lost his cool and confidence while presenting the results of a tenth grade science experiment in front of the other students. Now he feels so embarrassed that he wants to sink into the ground so that he will never have to face his classmates again. The kids have noticed his inner struggle and some have started snickering while others feel so embarrassed for Corey that they pretend not to notice. This makes the situation even more difficult. Corey stands there frozen. His face twitches. The silence turns unbearable. But then the teacher breaks the awkwardness by handing Corey a piece of chalk and asks if he

would capture the main findings with two or three points. Corey has a chance to turn to the blackboard and collect himself while not facing the other kids. Meanwhile the teacher makes some comments to the class, which help Corey get back on track. Corey ends up doing a decent presentation and the teacher says finally: "Thank you, Corey, you had a difficult moment. But we all have moments like that. You handled it well."

What Corey's teacher had done is to make an awkward and embarrassing experience livable. By her tactful intervention she has made Corey's experience lighter, bearable, just an awkward moment that Corey may not feel proud of, but that he can come to terms with nevertheless. The teacher stepped in to rescue the situation, but rather than making Corey's position as presenter impossible (for example, by suggesting that he sit down), she helped save his space, as it were, by enabling him to regain control over the situation. After stepping into the situation she as quickly stepped out of it again to turn it back to Corey.

Tact means to step back whenever possible, but remaining available when things turn problematic. By stepping back, the adult creates the space in which the young person is enabled to make decisions and act in his or her own way. However, there is a difference between tactfully stepping back and stepping out altogether, thus simply leaving a child to his or her own devices. The latter *laissez-faire* approach in education is often mistaken for child-centered democratic progressivism. A child should be allowed the freedom to make mistakes and learn from them. But it is false tactfulness to step out of the pedagogical relation altogether and leave the child "free" to make decisions and choices for which he or she may not be quite ready yet.

In many families adults may be too preoccupied with their own affairs to be very aware of what goes on in the inner life of the child. Good communication maintains a level of intimacy without suffocating the child's need for personal space. In most families adults probably communicate too little with their children, but on the positive side this allows an inner life to develop. Overprotective or overly snoopy parents communicate too much with their child in prying into the child's thoughts, dreams, imagination, feelings, fears, and so on. A balanced communicative relation promotes greater opportunity for self-knowledge while the human satisfaction of closeness and intimacy promotes sensitivity. But undercommunication is probably more common than

overcommunication in most families. Prying parents tend to be suspicious of their children and, therefore, such children may have a greater need to keep certain things secret from their parents. Thus a silent struggle develops between the child's need for autonomy and the parent's desire to keep control of the child's affairs. Of course, one way to find out someone's secret is to look for evidence of suppression which will sometimes tell us the nature or location of the secret (for example, the preadolescent suddenly avoids undressing in sight of his or her parents).

Teachers not only should be aware of the child's need for tactful support as well as for personal space, they also need to be aware of both under- and overcommunication at home. The way the child communicates at home may affect the child's preparedness to share thoughts and feelings and willingness to take risks at school.

Tact protects what is vulnerable

The child's vulnerability weakens the adult.

The Physical Education teacher has taken his class swimming. Most children are enjoying themselves, and some he helps to improve their stroke. He sees Stephen, a good swimmer, on the diving board. Stephen stands there for a long time, estimating the distance down to the surface of the pool. He wants so much to follow the example of some of his friends and take a brave leap. But he simply cannot get over his fear. Friends call him to jump and come and play water tag. But Stephen shakes his head and pretends that he likes it up there on the board. "Later!" he shouts back. "I'm taking a rest." Finally, when no one is looking at him Stephen clambers down the side of the board and jumps in the water to join in the game. The teacher who has witnessed his struggle realizes that it would have been wrong to step in to openly encourage Stephen to conquer his fear and thus draw the attention of Stephen's classmates. Later he finds an unobtrusive opportunity to give Stephen a pointer or two, helping him to take the first jump. Before the swimming is over Stephen once more ventures up on the board and finally takes a leap down. After that he tries a few more jumps. Stephen is obviously overjoyed in his