

Raj Bandi

Living Creatures

ANIMALS

Dog
Cat

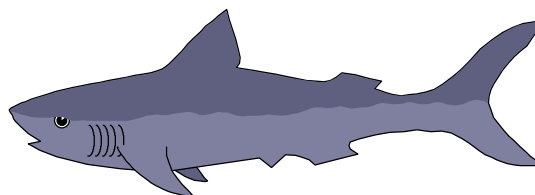
BIRDS

Eagle
Crow

FISH

Marlin
Bass
Shark

- Nurse
- Great White
- Hammer Head
- Sand



Number of enrolled Students:

	<i>Fall 97</i>	<i>Spring 98</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>CGS1100</i>	134	156	290
<i>ISM6122</i>	111	222	333

Something to Think About

Just two weeks ago I finally got around to reading the September issue of Harper's in which Earl Shorris writes about the Clemente Center, a school he founded on New York's Lower East Side to teach the humanities to poor adults. By teaching them about philosophy and history and art, Shorris instills in his students a heightened critical capacity, the result of the discipline of analysis. And it is this critical faculty – the ability to reflect, and judge, and act, that enables them to not be overwhelmed, as the poor too often are, by what Shorris calls “the surround of force”, but instead to become active agents in their own lives.

So, I read his article, and was profoundly moved, as I have sometimes been before when reading about great educators doing great things. So as I always do, I went out and bought his book. But because it was New York, and because I knew the publisher of his book, and mostly because I am in a dark wood and the straight way is lost, I called up Earl Shorris. And the end result of that conversation is that I am, at the age of fifty, going to have my first formal teaching experience – I will be helping adults learn to write at the Clemente Center. And so my education will continue, and my own small experiment in lifelong teaching will begin.

The woods just got a little less dark. But I'm still afraid. If Goethe is right, if we learn from those we love and if love is the opposite of fear, then one might be tempted to say that real education can occur only when there is no fear. Learning flourishes where we are given enough space and freedom to risk, to make mistakes, to fail without fear of serious consequence. Learning and fear are antithetical.

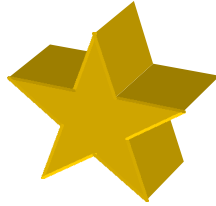
This is a lesson we cannot master often or deeply enough. But I don't know if the converse is true – if teaching can

“Everyone's afraid;
courage is what some of us do with
our fear.”

only occur where there is no fear. I doubt it. Teaching, in fact, often seems to me to be a stupendous act of courage – the equivalent of performing a high wire act with no net in the nude – lots of danger, lots of exposure, and the results can be either fatal or embarrassing, sometimes both. It would seem to me that the task facing educators is not to be fearless, but instead to heed my father, the football coach, who says, As an embryonic – and very scared – teacher, I need your help.

So let me ask you a few questions. How do we teach? What stories should we tell? How do we connect more deeply with the past, so that we may better understand its lessons. How do we engage more fully with the present so that for our brief run, we make better that which we touch? What do we need to learn in order to face the future with confidence, with faith, and with hope, and with love, so that the generations who succeed us will look back on us with understanding, perhaps even with thanks? I do not know the answers to these questions, perhaps I never will, but I know that passion must be a part of it. In our vision worth working toward, let this be foremost. That teaching is giving, that learning is an act of love. Let the mercantilists figure out the productivity quotient for that. I'd rather be listening to Madame Butterfly, or looking at a Carpaccio, reading Dante, or talking to you today. These are my passions – at least, the ones I can tell you about – and I have my teachers, my friends to thank for each one. And

what has technology to do with all this?



For many of us, it may seem like one of the beasts lurking in the dark wood in which Dante and we find ourselves, yet another murky form that threatens us with torment and isolation. To some of us, it may seem the celestial paradise, the answer we've all been waiting for, it only the rest of the world would get the faith. I suppose I take a middle view: using technology Given my line of work, I want to believe it can be a means to help teachers effect the kinds of education we all need, we all deserve. New media excites me because it enables us to tell more – to hear more – to see more – to combine into one form, one work, the oral, gestural, and written traditions that we humans use to tell each other the stories of our lives. Around the campfires of the past, our long-gone relatives gathered to express through their

words and movements the essential truth of their existence. And then one day someone pulled a charred stick from some smoldering fire and made a mark on the packed earth that was pleasing to her, and so she did it again and again and again. And so art was born. And with this great – to my mind, the greatest – miracle of the human condition came the ability to transmit experience beyond the physical and temporal boundaries of the teller.