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Keeping It Real: Teaching and Learning in the *Harry Potter* Series

By

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A Thesis

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INTRODUCTION

Scholars have noted that embedded in the plot of J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series¹ are representations of teaching and learning in and outside of the classroom. In fact, much study has been dedicated to analyzing pedagogical techniques present in the series, some of which studies I will be discussing below. The novels also reflect real problems and issues in the classroom. How people react to the educational process depicted in the text grows out of popularized conceptions or misconceptions of real-world education. Considering that Rowling was an educator before becoming established as a writer, she probably has some ideas of her own about education. These ideas are strengthened by the realism in the text. Though there have already been broad studies that analyze the education in the *Harry Potter* series, I will focus primarily on the depictions of teaching and learning.

The popular Harry Potter series tracks the life of a young wizard, Harry Potter. The books in the series are *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Rowling has also published three shorter texts connected with the series, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, *Quidditch through the Ages*, and *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, but these texts are not important to this thesis.

The *Harry Potter* series has been wildly popular. The series is a global brand, having been translated into 65 different languages (Puentes). There are major motion pictures, action figures, videogames, websites, and even a theme park based on the

novels. In “How Has Harry Potter Cast Such a Wide Spell?” Maria Puente reports that Kansas State University professors Phillip Nel and Karin Westman take turns “teaching a class on Potter that is so popular, it draws long waiting lists.” It is not surprising that the series is being studied critically, given the number of themes and issues in the text. The text can be analyzed according to several literary theories, including feminism (the characterization of Hermione Granger) and Marxist criticism (the oppressed house elves). I will be focusing on how Rowling’s portrayal of teaching and learning is a fruitful source of meaning in the texts.

GENRE

Though other genres are represented in the *Harry Potter* books, the novels fit most comfortably in the “British school story” genre. School stories take place at boarding schools instead of day schools. Boarding schools provide the most possible outlets for adventures because students live on a campus, removing them from the banality of home. As a result, students often develop a stronger sense of community—students are closer to each other, to the instructors, and to the school. Isabel Quigly suggests, “[The student’s] religion, if he has one, is an unswerving loyalty to his house and school” (Quigley 7). Within Hogwarts, students are separated into one of the four houses, which are Gryffindor, Slytherin, Ravenclaw, or Hufflepuff. Each house has a shield and colors. Students take pride in their house, but they never let that get in the way of their support of the institution as a whole, with the exception of the Slytherin students. During the final battle against Voldemort, Slytherin students do little to protect the school

while other students fight Voldemort's followers, even though Horace Slughorn, himself a Slytherin, comes back to fight (*Deathly Hallows* 734).

Traditional school stories are also didactic, or demonstrate some moral doctrine (Abrams 25). One of the seminal examples of a school story is Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's School Days*, so much so that Isabel Quigly's study of the school story is entitled *The Heirs of Tom Brown*. In Hughes' preface to the sixth edition he claims, "My whole object in writing at all was to get the chance of preaching...I can't see that a man has any business to write at all unless he has something which he thoroughly believes and wants to preach about" (Quigley 42). Hughes is not preaching in hopes of stressing informational/intellectual learning. Instead, his "preaching" is focused on a heavy-handed moralism. Thomas Arnold, the model headmaster of Rugby School that Hughes himself knew and features in the book, was more interested in students having good character than having high scores. This emphasis on morality is communicated in *Tom Brown's School Days* and in many other school stories since.

The school story series *Harry Potter* is didactic, and the message Rowling could be conveying may be ideas about teaching and learning. I cannot assume that Rowling wrote the novels to reveal perspectives on learning; however, it is probable that Rowling's experience in the field of education influenced the series. In a 2000 interview, J. K. Rowling declares, "I used to be a teacher and I enjoyed teaching" (Soloman). Rowling's experiences as a teacher could be reflected in the *Harry Potter* series. She emphasizes classroom scenes throughout the novel, which is atypical for British school stories: school stories take place in boarding schools, but little time is spent in the classroom. Describing the school story in *Regendering the School Story: Sassy Sissies*

and Tattling Tomboys, Beverly Lyon Clark reports, “Occasionally we might glimpse a classroom, for a paragraph or two, but we could count on spending pages and pages on the playing fields” (Clark 4). Though a sufficient amount of the text is dedicated to Harry Potter’s extracurricular and social activities, there is a substantial number of classroom scenes. When students are not in class, they making comments about their teachers and/or their assignments. The *Harry Potter* books focus more on actual education than do other school stories.

The audience for school stories can be either children or young adults. Even during the emergence of the school story genre, this problem of identifying its audience was acknowledged. This confusion likely stems from the difference in age between the writers of school stories and their protagonists. Quigly explains, “[The author] had to keep putting himself into the shoes of an age-group whose outlook and feelings were, or should have been, quite unlike his own...he had to treat the relation between [school]master and boy from the boy’s point of view when he was in fact the [school]master” (Quigly 45). Recently, other factors like gender, nationality, and sexuality have complicated the composition of the target audience, since attitudes towards what is appropriate for children and young adults are changing. For example, some parents may conclude that novels that address sexuality are inappropriate for children, but other parents may use such novels to introduce children to sex.

The target audience for the *Harry Potter* series is initially the child, but the age of the intended audience increases as Harry Potter ages. In the first novel, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, Harry is eleven years old; however even at this age he has a greater than normal agency (ability to act) because he is an orphan. In *The Pleasures of*

Children's Literature, author Perry Nodelman points out, "The prevalence of orphans in children's fiction seems to relate to a central concern adults have with the question of children's independence and security. Orphans are of necessity independent, free to have adventures without the constraints of protective adults" (Nodelman 154). Childhood is typically a time when parental love and control is expected, but whether children have parental love and control in their lives or not, they enjoy a young protagonist who has a greater scope of action. Harry Potter lives with his aunt and uncle, but they provide little parental love and supervision. It does not seem so odd that Harry would be away from his home for months at a time or that he plans grandiose adventures while at school.

Besides the age of its protagonist and its subject matter, the *Harry Potter* series also initially qualifies as children's literature because of repetitions of similar situations within the texts. Repetitions are common within children's literature series. Whereas adults may grow weary of the repetitiveness, children are not so aware that each of the novels in a series follows a formulaic structure. Authors of children's literature create variations in their work by "writing about the same characters in different but similar situations" (Nodelman 163). Repetitions are often useful for children because they drill concepts. In each *Harry Potter* book, for instance, the reader can expect a showdown between Harry Potter and Voldemort. The fight between good and evil is inevitable in each novel, yet Rowling approaches each conflict differently. In one book, Voldemort takes control of a Hogwarts teacher's body (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*); in another book, Voldemort battles Harry Potter with a basilisk in an abandoned chamber under Hogwarts (*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*); in another book, Harry is transported from the Tri-Wizard Tournament to a graveyard where Voldemort is waiting

(*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*). There are only two books out of the seven Harry Potter novels in which Harry does not meet Voldemort face-to-face. In *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, Harry meets Voldemort's followers, Death Eaters, instead of Voldemort; in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* Harry meets the person responsible for the death of his parents and the imprisonment of his godfather. No matter the conflict, Harry is able to escape due to the help of his friends and his selfless attitude. As a result of the repetitions within the text, one could skip one of the earlier *Harry Potter* texts and still follow the story. As the texts progress, the battle between Harry Potter and Voldemort is still inevitable, but characters get more complex. For instance, the hapless Neville Longbottom goes from being portrayed as a weakling to a courageous wizard and Professor Snape goes from being portrayed as an enemy to selfless instructor.

The fourth book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, significantly marks Harry's transition into young adulthood. Even Rowling admits, "Book four is the end of an era for Harry...He's no longer protected" (Soloman). Children's literature usually naïvely expects the good guy to win. If he does not win at that moment, there is still hope that he will do so eventually. Young adult literature, on the other hand, typically avoids tidy endings. With the exception of the final novel, all *Harry Potter* novels end with several unresolved issues. Harry Potter is often left with unanswered questions and convoluted tasks. The fourth book introduces an element that further validates the text as young adult literature—the witnessed death of a character. In the fourth book, Harry's schoolmate Cedric Diggory is murdered before Harry's eyes. In earlier novels, we hear about the deaths of Harry's parents and other victims of Voldemort, we see ghosts, and we know about dangers that could result in death, but

nobody is actually murdered. By the end of the series, several key characters are dead, including Professor Snape, Professor Dumbledore, Remus Lupin, Fred Weasley, and Sirius Black.

As Harry Potter gets older, the transition from children's literature to adolescent literature is more apparent with growth of social power, a characteristic singled out by noted critic Roberta Trites, who identifies social power as the characteristic that distinguishes young adult literature from children's literature. In young adult literature, protagonists "assume responsibility for their own position in society, whether they engage their power to enable themselves or to repress others" (Trites 7). Social power propels the plot in the *Harry Potter* series; however, such power gains even more momentum later on in the series. Early within the series, Harry grows to hate Voldemort, but it is not until later on that Harry realizes he must be the one to kill him. Harry Potter's "chosen boy" image is strengthened with the emergence of this prophecy. Voldemort takes control of media outlets, the Ministry of Magic, and eventually Hogwarts in an attempt to isolate Harry and his supporters. Towards the end of the book, Harry finds himself racing to destroy Voldemort, because Voldemort is rapidly obtaining social power. Voldemort has placed Death Eaters in Hogwarts and used curses on important political figures that allow him to control more aspects of the wizarding community. The struggles that Harry faces while fighting Voldemort are not simple questions of mere magical performance. Harry must strengthen his social skills with his friends and other magical beings in order to overcome Voldemort.

The *Harry Potter* series has thus been transformed into a *Bildungsroman*— a "novel in which the protagonist comes of age as an adult" (Trites 10). Such novels

usually begin with a sensitive child who feels confined and eventually leaves home for an urban center. Next the protagonist triumphs over difficulties, and the reader is given a glimpse of the protagonist's adulthood (Trites 11). Harry Potter begins as a literally confined child—his aunt and uncle force him to live in a cupboard. His aunt and uncle also mentally confine Harry by constantly isolating him from the family, having low expectations of his achievements, and considering him inferior to his silly cousin Dudley. Harry finds refuge in Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, soon finding out that he is a celebrity in the wizarding world. Harry faces other struggles as well, the most serious ones pertaining to the upcoming battle between Harry Potter and Voldemort, but in the end he succeeds. In response to trials, Trites asserts, “the hero self-consciously sets out on a quest to achieve independence” (11). Though a fight between a powerful adult wizard and a teenage wizard seems deadly for the latter, Harry Potter never fears facing Voldemort. Instead, Harry Potter understands that he is the only one who can kill the evil wizard and succeeds in doing so in the final book. The *Bildungsroman* is complete once the protagonist gains the two main indicators of adulthood other than age: a job and a steady relationship (Trites 11). In the epilogue, Harry is an adult. He is married to Ginny Weasley, and he is an Auror. Since Harry Potter ends up with more social power at the end of the novel (Trites 19), the *Bildungsroman* is complete.

REALISM

Thus far, I have been describing the genre of school story, its audience, and the related genre of the *Bildungsroman*. Before I return to my discussion of pedagogy, I want to discuss realism and how it will strengthen my argument. Realism is also an essential aspect of young adult literature that adds to the complexity of the *Harry Potter* series. Granted, the *Harry Potter* novels do make references to giants, unicorns, ogres, elves, centaurs, mermaids, and other fantastic creatures, yet the central characters are humans in very recognizable situations. Realistic fiction, according to M. H. Abrams in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, is “written so as to give the effect that it represents life and the social world as it seems to the common reader” (Abrams 174). It is considered to be such by being “realistic in subject and manner” (Norton and Rushton 76). Demonstrating that the *Harry Potter* series is “realistic fiction” will strengthen my argument that it is representative of real attitudes towards education. The manner in which the characters and their problems are introduced and continuously portrayed in the novel maintains this underlying realism. For example, when Harry first meets Professor McGonagall, he does not first see her as a powerful witch. Instead, he recognizes her to be a strict disciplinarian because of her style of teaching and choice of clothing. Each novel leads up to Harry facing Voldemort, an obviously fantastic situation, yet there are many more instances of Harry doing realistic things like complaining about the amount of homework he must complete, having crushes on girls, and arguing with schoolmates. Rowling further communicates the texts’ essential realism by hiding centers of wizarding life in very real locations (like Diagon Alley, a popular shopping venue in London) or

emphasizing the continuities between the wizarding world and everyday reality (such as the difficulty of hiding dragons and giants from non-magical people).

Even the most realistic texts do not completely reflect reality. Doing so would be impossible, but realistic characters and plots do correspond with actual places, personalities, and/or ideas. In *Realism*, Pam Morris argues, “Events and people in [a realist] story are explicable in terms of natural causation without resort to the supernatural or divine intervention” (Morris 3). Realist literature is considered so because the characters and themes present seem plausible. As I have been arguing, the human aspects of the *Harry Potter* series are very realistic, including the descriptions of teaching and learning.

This seven-book series depicts seven years’ worth of Harry’s interaction with his teachers and peers at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, fitting comfortably, as I have said, into the “English school story” genre. Apart from its spells, broomsticks, and potions, Hogwarts is a school similar to any other. There are tests, homework assignments, and extracurricular activities. The educational process is vividly characterized in the novels. Harry Potter spends the majority of his time at Hogwarts, and thus much of the book references education at least obliquely. Inside the classroom, students take notes and exams, ask questions and sometimes even struggle to stay awake. Outside of the classroom, students do homework, teach each other spells, and make claims about the effectiveness of their teachers. The portrayals of teaching and learning in the novels are representative of a real educational process. For example, the reader is aware that Harry Potter masters magic that is above his grade level when he duels evil wizards, yet he does not have the highest grades in his classes. Hermione excels in every

class except broomstick flying and Divination—subjects that cannot easily be learned from a book. Ron makes average grades, yet he is a master at wizard-chess, a game requiring much analytical thinking. These facts could support the notions that learning can (and does) take place outside of the classroom, that standardized exams do not necessarily accurately measure skills, and that reading and mathematical skills are not the only skills necessary for success. The *Harry Potter* series is very much about pedagogy.

PEDAGOGY

Much of Harry Potter's time is dedicated to learning something, whether it is how to produce a Patronus charm or how to approach a hippogriff. Scholarly journals, books, and articles that focus on the educational process may be able to help readers understand how the education of young wizards and witches at Hogwarts is a significant part of Rowling's message. These studies of pedagogy may explain why some students display noble characteristics, yet have poor grades, how teachers decide upon homework assignments, why some teachers succeed in reaching low-achieving students, and how teaching and learning occur outside of the traditional classroom. For example, Dumbledore reveals that the secret to defeating Lord Voldemort is destroying "horcruxes," but Dumbledore dies before all of them are destroyed, leaving Harry to research exactly what "horcruxes" are, where to find them, and how to destroy them. The test of Harry's knowledge here is not an essay. Instead, the test is his survival. I plan to shed more light on how Hogwarts students were able to learn both inside and outside of the classroom.

There are various models that attempt to explain how students learn. “Lessons on Learning” by Christine Robinson identifies three of them: Bloom’s taxonomy², Fink’s taxonomy, and Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences. Bloom’s taxonomy organizes learning into six cognitive steps. The lowest level of learning is knowledge. It includes being able to recall specific definitions, dates, terms, and basic principles. The other stages are comprehension, application, analysis, and synthesis. Evaluation is the final stage. The appearance of the six steps of either taxonomy—Bloom’s original taxonomy and Anderson’s revision of it—can be derived from scenes from Hogwarts. For example, in “Charms” class, Harry sometimes struggles with the spells. He knows the incantation and the way he is supposed to flick his wand, but he has problems applying this knowledge. As noted earlier, application is the third step of Bloom’s taxonomy. Once a student masters the application of a concept, the next steps are analysis, then synthesis, and evaluation. The higher a student’s cognition can be placed on the hierarchy, the deeper that student’s cognitive ability.

The most noticeable differences between the two Bloom taxonomies are the replacement of nouns with verbs and the switching of the fifth and sixth levels of learning. As noted earlier, Bloom’s taxonomy is composed of six stages. Each stage is represented with a noun. Anderson uses verbs to represent these concepts. Knowledge is replaced with “knowing,” comprehension is replaced with “understanding,” application is replaced with “applying,” analysis is replaced with “analyzing,” evaluate is replaced with “evaluating,” and synthesis is replaced with “creating.” In the original taxonomy, evaluation represents the highest level of learning and synthesis represents the second highest level of learning. In the revised taxonomy, “creating” represents the highest level

of learning while evaluate represent the second highest level of learning (Wilson). The revised version of the taxonomy also provides more information about the types of knowledge. Nilay T. Bümen discloses in “Effects of the Original Versus Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy on Lesson Planning Skills: A Turkish Study among Pre-service Teachers” that, “the Knowledge subcategories [are] subframed as four types of knowledge: factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive knowledge” (Bümen 3). The original taxonomy only recognized factual, conceptual, and procedural knowledge. Wilson contends that the types of knowledge were “rarely discussed in any instructive or useful way.” This lack of emphasis on the types of knowledge may be why Robinson only provides a broad explanation of “knowledge” in “Lessons on Learning.”

Whereas Bloom’s taxonomy concerns itself with stages of cognition, Fink’s taxonomy deals with the cognitive and the affective domains of learning. Robinson defines the affective domain as one “relating to emotions, values, and beliefs” (26). Fink suggests that students must go through specific stages of personal development in order to strengthen their intellectual ability. There are six different non-hierarchical stages of significant learning: foundational knowledge, application, integration, human dimension, caring, and learning how to learn. Robinson explains, “Fink’s taxonomy points out that teaching is about more than just the subject matter, it is helping the student integrate what is learned into his or her life in a way that brings lasting change” (26). Fink’s taxonomy may explain why Professor Binns and Professor Umbridge are competent in their subjects yet unable to keep students engaged and learning in their classrooms. Fink’s taxonomy could even support the effectiveness of seemingly unsuccessful teachers like Hagrid, who teaches “Care of Magical Creatures.” Being half-giant, Hagrid has an intimidating

demeanor, yet literally demonstrates care in his own care of magical creatures, not to mention his concern for the well being of Harry Potter. Hagrid being the teacher has a lot to do with Harry's interest and performance in the class.

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences is the final model of learning that is included in Robinson's "Lessons on Learning." It comprises seven ways that people learn: linguistically, logical-mathematically, visual-spatially, body-kinesthetically, musical-rhythmically, interpersonally, and intrapersonally. Most people utilize all seven characteristics, but show a preference for one or two. The Weasley twins are prime examples of students who display a range of skills. Their interpersonal skills are dominant, but they demonstrate logical-mathematical and visual-spatial skills as well. Linguistic skills are most often assessed in traditional forms of education. Test books and essays reinforce this notion. The Weasley twins did not have horrible grades, but they did not do well on the Ordinary Wizard Level (OWL) exams, subject-specific standardized tests. They are mostly written tests; however, there are a few sections that actually require students to perform magic. The Weasley twins' mother complains about their poor exam results, yet the twins have created their own business while in school. They market their products to students, answering questions about the products, providing samples, and eventually making sales. Many of the students remain faithful customers even when the twins drop out of school to better develop their business. The twins thus demonstrate interpersonal intelligence, which Robinson defines as, "the ability to develop and maintain relationships and understand, communicate, and work with other people" (26), and mathematical intelligence. Interpersonal intelligence is likely the dominant type of intelligence that the twins display, but their business endeavors reveal visual-spatial skill.

This skill includes being able to “mentally visualize objects,” (26), since the Weasley twins invent their own products. The mathematical skills being used while running a business are obvious, since the twins make enough profit to eventually expand their business.

Another useful pedagogical source for this thesis is *What Successful Teachers Do* (Glasgow and Hicks), which reveals 101 research-based classroom strategies. Each of the strategies falls under one of nine categories: Interacting and Collaborating with Students; Managing the Classroom Environment, Time, and Discipline; Organizing Curricular Goals, Lesson Plans, and Instructional Delivery; Using Student Assessment and Feedback to Maximize Instructional Effectiveness; Celebrating Diversity in the Classroom; Integrating Technology in the Classroom; Enhancing Reading and Literacy Skills; Developing a Professional Identity; and Fostering a Positive Relationship with Families and the Community. Teaching strategies are provided for each category. The strategies are easily identifiable in the *Harry Potter* novels, even the integration of technology in the classroom. *Technology* is defined as “the practical application of knowledge” in *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*. Technology may mean laptop computers and cellular phones to us, but for *Harry Potter* characters it could mean quills that take notes and broomsticks that can fly.

Yet another useful work on pedagogy is *The Elements of Teaching* by James M. Banner, Jr. and Harold C. Cannon. Banner and Cannon define the elements of learning as authority, ethics, order, imagination, compassion, patience, character, and pleasure. Perhaps the most intriguing element of learning in their list is ethics—a common sense of right and wrong. Although ethics is commonly expected from those who have studied

medicine and law, it is just as important in educational settings. Ethics is not a part of course content, but it can definitely affect the learning process. For example, Professor Snape shows favoritism to students from Slytherin, the house he heads. Providing favors for some but not others is unethical because students are being treated unequally. Most people consider disparate treatment to be wrong. In some instances some students may need to be treated differently because of physical or mental difficulties. Even so, they will still be treated fairly. Professor Snape's poor ethics likely contribute to his unpopularity among students who are not housed in Slytherin. Many non-Slytherin grow frustrated at being reprimanded for knowing answers that Slytherin students do not know or at watching Slytherin students get away with bending the rules.

The relationships among the faculty at Hogwarts also play a key role in their effectiveness. Teachers' relationships are discussed in both "Retaining Teachers in Challenging Schools" by Bobbie Greenlee and John J. Brown, Jr. and "Fostering Faculty Collaboration in Learning Communities: A Developmental Approach" by Catherine B. Stevenson, Robert L. Duran, Karen A. Barrett, and Guy C. Colarulli. "Retaining Teachers in Challenging Schools" deals with how schools can keep good teachers, and how they can stop attracting ineffective ones. This article will be especially helpful when addressing the many teachers of the Defense against the Dark Arts. As mentioned previously, there is a different Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher every year in the Harry Potter series. This inconsistency affects the students' education.

"Becoming a Better Teacher Using Cooperative Learning," by Barbara J. Millis, details how cooperative learning can lead to a deeper understanding of the course material. Cooperative learning is a teaching strategy in which students with varying

levels of ability work together to learn course material. By analyzing the type of instruction and activities used by Hogwarts teachers, researchers can tell which teachers utilized cooperative learning and how well they used it.

Another source that was helpful in understanding pedagogy and how it pertains to Hogwarts was “Conceptions of Effective Teaching in Education: Extending the Boundaries,” which reports a study conversation among eight teachers about the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. They also give examples of effective teaching and learning. Some of these examples include imparting information, facilitating learning, applying facts, and encouraging knowledge creation. The examples are easy to observe in the *Harry Potter* books in lectures and classroom activities.

HARRY POTTER and PEDAGOGY

I will discuss the teaching and learning present within the Harry Potter series in order to demonstrate that it is representative of such activities taking place in the real world. All of the articles to be discussed in this section do make a connection between the *Harry Potter* series and pedagogy, but their observations do not combine descriptions of teaching with literary criticism, and particularly not with how the descriptions are intensely realistic—issues that would strengthen their argument that the education at Hogwarts is significant. Not only will these issues be included in my discussion, but I will also analyze the *Harry Potter* series within the school story genre. These articles are still useful for looking at certain aspects of Hogwarts Schools of Witchcraft and Wizardry and of the teachers present.

Analyzing the educational and instructional activities within Hogwarts’ walls is not a new concept. Jodi H. Levine and Nancy S. Shapiro’s “Hogwarts: A Learning

Community” (2000) compares Hogwarts to an ideal college campus. The research focuses on diversity, first-year experience, learning communities, educational value, and civic responsibility. Just as many students attend colleges and meet people of different races, religions, socio-economic statuses, and sexuality, Hogwarts deals with a factor of its own—“muggles.” They are non-magical people. Though no actual muggles attend Hogwarts, some students have parents who are muggles. Sometimes there is tension between students whose parents are muggles and students whose parents are wizards and witches. In addition to diversity, Hogwarts students have their own first-year experience. Harry Potter’s experience with the sorting-hat is similar to the experience that most first-year students have with entrance exams. Shapiro and Levine ask, “Is Professor McGonagall’s advice to the new witches and wizards...any different from the implicit or explicit words of advice we offer new students when we inform them of impending placement tests?” (Levine and Shapiro 3). Hogwarts itself is a community, with the students living on campus and then only with the people in their house. Residence halls are created for the same purpose; however, many schools only require freshmen to stay on campus, if indeed there is any residency requirement at all. Information regarding the education at Hogwarts in terms of instruction, teacher effectiveness, and/or student achievement is most relevant to my research. Though Levine and Shapiro do not go into specific detail, they do admit that students at Hogwarts usually learn by trial and error. Ultimately, they describe Dumbledore as the ideal educator, “the guide who has fine tuned the appropriate levels of challenge and support for all students to get them properly launched on their own learning curves” (Levine and Shapiro 5). Levine and Shapiro’s article discusses many aspects of learning at Hogwarts, such as the diversity that the

muggles create, the first-year experience, and the affect that living on campus has on the students. More specifically, I want to focus on how the Harry Potter series does indeed provide pedagogical examples, or at least basic interpretations, of good and bad teaching and learning methods. Focusing on this pedagogical stance can lead to better understanding of how the educational process depicted at Hogwarts represents real attitudes towards education.

“Harry Potter Pedagogy” by Renee Dickson and “What American Schools can Learn From Hogwarts School of Wizardry” by Margaret Zoller Booth and Gracie Marie Booth are particularly relevant to my research because they focus on the education at Hogwarts. “Harry Potter Pedagogy” draws attention to critical matters in education. Dickson looks past all of the spells, dragons, and curses to see a school that is similar to any other. The instructors play a major part in the education of the students; however, Dickson notices also that students play an equally important role in their own education. She focuses on only seven professors: Binns, Trelawney, Firenze, Snape, McGonagall, Lupin, and Dumbledore. Dickson distinguishes the good from the bad by using Bloom’s Taxonomy. Though the teachers that are analyzed play a significant role in the education of young wizards and witches, Dickson does not pay much attention to Hagrid, Professor Sprout, or the many teachers of “Defense Against the Dark Arts.” These other teachers are important because they have such a profound impression on the students. For example, Hagrid is the grounds-keeper who teaches “Care for Magical Creatures.” He is quite knowledgeable of the subject matter, but his classroom management skills make his lessons difficult. Also, there are prejudices against him being half-giant. He is significant because his instructional methods are controversial. On the first day of school he brings a

hippogriff, a large animal that is a hybrid of an eagle, a lion, and a horse. A student gets hurt during the demonstration. Hagrid also allows Harry Potter and his friends to break rules, yet Hagrid is not typically considered unethical by readers because he treats students fairly. Professor Sprout teaches “Herbology,” a subject similar to botany. Professor Sprout is successful in reaching out to Neville Longbottom, a hapless student whose self-esteem often gets in the way of his achievement. Neville later returns to Hogwarts as a Herbology professor. Teachers of “Defense Against the Dark Arts” have the worst retention rate, but one of the largest impacts on the students. Each teacher plays a role in the fight against good and evil—that is, in Harry Potter’s fight against Lord Voldemort. Harry’s first “Defense Against the Dark Arts” teacher actually housed the remains of Voldemort’s inside his own body. Delores Umbridge, the “Defense Against the Dark Arts” teacher during Harry’s fifth year at Hogwarts, ignores all of the signs that Voldemort has returned to power, thus leaving the students unprotected.

All of Dickson’s research finally asks one question, whether learning can occur through classroom instruction, or in spite of it. Dickson admits that the information that successful educators impart is useful; however, self-guided learning comes from educator’s shortcomings. An educator’s shortcomings could be a series of small mistakes or it could be an overall pattern of ineffectiveness. Analyzing more of the teachers at Hogwarts would be more useful than focusing on only five. The successful and unsuccessful teachers and methods at Hogwarts should be analyzed to identify their successful techniques as models for educators and the unsuccessful methods as actions for them to avoid.

“What American Schools Can Learn from Hogwarts Schools of Wizardry” is authored by a mother and daughter—an eleven year-old daughter, to be exact. Margaret Booth is an associate professor in the Educational Foundations and Inquiry Program at Bowling Green State University. Gracie Marie Booth is Margaret’s daughter. Margaret notes her daughter’s educational perceptions of the *Harry Potter* series, and then she uses research that supports her daughter’s observations. Gracie examines the learning community that Hogwarts creates. She acknowledges that learning does not just occur in the classroom, she identifies successful and unsuccessful teachers, and she recognizes the need for students to learn skills that can easily be applied to their lives. My research will put less focus on Hogwarts as a whole, and more focus on specific teachers and their methods.

The chapter “Schooling Harry Potter: Teachers and Learning, Power and Knowledge” by Megan L. Birch in *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter* is the final source that I have employed to shed light on the education and learning taking place at Hogwarts. Birch focuses on the teachers at Hogwarts, the curriculum they use, and the knowledge they impart. Birch proposes that readers best understand teachers in three stereotypical caricatures: polarities, paragons, and complexities. The *Harry Potter* series is filled with teachers who are polar, or dramatically opposite (*Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary*). The most obvious pair is History of Magic instructor Professor Binns and Divination instructor Professor Trelawney. Birch describes Binns as “a stereotypical bore, he is dull, fact-driven, and focused on spewing information,” (Birch 105). The fact that Professor Binns is a ghost only enhances his portrayal as a bore. Professor Trelawney could not be more contrary. Her lessons are abstract and subjective.

Students and professors alike question her actual ability to prophesize. She represents eclectic, free-spirited teachers. It is interesting to note that both professors' personalities are highly representative of their fields (e.g., a ghost is teaching a history class). In addition to polarities, paragons and complex teachers are depicted in the text. Paragons are models of perfection, and complex characters embody two or more aspects of their personality. Albus Dumbledore serves as the paragon, while Professor McGonagall serves as the complexity. Dumbledore is generally considered to be one of the greatest wizards alive, yet he chooses to be the headmaster. He does not preside over an actual class, but he teaches Harry Potter many things. Dumbledore is not a paragon because he knows everything, but he knows most things and that which he does not know, he responds to with patience, understanding, and truthfulness. Professor McGonagall is initially characterized as a "schoolmarm." She is strict, wears her hair in a tight bun, and is extremely smart. Though McGonagall meets some of the criteria for being a "schoolmarm," she challenges the stereotype. McGonagall occasionally bends rules, and dances. Also, she makes witty remarks towards another professor and she has interests outside her content area.

Birch analyzes the curriculum at Hogwarts in her overview of the learning taking place there. Similar to the American high school reliance on standardized tests, Hogwarts has its own high-stakes testing as well. "The curriculum is the preparation for the test" (Birch 115), but the curriculum used by most teachers is ineffective. In the case of Delores Umbridge, the fear of admitting that Voldemort is back keeps her from allowing students to practice defensive spells. Instead, she suggests that if they study the spells long enough, they will be able to perform them when asked to do so.

Birch concludes that real learning cannot be achieved from classroom instruction. Harry Potter does not make the best grades, yet he learns a lot of things outside of class. Sometimes, learning can occur from extra help with teachers, as was the case when Professor Lupin shows Harry how to produce a Patronus charm. Education is important; however, it is not supreme. Birch points out that “the wise Ravenclaws are marginalized compared to the brave and chivalrous Gryffindors. Harry does things based on inspiration and impulse, not by thinking things out. At Hogwarts, bravery and magic powers...and sheer luck matter much more than intellectual and academic achievement” (Birch 117). Contrary to Hogwarts, public schools are accused on focusing on “intellectual training” and less on “character building,” (Quigly 11). Though education is a prevalent theme in the *Harry Potter* novels, Rowling does make references to the idea that education is not supreme. In *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, Hermione tells Harry, “Books! And cleverness! There are more important things—bravery and friendship” (*Sorcerer’s Stone* 287).

I have found many sources that analyze how people learn and how effective teachers teach. These books and articles are only a few of those that address such topics. It would be impossible to read the entire literature on pedagogical effectiveness, but I hope that a sufficient sample of scholarly thinking on education has been provided. The following discussion will focus on models of teaching and learning that are most representative of the education at Hogwarts. I will use the theory of Multiple Intelligences, the revised version of Bloom’s taxonomy, and the characteristics of successful teachers outlined within *The Elements of Teaching* to analyze the education at

Hogwarts. These sources can accurately depict how students learn, reveal different types of learning, and describe qualities of successful teachers.

DISCUSSION

As discussed above, one model of learning has been provided by Howard Gardner as the result of his attempt to thoroughly define intelligence sought to define intelligence. In an attempt to get away from standardized tests (he specifically mentions the SAT and IQ) and correlations among tests, he and his team focused on naturalistic forms of information on how people think and learn. Extensive research was conducted on patients that had suffered brain damage. In *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice* Gardner explains, “When one suffers a stroke or some other kind of brain damage, various abilities can be destroyed, or spared, in isolation from other abilities. This research with brain-damaged patients yields a very powerful kind of evidence, because it seems to reflect the way the nervous system has evolved over the millennia to yield certain discrete kinds of intelligence” (Gardner 7-8). Gardner studied autistic children, idiot savants, prodigies, and children with learning disabilities to delineate different types of intelligence. Intelligence as a whole is then divided into seven types: linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, and intrapersonal intelligence. Students in Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry display many of the types of intelligence listed above.

Linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence are most commonly valued in academic settings. Linguistic intelligence involves using spoken and written words to

deduce and impart meaning. Logical-mathematical intelligence involves logic (inductive and deductive reasoning) and mathematical computation. These two types of intelligences are often measured in essays or tests that focus on verbal and/or mathematical skills. Hermione demonstrates the most linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence. She gains a reputation for being brainy in the very first novel. She reads her text books before coming to school, so she already knows a lot of the information. Hermione is able to use her linguistic skills to her advantage in History of Magic. The class is taught by Professor Binns, the only ghost on the staff. He is considered to be the most boring teacher in the school. Rowling writes, “Professor Binns opened his notes and began to read in a flat drone like an old vacuum cleaner until nearly everyone in the class was in a deep stupor” (*Chamber of Secrets* 148). Hermione is one of the few students who can actually gain anything from Binns’ lectures. Ron and Harry often ask for her notes. Hermione’s logical intelligence comes in handy when Harry is racing to get to the sorcerer’s stone before Professor Quirrell does. Harry and Hermione are faced with seven potions—two of which are wine, two that will allow them to go through the flames unharmed, and three which are deadly poisons. While Harry seems worried, Hermione is not. She declares, “This isn’t magic—it’s logic—a puzzle. A lot of the greatest wizards haven’t got an ounce of logic” (*Sorcerer’s Stone* 185). Hermione obviously has such logic. She chooses the correct potions. Her logic is further displayed in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, when Professor Snape substitutes for Professor Lupin. Snape assigns the students an essay on werewolves in hopes that they will realize that Professor Lupin actually is a werewolf. Lupin tells students that the assignment is no longer a requirement, but Hermione has already written it. Furthermore, she took notice that Lupin

was always absent during full moons. She deduced that Lupin was a werewolf, and her assumption was correct. She was likely the only student who knew Lupin's secret.

The area in which Hermione falls short is bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. Such intelligence includes "wisdom of the body and the ability to control physical motions" (Robinson 2). Hermione was apprehensive towards her flying lessons. Flying a broom was something that she could not learn from a book, though she tried by reading *Quidditch through the Ages*. The flying lesson is disturbed by a student's injury, but Harry still ends up flying. Harry is elated when he realizes how great of a flyer he is. He considers flying to be "something he could do without being taught" (*Sorcerer's Stone* 148). Harry does not realize that this instance is not his first time flying. Harry later finds out that he received a toy broomstick for his first birthday. Even so, his parents were murdered shortly after his birthday, so Harry could not have spent that much time zooming around on the broom. Having spent the next eleven years with his muggle relatives, Harry had no practice flying a broom. Harry's bodily-kinesthetic intelligence must be superb because he was able to fly well though he never ridden a broom to his knowledge. Professor McGonagall, a strict disciplinarian, is so impressed by Harry's flying skills that she talks Professor Dumbledore into binding the rules to allow Harry to play Quidditch.

Many characters display some degree of interpersonal intelligence. Harry Potter and those closest to him have an abundance of it. The Weasley family, Hermione, Neville, the Order of the Phoenix, and Dobby support Harry and each other. They find effective ways to communicate, even when they are being carefully watched. They look

out for each other, and trust each other. Harry's friends, classmates, and teachers take on Voldemort and his Death Eaters rather than sacrifice Harry.

Throughout much of the series, Dumbledore reaffirms the values of friendship, trust, and love, ideals that require one to understand others; however his interpersonal skills are not very strong. Dumbledore requires Harry to take private Occlumency lessons. Occlumency is an art which includes closing one's mind so that other people cannot gain access to one's thoughts. Dumbledore never expresses to Harry how important closing his mind is. Instead, Dumbledore relies on Snape, a teacher who castigates more than teaches, to help Harry master Occlumency. As a result, Harry and Snape soon end their lessons, and Voldemort places a fake vision in Harry's mind. The memory leads Harry to believe that his godfather Sirius is in danger. In actuality, it is a trick to get Harry to the Department of Mysteries where Death Eaters are waiting. Sirius comes to help Harry battle the Death Eaters, but is killed. Dumbledore admits that he is partly responsible. Even so, Dumbledore still does not learn his lesson about communicating effectively with Harry. Before dying, Dumbledore instructs Harry to hunt horcruxes, but in actuality, Dumbledore wants Harry to put together the Deathly Hallows as well. Rather than being clear about the mission, Dumbledore leaves a book of fairytales revealing the Deathly Hallows for Hermione. Dumbledore eventually asks Harry, "Can you forgive me for not trusting you? For not telling you?" (*Deathly Hallows* 713). Harry has done nothing to deem himself unworthy of knowing the truth. He is always characterized as a modest, honest, talented character. Dumbledore's decisions to keep information from Harry are not wise ones. If Dumbledore were to strengthen his

intrapersonal skills, he could be more successful at getting other characters to love and trust each other.

Considering that interpersonal intelligence involves effective communication and relationships with other people, it is no surprise that Voldemort's interpersonal skills are minimal. Voldemort has limited interpersonal intelligence as well. He is the leader of the Death Eaters, but he has no idea how to govern them. He uses intimidation and fear instead of trust and love. Even his most favored Death Eaters are afraid of feeling his wrath if he gets angry at them. Dumbledore observes that Voldemort has never seemed to have a friend or expressed a desire to have one. Relationships in which one person is called "master" and the other "servant" usually do not represent strong interpersonal skills. At an early age, Voldemort indicates that he does not wish to develop such skills. Before Voldemort became known as one of the most dangerous wizards, he was the young Tom Riddle housed in an orphanage. He stole from the other children and used his magic to abuse other children (*Half-Blood Prince* 267-273). Had Voldemort developed interpersonal skills, he would better understand his Death Eaters and the power that love has on them. For example, Snape was probably once a faithful Death Eater, but the moment Voldemort threatened and killed Lily Potter, Snape began to work against Voldemort. Snape told Voldemort that he cared deeply for Lily Potter, but Voldemort obviously did not understand how deep this feeling was. Voldemort's disregard led Snape to spy on him for Dumbledore for seventeen years.

About the only interpersonal skill Voldemort possesses is manipulation. Voldemort does not care about anyone but himself, but he is able to use flattery and charm to his benefit. Dumbledore admits, "[Voldemort] charmed so many of my colleagues"

(*Half-Blood Prince* 361). Voldemort, in his earlier identity as Tom Riddle, was able to unleash the basilisk in the Chamber of Secrets without being detected because Tom was handsome, he made good grades, and he was a prefect. He was able to mask his desire to kill with a youthful curiosity for education. The young Voldemort was also able to get the ghost of Rowena Hufflepuff to reveal the location of the lost diadem. Once Rowena realizes that she gave such information to Voldemort, she stutters, “I had...no idea...He was...flattering. He seemed to...to understand...to sympathize” (*Deathly Hallows* 617). Voldemort may not have been very good at maintaining relationships, but he was definitely able to seem charming in order to get what he wanted.

Intrapersonal skills—skills that lead to a better understanding of the self—are difficult to assess. Self-reflection reveals an accurate depiction of values, purpose(s), motivations, and feelings. Because Rowling does not provide self-reflections for several of the characters, it is impossible to know what those characters think about themselves. The two characters that do exhibit a lot of intrapersonal skills are Dumbledore and Harry Potter. Dumbledore may not know as much as he claims to know about people, but he definitely knows himself. More specifically, he knows his strengths and his weaknesses. His strengths are obvious—he is extremely talented. Dumbledore is modest, choosing not to dwell on the fact that he defeated the infamous Grindelwald or that he has been offered the position of Ministry of Magic many times. It may seem odd that such a talented wizard would choose to be a teacher/school administrator, but Dumbledore did not trust himself with power. The last time he was in a position that would lead to power, he neglected the care of his sister and instead plotted with a dangerous wizard to oppress non-magical people. After his sister’s untimely death, Dumbledore realized that “power

was [his] weakness and [his] temptation” (*Deathly Hallows* 718). Harry Potter displays intrapersonal skills by accepting his purpose, which is to destroy Voldemort, and taking on that goal. There are times in which Voldemort manages to escape death, but those times are not the result of Harry backing down from his destiny. Harry is steady in his pursuit of Voldemort, even when Dumbledore’s brother tries to discourage him (*Deathly Hallows* 561). Though the situation seems in favor for Voldemort, Harry is sure that he will be able to defeat the evil wizard, which he eventually does.

I am sorry to say that there were no examples of musical intelligence or spatial intelligence. There were no choirs, symphonies, or bands at the school. The only times music is mentioned within the texts are when a magical harp is used to put a three-headed dog to sleep (*Sorcerer’s Stone*), when the band the Weird Sisters perform at the Yule Ball (*Goblet of Fire*), and when Mrs. Weasley constantly plays songs by Celestina Warbeck during the Christmas holidays (*Half-Blood Prince* 331). There are no examples of spatial intelligence, which is defined as “the ability to form a mental model of a spatial world and to be able to maneuver and operate using that model” (Gardner 9). Perhaps spatial intelligence would be displayed in the text if there were art classes in which sculpting was taught or adventures in which Harry and his friends had to navigate oceans. Those two activities are the only ones that Gardner provides as examples of this kind of intelligence.

Whereas Multiple Intelligences focuses on the different types of intelligence, Bloom’s taxonomy addresses how such intelligence is acquired. Benjamin Bloom developed his taxonomy to explain in terms of cognition how people learn. His original taxonomy includes six hierarchical stages of cognition, each represented with a noun.

Each stage of cognition could be used to develop and strengthen any of the Multiple Intelligences. Bloom's taxonomy was updated in 2000 by a team lead by some of Bloom's own colleagues and students. The updated version of the taxonomy uses verbs to represent the stages of cognition, and renames some of the stages, and repositions them. According to the new taxonomy, the stages of cognition (from least to greatest) are "remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating" (Wilson).

Remembering refers to "retrieving, recalling or recognizing knowledge from memory" (Wilson). It is often characterized by people remembering definitions, facts, and other information. Most witches and wizards must have this knowledge in order to remember the incantations to spells. While fighting evil wizards, one has little time to refer to a book in hopes of finding the incantation to a spell that will save one's life. Therefore, the wizards with the best memories are the most successful.

Though every witch/wizard has some proficiency in memory, Hermione displays considerable aptitude in this category. She reads the books before classes start, often before the school term even starts, and comes to class knowing many facts and definitions. In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Professor Umbridge, the new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, is more interested in controlling Hogwarts than actually teaching the students about the Dark Arts. Her lessons are limited to students coming to class and reading a designated chapter. She is surprised to realize that Hermione has read the entire text book. When she asks Hermione what the author says about counterjinxes, Hermione replies, "He says that counterjinxes are improperly named...He says 'counterjinx' is just a name people give their jinxes when they want to make them sound more acceptable" (316). Though Hermione could have only

remembered that one random fact, it is more probable that Hermione remembers most of what she reads. In the following book, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, Hermione also further demonstrates how proficient her memory is. On the very first day of Potions class, she can identify Veritaserum, Polyjuice Potion, and Amortentia (184-185). She even gives information about the characteristics of each the potions, though the only potion that she has actually made is the Polyjuice. In fact, Hermione's memory of what she has read is so consistently noted in the series that several examples of it could be provided from each novel.

Hermione is not the only student that demonstrates proficiency in the "remembering" stage. Harry and Ron both have that skill. Harry's ability to remember is critical to his survival. In each story, he gains another piece of the mystery between the death of his parents and the destruction of Voldemort. Harry may not remember facts from textbooks, but he is careful not forget information about Voldemort. In the first book, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, Dumbledore informs Harry that when Harry's mother died to protect him, she left a magic in his blood that protects him even after her death. Later on in the series, Harry remembers that this power is why Voldemort wants to use Harry's blood to regenerate (*Goblet of Fire*). The story concerning Voldemort, his rise to power, and the connection between him and Harry gets more complicated as the story progresses, but Harry keeps up with it.

Ron demonstrates a slight proficiency in this category as well. He is not able to speak Parseltongue, the language of snakes, but he has heard Harry speak to snakes twice. Ron has no idea what Harry said on such occasions, but he is able to replicate the sounds in order to open the Chamber of Secrets and get a fang from the dead basilisk.

Understanding is second in the hierarchy of cognition. It includes constructing meaning in order to interpret, exemplify, classify, summarize, infer, compare, and/or explain (Wilson). The aim of the teachers is for students to understand the material. The portion of the Ordinary Wizarding Level that requires students to describe the wand movements required to make objects fly (*Order of the Phoenix*) are definitely attempting to measure what students understand about subjects. In the case of Divination, a subject which includes horoscopes, crystal balls, tea leaves, and prophecies, Professor Trelawney admits, “If you do not have the sight, there is little that I will be able to teach you. Books can take you only so far in this field” (*Prisoner of Azkaban*). Trelawney in inferring that book-knowledge, rote memorization of definitions and concepts, will not lead to success in the class. Students must have the “Sight,” an innate sense of what the future brings. Hermione, who demonstrates knowledge in other courses, is unable to succeed in this particular class precisely because she does not understand the subject. She has the textbook and has no doubt read it before attending class; however, she is not able to take the information and accurately analyze tea leaves or dreams. Instead, Hermione suggests, “Divination [is]...a lot of guesswork, if you ask me” (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 111). The information regarding the subject is in the textbook, but Hermione, Ron, and Harry still rely on guesses when completing assignments for Divination. They might know the material, but they do not understand.

A shining example of “understanding” can be found in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. As mentioned earlier, Professor Umbridge is the new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, but she is clearly more concerned with gaining control over Hogwarts. She does not allow the students to actually perform magic in her class.

Instead, she suggests that if students read about defense against dark arts and study it hard enough, they will be able to correctly demonstrate the magic during the OWL exams.

Hermione persuades Harry to start a club and teach willing students how to use defensive magic. During the lessons, Harry does more than simply tell students the incantations. He demonstrates his understanding of the spells by telling students what to think in order to get the spells to work properly (606).

There are many examples of the application of knowledge within the *Harry Potter* series. Hogwarts teaches students magic that can, and usually is, used in their everyday lives. For example, in *Care of Magical Creatures*, Professor Sprout teaches, “The Mandrake forms an essential part of most antidotes” (*Chamber of Secrets* 92). Once the Chamber of Secrets is opened, some students are turned into stone. Staff members attempt to use Mandrakes to revive the students. The information imparted in classes often allow Harry and his friends survive their dangerous adventures. In *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, the three are faced with Devil’s Snare, a plant that can choke a person to death. Hermione recalls the lesson that Professor Sprout had concerning the plant and is able to defeat it (278). Hermione is able to do more than regurgitate facts, but use those facts to save her friends. The Weasley twins Fred and George apply their knowledge of basic magic to develop their own business, but their skills can be best explained in terms of analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

Fred and George are two students who make average grades, yet succeed in mastering difficult magic and starting a business to market the creations that are a result of such magic. Before starting the business, Fred and George set out to see what products sell the best. Fred tells Hermione, “We’re going to use [our last year] to do a bit of

market research, find out exactly what the average Hogwarts student requires from his joke shop” (*Order of the Phoenix* 227). Next, the twins start evaluating their sales and their products. Fred and George hire students to test their products. They use these experiments to make sure the products are safe and to see how students like them. They make corrections to products that are faulty. It is important to note that in the *Harry Potter* series, the only other character who master “evaluating” are faculty and staff members at Hogwarts. Effective teachers must evaluate their students. They often do so by checking homework and correcting mistakes while in class. Surprisingly, some teachers seem to discourage evaluation rather than encourage it. As mentioned previously, Umbridge asks Hermione a question to see if she really did read and comprehend the textbook *Defensive Magical Theory*. Hermione displays what the author says about counterjinxes, then makes her own claim about counterjinxes. She supports her opinions with logical reasoning, but Umbridge is not interested in what Hermione thinks about the subject. Umbridge tells Hermione, “Well, I’m afraid it is Mr. Slinkhard’s opinion, and not yours, that matters within this classroom” (*Order of the Phoenix* 317). Being able to critique another’s work would demonstrate a deeper level of cognition than simply knowing about the original work, but Umbridge is not interested in what the students think about material. Consequently, Umbridge is hindering the cognition of her students.

The final stage of Bloom’s updated taxonomy is creating, which is demonstrated by Fred and George. They master this step by creating many items to feature in their joke store. Though the twins only received 3 OWLs apiece while at Hogwarts, Hermione exclaims, “[This] really is extraordinary magic!” (*Half-Blood Prince* 117) The twins’

products include charms that can provides students with realistic, thirty-minute daydreams, apparel that can do Shielding Charms, objects that provide decoys, powerful love potions, pimple vanishers, and chews that can cause a person to start throwing up. Even the Ministry of Magic is making mass orders of their products. Fred and George are two of the few characters who have been able to master creation. Voldemort creates Horcruxes. The horcruxes allow him to escape death, but they dangerously rip his soul. In the end, Voldemort is still killed.

Rather than focusing on how students learn or what types of knowledge students can acquire as do Gardner and Bloom, *The Elements of Teaching* focuses on qualities of successful teachers. Authors James M. Banner and Harold C. Cannon suggest that teaching is an art composed of nine components: learning, authority, ethics, order, imagination, compassion, patience, character, and pleasure. Learning is perhaps the most obvious trait of teaching—teachers are expected to relay knowledge that they have learned. Banner and Cannon identify learning with three things: the act of gaining knowledge, the knowledge learned, or the process of acquiring knowledge (7). “Learning” can function as a noun or a verb. One of the primary purposes of school is for students to leave learning more than when they came. There for, the most important application of learning is “that which is known” (7). Teachers should have mastered a subject in order to effectively teach it. Even so, teachers are not considered to be all-knowing. Actually, the best teachers strive to learn more as they teach (7-8). They are open to the knowledge of others. By continuing to learn, teachers convey a love of learning. Banner and Cannon define the balance of the teacher’s knowledge and the knowledge of others (perhaps even her students), stating, “The teachers whom we

remember most vividly are those who knew their subjects best and transmitted them with the greatest intensity and love. They were confident in their knowledge and not dogmatic” (15).

In the *Harry Potter* series, the teachers without such learning are remembered as vividly as the ones who exemplify it. The teachers who demonstrate the least amount of learning are Professor Binns, Professor Umbridge, and Professor Lockhart. Students profess their disdain for Professor Binns, the ghost who teaches the History of Magic class, very early (and very often) within the series. Binns. Relying solely on monotonous lectures, Binns bores his students to the point of lethargy, but at one point in the series they turn to him for answers. That is when the rumor begins about the opening of the Chamber of Secrets, a space within the castle of Hogwarts where one of the founders of Hogwarts allegedly left a beast that could be used to purge the school of students from muggle families. Binns reluctantly tells the students about the Chamber of Secrets. Then he cuts off their questions and insists on voicing his own thinking on the matter, exclaiming, “It does not exist! There is not a shred of evidence that Slytherin ever built so much as a secret broom cupboard” (*Chamber of Secrets* 152). Binns is competent within his subject area; however he fails to communicate a love of learning. This is the only time in which a student actually asks Binns a question. Other students began to wake up because they were finally interested in what Binns had to say on the subject. This is one occasion when Binns could actually engage the classroom, but he fails to do. Binns also ends up being proved wrong, because the Chamber of Secrets really does exist and really is opened...twice.

Professor Umbridge fails to display learning, not only by insisting on unvaried and monotonous rote learning but also in being unwilling to learn from her students. Professor Umbridge teaches Defense Against the Dark Arts. She requires the students to silently read from their textbooks, and is surprised to find a student like Hermione who has already gotten the basic facts from the book and comes to class to acquire further knowledge of the subject. Hermione is able to repeat the lesson from the chapter, analyze it, and evaluate it. As mentioned earlier, Umbridge chastises Hermione for forming information about the information from the text (*Order of the Phoenix* 317). Umbridge certainly is not displaying a love for knowledge. If she was, then she would appreciate that Hermione is able to think critically about information and strive to keep her engaged in the classroom. Instead, Umbridge tramples on Hermione's desire to learn, her opinion, and perhaps even her feelings. Umbridge is more of a tyrant than an educator.

Though Binns and Umbridge do not convey a love of learning, at least they are somewhat competent in their content area; the historical information that Binns relays is accurate, and Umbridge does indeed know how to perform defensive spells. Professor Lockhart, on the other hand, has not acquired any such proficiency in his subject area. Lockhart is the teacher for Defense Against the Dark Arts during Harry's second year at Hogwarts, but he is also a celebrity. He has written books about his famous deeds and he quizzes the students on facts from the books instead of information relating to Defense Against the Dark Arts. These deeds are related to the Defense Against the Dark Arts, but Lockhart has not actually done them. Not only has he not performed the magic which he claims in books, he *cannot* perform it. He demonstrates his incompetence in the field when he attempts to introduce the class to Cornish pixies. He gives the students no

information about the pixies, and he hides under his desk after releasing them in the classroom. Lockhart asks Harry, Ron, and Hermione to catch the pixies while he leaves the room (*Chamber of Secrets* 101-102).

The paragon of learning in the series is the headmaster, Professor Dumbledore, who is himself a celebrity. He defeated an infamous wizard, serves on many committees in the Ministry of Magic, and has been offered the position of Minister of Magic several times. Even in the wizarding community, many persons find it odd that one so popular and talented would choose to be an educator, though parents often say that they want the best for their children. Dumbledore's tenure at Hogwarts is one of the few examples in prose (and reality) in which a person of such status chooses to teach adolescents.

Dumbledore seems quite content overseeing the education of young witches and wizards. Though he does not teach an actual class nor provide in-service lessons for teachers, he still succeeds in teaching both the students and faculty members of Hogwarts. By using his own demeanor as a model for others, Dumbledore strives to teach teachers and students alike about love. Dumbledore uses love to teach Harry about horcruxes, Voldemort's past, and Harry's own past. He is even able to transform Snape's love for Lily Potter into a lifelong dedication to fighting Voldemort. Dumbledore gives people the benefit of the doubt more often than some would like and is polite even with those who intend to kill him. Dumbledore also admits that he can be wrong. During Harry's first private lesson, Dumbledore declares, "I make mistakes like the next man. In fact, being—forgive me—rather cleverer than most men, my mistakes tend to be correspondingly huger" (*Half-Blood Prince* 197). Dumbledore is often referred to as one of the greatest wizards of all time, yet even he admits that he could be wrong. As a result,

many of Harry's lessons end with in-depth discussions. Dumbledore shows Harry memories relating to Voldemort's life and the two of them discuss what they could possibly mean.

Once teachers have the knowledge that is necessary for them to teach, they must have the authority necessary for them to impart such knowledge. Authority is similar to classroom management. Banner and Cannon claim, "If teachers have no command of their classrooms, their students ignore their knowledge, and their compassion for their students' efforts is pointless" (21). It is important to note that Banner and Cannon conclude that teachers should exert authority, but not power, in their classrooms. Authority includes a balance of the teacher's knowledge, character, and decorum, and of the students' respect of the teacher. Power is usually the result of coercion, often focusing on dependency and fear (21). Teachers in modern school systems often gain some authority from legislation forcing students to attend school. Authority is further gained by creating an environment conducive to serious learning (i.e. providing real-life applications of school subjects), mastering a content area (i.e. getting a college degree in the subject area), and/or displaying appropriate decorum (i.e. opting for professional slacks and dresses instead of jeans and sneakers).

Schooling is not mandatory for students in the wizarding world, so Hogwarts teachers gain little authority from legislation. Instead, teachers master some of the previously mentioned techniques to strengthen their authority. Professor Sprout gains authority in her Herbology class by displaying the real-life application of Mandrakes, plants that have the power to lift curses and remedy many poisons. Sprout informs the students that Mandrakes are often a part of most antidotes, but the fact is reiterated when

Mandrakes are used to heal students who have been turned into stone. Professor Snape uses his proficiency in his content area to gain authority, though his attempts to use fear and intimidation to gain power work on first-year students and the hapless Neville. While many students, especially Harry, Ron, and Hermione, dislike Snape, they know and accept that he is very good at making potions. Banner and Conner suggest, “For most teachers, substantial knowledge of the subjects they teach is the foundation of their stature” (25). In all of the series, Snape never incorrectly makes a potion. Even the other teachers comment on his potion-making skill. Harry is so convinced of Snape’s skill that he worries at one point that Snape will poison Professor Lupin in hopes of taking his job (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 157-159).

Professor McGonagall displays the most authority. Her authoritative manner is communicated to students within moments of meeting her. She comes off as a no-nonsense schoolmarm. The first day that Harry meets her, he concludes that she is “not someone to cross” (*Sorcerer’s Stone* 113). She wears dark robes, styles her dark hair in a tight bun, and wears glasses. Her personality further conveys that she is a strict, though fair, educator. McGonagall even takes points away from students in her own house if they break rules. She takes five points away from Gryffindor when Hermione is caught with a troll (*Sorcerer’s Stone* 178).

Hagrid could use a lesson or two on authority from McGonagall. Hagrid becomes the Care of Magical Creatures instructor during Harry’s third year at Hogwarts. Hagrid had never taught before and is a little nervous on his first day. Rather than display his authority from the beginning, he adopts a “buddy-buddy” approach. The class goes downhill from there. Students begin making snide comments, and Hagrid does not

reprimand them. Instead, he stutters a few comments and struggles to teach the class. A student is soon injured, and though Hagrid is free from blame, the Slytherin students begin to chastise him. Had Hagrid used the first class to show students he was serious instead of regarding the students as chums, he might have been able to avoid the lesson ending in chaos (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 113-118).

Ethics is also considered by Banner and Cannon to be an element of teaching. As previously noted, some people only associate ethics with medical and/or political professions, but ethics is necessary in educational fields as well. Ethics refers to a common sense of right and wrong. Considering that teachers usually have a significant amount of influence on students, they are in an optimal position to relay ethics to the students that they teach. Banner and Cannon identify “truth, honest, and character” as qualities that ethical teachers convey (41). In addition to teaching information in their specific content area, teachers actually teach ethics. In order to better provide ethical teaching, teachers should first seek to do no harm to students. Students, especially adolescents, are at a stage when they are highly sensitive of their self-image and self-efficacy. As a result students can be easily embarrassed or offended, and may even hold grudges against teachers who embarrass or offend them. When teachers determine to do no harm to students, they are making their own jobs a little bit easier. Ethical teachers even further display that they are willing to treat students right by placing their students’ needs before their own, which action is likely one of the hardest aspects of ethical teaching because the needs of students can sometimes conflict with a teacher’s personal needs, aspirations, desires, and obligations. As mentioned earlier, the most successful teachers actually teach ethics in addition to information in their subject areas. Setting

examples is good, but Banner and Cannon conclude, “Teachers must also...offer instruction about bad and good, right and wrong, justice and injustice, truth and error” (41). Doing so further communicates to students that the classroom is a place where instead of feeling threatened, they will be welcomed and enlightened. Teaching ethics to students also results in more ethical human beings, or at least hopefully it does. People expect adults to be ethical, so it would be wise to prepare adolescents to lead ethical lives.

A lesson in ethics can be best learned when analyzing the experiences of Neville Longbottom. He begins his first year at Hogwarts as a hapless and seemingly incompetent orphan and blossoms into a skilled wizard and eventual teacher at Hogwarts. Neville is a sensitive character, and Professor Snape’s snide remarks have the greatest effect on him. Snape never seems to miss an opportunity to castigate students from the Gryffindor house, but next to Harry, Snape seems to dislike Neville the most. At one point, for instance, Neville incorrectly mixes a potion, and Snape suggests feeding the potion to Neville’s pet as a way to inspire him to make potions correctly in the future (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 125-138). Snape does not offer Neville any help and takes away points from Gryffindor when Hermione helps him. Not only does Snape treat Neville poorly in Potions class, but Snape tries to embarrass Neville any time he can. During a Defense Against the Dark Arts lesson, Snape tells Professor Lupin, “This class contains Neville Longbottom. I would advise you not to entrust him with anything difficult. Not unless Miss Granger is hissing instructions in his ear” (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 132). Lupin parries the comment by replying that he is looking forward to having Neville help with a demonstration. Lupin even remarks that he is sure Neville will “perform admirably.” Snape is doing his best to embarrass Neville and is successfully providing an example of

a teacher that does not demonstrate high ethical character. Luckily, Lupin saves the day by supporting Neville. Being an ethical teachers pays off, too. Neville is eventually able to study Defense Against the Dark Arts at the Nastily Exhausting Wizarding Tests (N.E.W.T.) level, even though he did not score high enough on the Potions OWLS to continue studying the subject under earlier placement rubrics. His mastery of Defense Against the Dark Arts is crucial during the battle against Voldemort, when Neville easily breaks free of a body-binding curse, the same curse that was successfully used on him six years earlier, and is able to destroy Voldemort's snake (*Deathly Hallows* 733).

Professor Umbridge is another teacher who blatantly disregards ethics. Her driving purpose for being at Hogwarts is to spy on Dumbledore for the Ministry of Magic. She is obsessed with power, but displays little dedication to the education of young witches and wizards, though she is supposedly a teacher. Hogwarts is a school of witchcraft and wizardry, but she does not allow her students to do magic in her classroom. She is determined to ignore the signs that Lord Voldemort has returned to power. Attempting to perpetuate a false sense of security, she tells students that there will be no need for them to actually know how to do defensive magic. By failing to actually teach the defensive spells to the students, Umbridge does not have the students' best interests in mind. Not only does she not prepare them for their standardized test, but she fails to encourage them as well. During Harry's career advisement she exclaims, "Potter has no chance whatsoever of becoming an Auror" (*Order of the Phoenix* 665). Luckily Professor McGonagall concludes that Harry is capable of doing so, even if she has to tutor him herself. McGonagall supports Harry rather than crush his dreams. She tells him

what areas he will need to work on in order to be considered for the Auror position.

McGonagall displays her ethics by supporting Harry and having his best interest at heart.

Unfortunately, Snape and Umbridge are not the least ethical of Hogwarts teachers. After Dumbledore's death, two Death Eaters become teachers at Hogwarts—Alecto and Amycus Carrows. The brother-sister duo are obsessed with punishment, using a torturing curse on students who have detentions. Neville is covered in cuts and bruises that he received from them. The Carrows also resort to attacking the guardians of students in order to get them to behave. For instance, they so attempt to attack Neville's elderly grandmother (*Deathly Hallows* 575-576).

Order is another essential element necessary for successful teaching. Creating structure in a chaotic world can be difficult, but it helps create an atmosphere conducive to external and internal control. The effective use of discipline is one of the best ways to create order. Schedules, rules, a system of rewards and penalties, consistency, dependability, and fairness are different forms of discipline. Punishments may be a part of discipline, but punishments need not include "physical chastisement." Reprimands can be just as useful. Banner and Cannon suggest, "Reprimands need be more than calm simple statements of faults, coupled with expressions of disapproval and disappointment on the teacher's part. They should always end with something hopeful and positive" (58). A teacher's authority can help her create order within the classroom. It is best for teachers to exert their authority during their first encounter with the students. Instead of beginning the semester with a "buddy-buddy" system, teachers should present a 'no-nonsense' attitude. Banner and Connor conclude, "Too much familiarity and easiness at the outset are likely to make for greater difficulty later on, when the need for order and authority

requires some distance and rigor” (55). Tranquility in the classroom is usually a by-product of order. Teachers that operate with a sense of order are able to keep students calm when tensions run high. Even when a few extreme situations result in turbulence, the chaos is short lived.

The founders of Hogwarts fashioned the school in such a way that is conducive to order. On Harry’s first day there McGonagall explains, “You will be sorted into your houses... Your house will be something like your family within Hogwarts. You will have classes with the rest of your House, sleep in your House dormitory, and spend free time in your House common room... While you are at Hogwarts, your triumphs will earn your House points, while any rule breaking will lose house points. At the end of the year, the House with the most points is awarded the House Cup, a great honor” (*Sorcerer’s Stone* 114). Though students may wonder what House they will be taking a subject with, they can definitely count on having students from their own House in the class. The House Cup is a reward for exemplary behavior. The students can earn points by getting answers correct in class, winning Quidditch games, or completing special services for the school (i.e., killing a large basilisk hidden in the Chamber of Secrets).

While there are rules, rewards, and punishments that are school wide, teachers are also able to implement rules, rewards, and punishments specifically for their classroom. While rules and punishments typically get much of the attention for creating order, rewards are just as useful. On Professor Slughorn’s first day of class, he introduced students to liquid luck. He gave students a potion assignment and the student whose potion is best would receive liquid luck as a prize. Never had students been so focused on making a potion, or on completing any other assignment for that matter. There was no

idle chatter or horse-playing. Instead, students were feverishly working because they wanted to win the prize.

Rules, classroom expectations, and school schedules mean nothing if they are not consistently enforced. It is easy to maintain order when nothing out of the ordinary is happening, but when wizards are attempting to break into the school, students are battling dragons, teachers are possessed by Voldemort, or a large basilisk is injuring students, consistency can be difficult to maintain. McGonagall insists on such consistency when the Chamber of Secrets is open by still requiring students to take their exams. When students question her, she replies, “The whole purpose of keeping the school open at this time is for you to receive your education...The exams will therefore take place as usual, and I trust you are all studying” (*Chamber of Secrets* 284). Even though a large snake that can turn a person into stone is loose in the school, students thus still need to focus on order. It seems preposterous that a teacher would such a focus at such a time, but McGonagall’s tactics allow her to get students back on task. By remaining calm and focused, she allows learning to take place even during difficult times.

In order for learning to take place, teachers must be imaginative enough to be able to engage the students. Teachers may have to think about their own struggles as students in order to remember what methods worked in getting the class’ attention. Students may often think that their teachers are hopelessly outdated; however, teachers were once students struggling to pay attention as well. Successful teachers use their imaginations to fully engage the subjects that they teach. While some concepts and information has not changed in decades, there are new ways to present the material. Students tend to do

better in classes where teachers are creative and use exciting methods to introduce material. Creative teachers are able to introduce concepts as new, but attractive. Banner and Connor suggest, “The unknown stimulates fears as easily as it generates hope, [so] teachers must present what students do not yet know in attractive and positive forms” (73). Imagination is crucial in education, and while unimaginative teaching does not exist, unimaginative teachers do.

An unimaginative teacher is a teacher in name only, because learning cannot take place if students are not open to the material. There will always be a few students like Hermione who require very little stimulation to acquire information, but they will almost never account for the majority of a class. Imaginative teachers are able to engage the majority. Professor Lupin is a prime example of an imaginative teacher. He is remarkably imaginative when introducing a frightful magical creature to the class. The creature is a boggart, an animal that shifts into whatever a person fears the most. The key to destroying it is in making it turn into something that is hilarious. Rather than simply make the students read the chapter concerning boggarts, as Umbridge would have done, Lupin allows the students to turn the boggart into comical forms before finally destroying it. The activity definitely makes the lesson more memorable (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 133-140).

Teaching is a demanding activity, requiring teachers to work closely with students. Banner and Connor suggest, “Anyone contemplating teaching as a profession should consider compassion as a measure of suitability. The physical and emotional toll exacted by teaching will be too much for those lacking it” (89). In order to be

compassionate, teachers must know their students, avoid favoritism, and devote themselves to each student's future.

A teacher cannot claim to have compassion for her students if she does not even know them. Teachers do not have to be extremely close to students to get a sense of who they are. A quick and easy way to get to know students could be learning their names, having them complete interest inventories, or even simply paying attention to what they say and how they act in class. Professor Binns is already a ghost and thus is far from the immediate experience of his students, but he further separates himself from his living students by showing no compassion—he does not even know their names. Hermione is a memorable student. She attempts to answer nearly every question, so most teachers are familiar with her. Nevertheless, Binns cannot recall Hermione's name at all, and even though she informs him that her name is Hermione Granger, he later calls her "Ms. Grant." He also calls Seamus "O' Flannery" when his last name is actually Finnigan (*Chamber of Secrets* 149-151).

Teachers who successfully display compassion distribute that compassion fairly; if not, their actions would be favoritism instead. Being fair does not mean that all students will be treated exactly the same. On the contrary, Banner and Cannon write, "There will always be some students who require more attention than others if they are to have any success at all and others who can learn without special consideration" (86). Neville could be pictured in the first description of students, while the brainy Hermione easily fits in the latter. Though the two may not be treated identically in classes, compassionate teachers will make sure that neither types feel neglected or excluded.

Compassionate teachers devote themselves to the future of their students. Doing so gives their profession purpose and allows them to better serve students. Banner and Cannon conclude that compassion is often marked “with [a] teacher seeking to ease the difficulties of learning with caring attentiveness and thus to encourage students to persevere” (89). Professor McGonagall displays her concern for her students’ future when she advises them at the beginning of their sixth year. Students take OWLs during their fifth year, and their courses during the sixth year correspond with careers that interest them and results from the OWLs. Neville seems upset that he cannot continue to take Transfiguration, so McGonagall asks, “Why do you want to continue with Transfiguration, anyway? I’ve never had the impression that you particularly enjoyed it” (*Half-Blood Prince* 174). Neville hints that he is only interested in the subject because his grandmother wants him to take it. Neville’s grandmother has often been critical of Neville, comparing him to other students and reminding him of how his parents were injured. McGonagall encourages Neville by suggesting he take Charms and concluding that his grandmother should be proud of him after he fought Death Eaters at the Ministry of Magic. McGonagall proved that she actually knew Neville by bringing up his past events like his behavior in her classroom and at the Ministry of Magic. Next, she shows devotion to his future by helping him choose classes based on his strengths and interests, not the interests of his grandmother.

Patience is one of the elements of teaching that requires restraint. Banner and Connor explain, “[This] persistence allied with a determination to help others learn, as well as a kind of resignation to the difficulties students face, requires endurance, equanimity, and tolerance in about equal measures” (95). If teachers are to be successful,

they may have to harness their “frustrations and fatigue” with students and even parents and faculty members to achieve their goal of educating others. Patience gives students time to learn and accounts for student’s weaknesses. Teachers are in a position where they must share their knowledge with others. New material can be difficult and confusing to students, so teachers should provide time for students to comprehend it. Some students may need alternate explanations to grasp a concept or they simply may need time to make sense of the information. Also, students may make many mistakes along the way. Teachers that remain frustrated by frequent student errors are doomed to be constantly stressed. Patient teachers remember that mistakes often embarrass the students who commit them, so teachers use such mistakes as an opportunity to further teach students.

Professor Lupin displays his patience during his private lessons with Harry, who seeks Lupin’s help on dealing with Dementors, dark creatures that feed on happiness and positive thoughts. Whenever dementors come around, people typically get depressed, but dementors cause Harry to have flashbacks of his parents’ violent death, so he asks Lupin to teach him how to defeat them. The Patronus charm that is used to repel dementors is an advanced one, but Harry is determined to master it. Lupin tells Harry the correct incantation and even tells Harry what to think when saying the spell. Harry still is not able to defeat the dementors. On Harry’s second lesson, Harry’s Patronus is inchoate. When Harry admits his frustration at not being able to produce a fully functioning Patronus, Lupin responds, “For a thirteen-year-old wizard, even an indistinct Patronus is a huge achievement” (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 246). Lupin is patient with Harry even when Harry is not patient with himself. Lupin understands that a young wizard

probably will not learn how to produce a fully functioning Patronus on the first try or even on the first several tries. Lupin is supportive of Harry's progress instead of disappointed that Harry's progress is still short of producing an actual Patronus.

The teaching profession, like any other profession, can seem tedious if one does not take pleasure in it. Politicians, parents, and administrators typically seek teachers who take pleasure in teaching instead of individuals who are simply after a paycheck. Teachers may have different motives for teaching, but one thing is universal for such teachers: they enjoy witnessing their students succeed in life. Teachers who truly enjoy teaching take pride in student's achievements and skills.

Professor Slughorn takes pleasure in teaching. It is a profession that allows him to help students become powerful, wealthy, and/or well known. Dumbledore tells Harry, "[Professor Slughorn] enjoys feeling that he influences these people. He has never wanted to occupy the throne himself; he prefers the backseat" (*Half-Blood Prince* 74-75). Slughorn gains pleasure from his students' successes and recalls many of their achievements. He has taught influential politicians, sports celebrities, business owners, and writers. Slughorn's greatest pleasure arises from his student's abilities, but unfortunately, he tends to favor students who are more talented, more cunning, or simply well connected. He spends little time speaking of the achievements of students who are merely average.

Effective teachers utilize their character to better instruct the classroom. Banner and Cannon define teachers' character as "the traits of their moral nature" (108). A person's character is the amalgamation of many things, such as that person's experiences, hopes, personality, etc. Though character is difficult to define, there are some traits

common to successful teachers. They are usually friendly, humorous, and honest. These traits often allow such teachers to stand out. While all people may have less than admirable tendencies in their character, successful teachers strive to highlight the aspects of their own character that will best allow them to teach students, rather than trying to become something they are not. Banner and Connor declare, “The classroom is not a stage, and those who feel obliged to assume different characters in order to be effective in it should probably not be teachers in the first place” (109). Successful teachers are true to themselves. They do not have to pretend to be someone else in order to reach students. They are able to highlight the character that they naturally have, though they may still have to suppress feelings. This suppression does not mean that their demeanor is artificial. Banner and Connor explain, “There is little room [in teaching] for greatly varying shifts of mood or for anger, disappointment, or despair. These emotions may well afflict the personal lives of teachers, but must be left at the classroom door. They cannot help students” (111). No person is good-humored all of the time, but successful teachers strive to display good humor as consistently as possible.

Since Hogwarts is a boarding school, readers are afforded aspects of teacher’s personality that may not be evident in traditional day-school settings. The demanding situations that arise within the *Harry Potter* series further highlights the teachers’ true character. Dumbledore is consistently good humored. He is exceedingly polite to the Dursleys, the family that neglects Harry and frowns upon the wizarding community, and to Voldemort, the evil wizard who has attempted to kill him several times. Also, there are many occasions in which Dumbledore would have been well within his rights to punish Harry for breaking a rule, but he is always more interested in helping Harry with his

struggles. Dumbledore even maintains a positive demeanor when discussing his own death. When Dumbledore asks Snape how much longer he has to live, Rowling notes, “Dumbledore’s tone was conversational; he might have been asking for a weather forecast” (*Deathly Hallows* 681). Dumbledore’s pleasant mood is imperturbable even during dire situations.

The teacher with the most difficult character to understand would most likely be Professor Snape. He does not typically care for Gryffindor students; however, it seems like he goes out of his way to badger Harry. On the first day of class, Snape asks Harry questions regarding potion-making, but it is unlikely that Harry would know the answers. Harry has been raised by muggles (which Snape no doubt knows), so he is completely unfamiliar with the terms, and this is his first day in class. Snape clearly is not interested in actually choosing a student who knows the answer because Hermione raises her hand to answer all of his questions, but he insists on requesting the information from Harry. Readers even have more reason to assume that Snape does not care for the Harry when it is revealed that Snape is responsible for Voldemort’s deadly obsession with Harry. While Dumbledore professes his trust of Snape, there is little to indicate that Snape is so trustworthy until the final book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. It is there that readers learn that Snape had been in love with Harry’s mother and tipped Dumbledore off that Voldemort was seeking to destroy her family. After her death, Snape pledged to help protect Harry, though it often seemed that Snape was a danger to him instead. It was Snape who delivered the sword of Hogwarts founder Godric Gryffindor to Harry. Snape may have been a Death Eater, but he has some noble characteristics. Even so, Snape makes Dumbledore swear that he will never reveal the reason why he helps protect

Harry. Dumbledore reluctantly replies, “My word, Severus, that I shall never reveal the best of you? If you insist” (*Deathly Hallows* 679).

CONCLUSION

The pedagogies employed to better understand the education taking place at Hogwarts were created to assist real educators. Many educators use Multiple Intelligences to decide what type of activities to include in classroom assignments, use Bloom’s taxonomy to assess how well students have mastered a concept, and use the traits from *The Elements of Teaching* to help select the most effective teachers. Similarly, Multiple Intelligences can be used to explain why the Weasley twins only got 3 OWLs each though they have mastered some very difficult magic, to explain how students recall information, and to explain why McGonagall is a successful teacher. The examples of education provided in the *Harry Potter* series are fiction, but they seem analogous to experiences that current educators and students have. It is difficult to read the novels without remembering real-life teachers who seemed to take students’ every mistake as an opportunity to further embarrass them (like Snape), focus more on the quest for knowledge than rules or regulations (like Dumbledore), or are completely incompetent within their subject area (like Lockhart). The educational strategies of the Hogwarts professors are representative of real ones, making it safe to assume that the learning that takes place at Hogwarts can be applied to the real world.

Teaching and learning are realistically presented in the novels, despite the presence of unicorns, flying broomsticks, and love potions. To that extent, the *Harry Potter* series is indeed realistic fiction, even though the term “realistic fiction” seems contradictory. It is completely possible for imaginative literature (i.e. fiction) to be

“realistic in subject and manner” (Norton and Rushton 76). Most readers’ synopsis of the series would merely include the seven-year struggle between Harry Potter and Voldemort, but the manner in which this struggle is revealed to readers and understood and overcome by the characters has everything to do with education. Although there is no actual Harry Potter, the methods that Dumbledore uses to teach Harry could be used to reach students in modern classrooms. The acquisition of knowledge, or the lack of it, is due to the performance of the teachers, not to magic. Some critics find it difficult to assess the *Harry Potter* series as realistic fiction because of the fantastic machinery, but there are far more instances of characters displaying real behaviors (i.e. harboring crushes on classmates, complaining of homework, or critiquing their physical appearance) than on magical activities (i.e. transforming from a human to an animal, flying by broomstick, or mixing potions).

As school stories, the series can more easily be accepted as realistic. School stories are novels in which the setting is a boarding school rather than a day school. *The Heirs of Tom Brown*, the quintessential school story, is based on an actual school, Rugby. Since school attendance is a universal experience for most developed civilizations, it would be impossible to write a school story free from the influence of actual schools and educators. J. K. Rowling, the author of the *Harry Potter* series, is a former teacher, one who may still think about the nature of real education. The *Harry Potter* series spends more time in the classroom than other school stories, suggesting that Rowling intends for the education reported in the text to be significant.

School stories are also didactic, meaning they demonstrate some moral doctrine (Abrams 25). Children’s and young adult literature are didactic as well. Writers that

employ these interdependent genres strive to relay ethics and characters to young readers. Since the setting is a boarding school, teachers and students communicate such messages. Along the way, Rowling could be to communicating her ideas on boarding schools, the limitations of standardized testing, the use of power and authority in the classroom, and/or the acquisition of knowledge. It is impossible to guess what her reason for writing for novels, but the extensive presence of actual teaching and learning in the novels make it difficult to argue that Rowling does not find education significant.

Children and adolescents may not know it, but much of the literature aimed at them is created for the purpose of teaching them something. Authors often use repetition to further communicate messages to younger children and unresolved problems to communicate messages to young adults. Just as parents often have to tell their children things many times before they actually get it, authors tell young readers the same thing many times in hopes that they will eventually learn the concept. Perfunctorily reading about the same thing over and over can get banal, so authors place the characters in varied situations that convey the same message. For example, in nearly every book Harry comes face-to-face with Voldemort and/or his followers. Harry relies on his skill and the support of his friends in order to defeat them. Gaining knowledge and building healthy relationships must be an important key to survival in the real world since it helps Harry escape death many times.

As Harry ages, so does the target audience. In order to make the novels more appealing for adolescents, the texts have difficult and often unresolved issues like the struggle to defeat Voldemort or the death of characters. Young adult readers are more likely to grow tired of tidy endings and easily resolved situations because they are not (or

should not be) so naïve as to think that life is like that in the real world. Long struggles, deaths, and untidy endings make the *Harry Potter* novels more recognizable. The later *Harry Potter* novels reflect a world in which people die and issues are not immediately resolved, just like in the real world.

It would be unusual for educators to base their methods solely on education depicted in fiction, but it would be just as unwise to completely ignore the education taking place in such fiction. Rowling is definitely communicating ideas about effective education. The characterizations of Snape, Umbridge, McGonagall, Binns, Hagrid, Lupin, Lockhart, and Dumbledore are too extreme and complex to be fortuitous. They have their parallels in the real world.

Notes

¹Though MLA style does not normally italicize series titles, I will be using italics in this thesis to differentiate the series title from the character.

²“Lessons on Learning” was published in 2010, yet Robinson bases her explanation of Bloom’s taxonomy on the older version of the concept instead of the revision of Bloom’s taxonomy published in 2001. The revision was led by one of Bloom’s former students, Lorin Anderson. There was no professional rivalry between the two. In fact, Anderson refers to Bloom as “both a ‘living legend’ and a mentor” in his article “If You Don’t Know Who Wrote It, You Won’t Understand It: Lessons Learned from Benjamin S. Bloom.” Anderson led a team of experts in the fields of curriculum and instruction, cognitive psychology, and educational testing, measurement, and assessment to revise the original taxonomy. One of the educators that aided Bloom in creating the original taxonomy, David Krathwohl, also worked to revise it with Anderson (Wilson).

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