

# A GUIDE TO DIFFERENTIATING CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION THROUGH ENRICHMENT AND ACCELERATION

Paul's Mediterranean complexion didn't make a blush easy to detect, but Tom thought his face brightened until it was a shade or two closer to the color of his rust-red hair. His eyes, usually so direct, evaded Celestina. Turning his patched eyes in the general direction of his mother, Barty said, "Oops." A supply of ammunition lined the bottom of all the dresser and bureau drawers, concealed by underwear and other garments. Junior appropriated a box of 9-mm. cartridges. More likely than not, Victoria spoke directly to the maniac detective. Even if she reported her sordid fabrications to another officer, it would have gotten back to Vanadium, and the cop would have sought her out at once to hear her filth firsthand, whereupon she would have enhanced her story until it sounded as though Junior had grabbed her knockers and had tried to shove his tongue down her throat. Murder itself was easy, but the aftermath was more draining than he had anticipated. Although the ultimate liability settlement with the state was certain to leave him financially secure for life, the stress was so great that he wondered, in his darker moments, if the reward would prove to be worth the risk. When he woke, he was in a hospital bed, his upper body slightly elevated. The only illumination was provided by a single window: an ashen light too dreary to be called a glow, trimmed into drab ribbons by the. Renee Vivi spoke with a silken southern accent. Vivacious without being cloyingly coquettish, well-educated and well-read but never pretentious, direct in her conversation without seeming either bold or opinionated, she was charming company. "I'm Sister Josephina." She slipped Celestina's purse off her shoulder--"You can trust this with me". Inevitably, he had to wonder if Naomi had kept her pregnancy secret because, indeed, she suspected that the child wasn't her husband's. Before the pianist could cry out, Junior drove him between the toilet and the sink, slamming him against the wall hard enough to knock loose his breath and to cause the water to slosh audibly in the nearby toilet tank. Raised by a father to whom any form of amusement was blasphemy, Agnes had never seen a magician perform until she was nineteen, when Joey Lampion, then her suitor, had taken her to a stage show. Rabbits plucked out of top hats, doves conjured from sudden plumes of smoke, assistants sawn in half and mended to walk again; every illusion that had been old even in Houdini's time was a jaw-dropping amazement to her that evening. Now she remembered a trick in which the magician had poured a pitcher of milk into a funnel fashioned from a few pages of a newspaper, causing the milk to vanish when the funnel, still dry, was unrolled to reveal ordinary newsprint. The thrill that had quivered through her that evening measured I on the Richter scale compared to the full 10-point sense of wonder quaking through her at the sight of Barty as dry as if he'd spent the afternoon perched fireside. The rough massage had only just begun to bring a little relief to Junior's legs when Sparky returned with six stoppered rubber bags full of ice. "This was all the bags they had down at the drugstore." Barty came out of the house with the library copy of Podkayne Of Mary, which his mother had promised to read to him later, in the hospital. "Are we all going?" he asked. Between his surgeries and for many months thereafter, Vanadium had devoted his energies to speech therapy, physical rehabilitation, and the concoction of periodic torments for Enoch Cain, which Simon Magusson was able to implement, every few months, through Nolly and Kathleen. The idea wasn't to bring Cain to justice by torturing his conscience, since he'd allowed his conscience to atrophy a long time ago, but to keep him unsettled and thereby magnify the impact of his first face-to-face encounter with the resurrected Vanadium. After supper in a roadside diner, Paul returned to his room and studied a tattered map of the western United States, the latest of several he'd worn out over the years. Depending on the weather and the steepness of the terrain, he might be able to reach Spruce Hills, Oregon, in ten days. The following April, when he proposed to her, she wouldn't have him. "You're sweet, Paul, but I can't let you throw your life away on me. You're this ... this beautiful ship that will sail a long way, to fascinating places, and I'd only be your anchor." In the end, the reason for the walking was the walking itself. Walking gave him something to do, a needed purpose. Motion equaled meaning. Movement became a medicine for melancholy, a preventive for madness. Edom had noticed them earlier. Now he saw they were in worse condition than he'd thought. Enlarged knuckles, fingers not entirely at natural angles to one another. Perhaps Obadiah had rheumatoid arthritis, like Bill Kleifton, though a less crippling case. Glimmered along the barrel of a hypodermic syringe in the hand of the paramedic. In a rocking chair, holding her tiny son in her arms, Agnes cried quietly. Often, Barty slept through her weeping. Awakened, he smiled or squinched his face into a puzzled frown. Breath held, Celestina confirmed what she had suspected about the child since the quick glimpse she'd had in the surgery. Its skin was cafe au lait with a warming touch of caramel. Yes, he suspected that he would require a great deal of rest to prepare himself for this vixen. Even in her loose white uniform and stodgy rubber-soled shoes, she was an incomparably erotic figure. She would be a lioness in bed. Eventually he put the quarter on the nightstand, switched off the lamp, and slipped into bed. Grace and Celestina fell at once into the rhythms of kitchen work, not only brewing the coffee, but also helping Agnes with the pies. She remained fixated on the card that she had just dealt, and for a while she didn't speak, as though the eyes of the paper knave held her in thrall. Finally she said, "Monster. Human monster." Had Junior been chest-deep in wet concrete, he would have been more mobile than he was now. He had no feeling in his legs. In abject misery, Junior lay waiting to go under the knife, more eager to be cut than he would have thought possible only a few hours before. The mere promise of this surgery thrilled him more than all the sex that he'd ever enjoyed between the age of thirteen and the Thursday just past. Over many proud generations and at least to the extent of second cousins, no one on either side of Celestina's family had skin of this light color. They were without exception medium to dark mahogany, many shades darker than this infant. "One hour," he announced, establishing a countdown. In sixty minutes, his internal clock would rouse him from a meditative state. Leaving Spruce Hills, Junior thought he was putting distance between himself and his enigmatic enemy, gaining time to study the county phone directory

and to plan his continuing search if that avenue of investigation brought him no success. Instead, he had walked right into his adversary's lair. From his motel room, he telephoned Hanna Rey in Bright Beach. She still looked after his house on a part-time basis, paid the bills from a special account while he traveled, and kept him informed about events in his hometown. From Hanna, he learned that Barty Lampion's eyes had been lost to cancer. Babies of unwed mothers—especially of dead unwed mothers, and especially of dead unwed mothers whose fathers were ministers unable to endure public mortification—were routinely put up for adoption. Since Seraphim had given birth here, the baby would be—no doubt already had been—adopted by a San Francisco-area family. This philosophy had worked for him previously, but forgetting the aftermath was more difficult when the aftermath was your own poor, torn, severed toe. Your own poor, torn, severed toe was infinitely more difficult to ignore than a busload of dead nuns. Lord, listen to me—but I've really got to know if you can, if you are, how you feel, whether you feel, I mean, whether you think you could feel—". She had expected horror, although perhaps not a horror quite as stark as this, and she had also expected to be crushed by it, destroyed, because although she was able to survive any misery that might be visited upon her, she didn't think that she possessed the fortitude to endure the suffering of her innocent child. Yet she listened, and she received the terrible burden of the news, and her bones did not at once turn to dust, though unfeeling dust was what she now preferred to be. The blocking dresser, which doubled as a vanity, was surmounted by a mirror. One bullet drilled through the plywood backing, made a spider-web puzzle of the silvered glass, lodged in the wall above the bed—thwack—and kicked out a spray of plaster chips. Reflecting upon her son's clever, diligent, and uncomplaining adaptation to darkness, she wished that she had described to him the dazzling sunset under which they had made their journey home. Although her words might have been inadequate to the spectacle, he would have elaborated on them to create a picture in his mind; with his creative skills, the world that he'd lost with his sight might be remade in equal splendor in his imagination. Instead of immediately killing anyone, Junior returned to his apartment on the afternoon of December 29, and went to bed, fully clothed. To calm down. To think about focus. But, ah, the heft of the candlestick, the smooth arc it made, and the crack of contact had been as hugely satisfying as any home-run swing that had ever won a baseball World Series. The second medic wheeled the gurney to the rear of the van, calling for one of the policemen to accompany him to the hospital. Apparently, he needed help if he was to deliver the baby and also stabilize Apes while en route. When the subject shifted to card tricks and fortune-telling, Maria admitted to practicing divination with standard playing cards. As soon as he was alone, however, Junior yearned for the nurse to return. Alone, he felt vulnerable, threatened. He was, admittedly, surprised that Nurse Bressler was strongly compelled to come on to him even though she had read his patient file and knew that he'd recently been a veritable geyser of noxious spew, that during the violent seizure in the ambulance, he had also lost control of bladder and bowels, and that he might at any moment suffer an explosive relapse. This was a remarkable testament to the animal lust he inspired even without trying, to the powerful male magnetism that was as much a part of him as his thick blond hair. As Barty ascended higher, Agnes's fear became purer, but at the same time, she was filled with a wonderful, irrational exhilaration. That this could be accomplished, that the darkness could be overcome, struck music from the harpstrings of the soul. From time to time, the boy paused, perhaps to rest or to mull over the three-dimensional map in his incredible mind, and every time that he started upward again, he put his hands in exactly the right place, whereupon Agnes would speak a silent inner yes! Her heart was with Barty high in the tree, her heart in his, as he had been with her, safe inside her womb, on the rainy twilight that she had ridden the spinning, tumbling car to widowhood. In regard for Barty's tender age, Dr. Franklin Chan had arranged for Agnes to spend the night in her son's room, in the second bed, which currently wasn't needed for a patient. From Christmas through February, he dated a beautiful stock analyst and broker—Tammy Bean—who specialized in finding value in companies that had rewarding relationships with brutal dictators. "He's here as sure as I am, Barty. He's very busy, with a whole universe to run, so many people to look after, not just here but on other planets, like you've been reading about." Then the old man taught it to him. But it wasn't much use, Otter thought, since he had to hide it. Her hands were locked together in her lap, gripped so tightly for so long that the muscles in her forearms ached. "What's wrong?" Reverend White's murder received significant coverage throughout the nation, especially in West Coast papers, because of its perceived racial motivation and because it involved the burning of a parsonage. Maybe the bright side was that the musician hadn't either wet his pants or taken a dump while in his death throes. Sometimes, during a comparatively slow death like strangulation, the victim lost control of all bodily functions. He'd read it in a novel, something from the Book-of-the-Month Club and therefore both life-enriching and reliable. Probably not Eudora Welty. Maybe Norman Mailer. Anyway, the men's room didn't smell as fresh as a flower shop, but it didn't reek, either. Returning the newborn to the nun, Celestina asked for the use of a phone, and for privacy. Maria turned sideways in her chair and dealt from the top of the four-deck stack, onto the table in front of Barty. The window didn't face the street. It overlooked a five-foot-wide passageway between this house and the next. The police might not spot him leaving. Assuming this criticism was amusing hyperbole, Junior laughed, but Sklent squinted those virtually colorless eyes, and Junior's laugh withered in his throat. "Well, maybe that's how it'll work out," he said, wanting to be on Sklent's good side, but he was at once sorry he'd spoken those words in front of witnesses. The sound-suppressor didn't render the pistol entirely silent, but the three soft reports, each like a quiet cough muffled by a hand, wouldn't have carried beyond the hallway. "Here we are," said the driver, braking to a stop at the curb in front of the gallery. If killing the wrong Bartholomew had broken a dam in Junior and released a lake of tension, whacking the right Bartholomew would set loose an ocean of pent-up stress, and he would feel free as he'd not felt since the fire tower. Freer than he'd been in his entire life. In a monotone that gave new meaning to deadpan, the detective added: "I'm the only one who was there who doesn't have a dry-cleaning bill." At first light, a nurse arrived to perform preliminary surgical prep on Barty. She

pulled the boy's hair back and captured it under a tight fitting cap. With cream and a safety razor, she shaved off his eyebrows..Worse, to make credible his anguish and to avoid suspicion, he would have to play the devastated widower for at least another couple weeks, perhaps for as long as a month. As a dedicated follower of the self-improvement advice of Dr. Caesar Zedd, Junior was impatient with those who were ruled by sentimentality and by the expectations of society, and now he was required to pretend to be one of them-and for an interminable period of time..Edom removed two of the pies from the table and put them on the counter near the ovens..He opened his mouth but stood mute. Raised his right hand from his side. Worked his fingers in the air, as though the needed words could be strummed from the ether. He felt stupid, foolish..What he saw next in the brochure wasn't the link that he sought, but it alarmed him so much that the three-fold pamphlet rattled in his hands. The reception for Celestina's show had been this evening, had ended more than three hours ago..Instead, he imagined Vanadium's blunt fingers moving over the intravenous apparatus with surprising delicacy, reading the function of the equipment as a blind man would read Braille with swift, sure, gliding fingertips. He imagined the detective finding the injection port in the main drip line, pinching it between thumb and forefinger. Saw him produce a hypodermic needle as a magician would pluck a silk scarf from the ether. Nothing in the syringe except deadly air. The needle sliding into the port ....Knuckle over knuckle, snared in the web of thumb and forefinger, vanishing into the purse of the palm, secretly traversing the hand, reappearing, knuckle over knuckle, the coin glimmered as it turned..Pity warmed the physician's ascetic face. "You loved your wife very much, didn't you?"..By air from San Francisco south to Orange County Airport, then farther south along the coast by rental car, one week in the wake of Paul Damascus and his three charges, following directions provided by Paul, Tom Vanadium brought Wally Lipscomb to the Lampion house.."I was once doubting Thomas," said the detective, but not from beside the bed any longer. His voice seemed to come from across the room, perhaps near the door, though he had made not a sound as he'd moved.."I'm not sad," Tom said, "because though I have this face here in this world, I know there's another me-in fact, lots of other Tom Vanadiums-who don't have this face at all. Somewhere I'm doing just fine, thank you"..Celestina dropped to one knee in front of Angel, to tie the drawstrings of the hood under the girl's chin..After a bit Otter nodded left, away from the grey stone tower. They walked on towards a long, treeless valley, past grass-grown dumps and tailings..Her lead gaze was still surprisingly clear. How remarkable that the impact hadn't caused a starburst hemorrhage in either of her exquisite, lavender-blue eyes. No blood, lust surprise..Agnes winced. Already, another contraction. Mild but so soon after the last. She clasped her hands around her immense belly and took slow, deep breaths until the pain passed..Hound had taken him, had stood and seen his people beaten senseless, had not stopped the beating. Yet he spoke as a friend. Why? said Otter's look. Hound answered it..She was shaking and so afraid, not thinking clearly, and for a moment she didn't understand what he meant, what he wanted, and then she saw that the window on his side of the car was shattered, too, and that the door beyond him was badly torqued, twisted in its frame. Worse, the side of the Pontiac had burst inward when the pickup plowed into them. With a steel snarl and sheet-metal teeth, it had bitten into Joey, bitten deep, a mechanical shark swimming out of the wet day, shattering ribs, seeking his warm heart..Because they were smaller than men and could move more easily in narrow places, or because they were at home with the earth, or most likely because it was the custom, women had always worked the mines of Earthsea. These miners were free women, not slaves like the workers in the roaster tower. Gelluk had made him foreman over the miners, Licky said, but he did no work in the mine; the miners forbade it, earnestly believing it was the worst of bad luck for a man to pick up a shovel or shore a timber. "Suits me," Licky said..Stepping forward lightly, lightly, as he swung the candlestick, Junior saw the dinner guest stiffen, perhaps sensing danger or at least movement, but it was too late. The guy didn't even have time to turn his head or duck..Yet he didn't fault himself for a lack of sensitivity. He'd met this woman only once before. He wasn't emotionally invested in her as he had been in sweet Naomi..So burning with anger was he that his car, by direct thermal transmission from his hands upon the wheel, should have been glowing cherry red in the January night, should have been scorching tunnels of clear dry air through the cold fog. Rancor, virulence, acrimony, vehemence: All words learned for the purpose of self-improvement were useless to him now, because none adequately conveyed the merest minimum of his anger, which swelled as vast and molten as the sun, far more formidable than his assiduously enhanced vocabulary..Into Barty's darkness came light that he had not sought. He saw his smiling Mary on his lap as she lowered her hands from his temples, saw the faces of his family, the table set with Christmas decorations and many candles flickering..To her mother, Celestina said, "What did you mean when you said you'd heard all about Barty here?"..The gurney, one wheel rattling. The young orderly behind it, dressed all in white. And the nurse again..Two teenage boys and one elderly woman scrambled across the sidewalk, grabbing at the ringing rain of quarters. They caught some, but others bounced and twirled through their grasping fingers, rolling-spinning away into the gutter..He was glad that he'd taken the double dose of antiemetics. In spite of this provocation, his stomach felt as solid and secure as a bank vault..She heard the door, and when she opened her eyes, the bay had already slid out of the car, into the downpour again. She called him back, but he kept going..His in-laws' chances of receiving compensation for their pain and suffering over Naomi's death were seriously compromised if her husband did not hold the state or county responsible. In this, as in nothing previously, they felt the need to stand united as a family..Then it would stop. The torment would stop. Surely. His sense of drift, of sliding aimlessly through the days, would lift from him, and he would find purpose once more in determined self-improvement. He would definitely learn French and German. He would take cooking classes and become a culinary master. Karate, too..Elsewhere in the cemetery, about 150 yards away, another interment service-with a much larger group of mourners-had begun prior to this one for Naomi. Now it was over, and the people were dispersing to their cars..By the time he reached the airport, located a private-charter company, chased up the owner through the night-security man,

and arranged to be flown at once to Eugene, Oregon, aboard a twin-engine Cessna, the points of pain in his face had begun to throb. Celestina was better equipped to embrace this transcendental experience for what it appeared to be. She was not one of those artists who celebrated chaos and disorder, or who found inspiration in pessimism and despair. Wherever her eyes came to rest, she saw order, purpose, exquisite design, and either the pale flicker or the fierce blaze of a humbling beauty. She perceived the uncanny not merely in old houses where ghosts were said to roam or in eerie experiences like the one Lipscomb had described, but every day in the pattern of a tree's branches, in the rapturous play of a dog with a tennis ball, in the white whirling currents of a snowstorm-in every aspect of the natural world in which insoluble mystery was as fundamental a component as light and darkness, as matter and energy, as time and space. On this momentous day, however, drawing provided no solace. Frequently, her hands shook, and she could not control the pencil. The universe was vast and Barty small, yet the boy's immortal soul made him as important as galaxies, as important as anything in Creation. This Agnes believed. She couldn't tolerate life without the conviction that it had meaning and design, though sometimes she felt that she was a sparrow whose fall had gone unnoticed. Barty sat on the edge of the doctor's desk, legs dangling, holding Red Planet, his place marked by an inserted finger. Now, twenty-four hours later, when Sparky answered his telephone and heard Tom Vanadium, he said, "You looking for a little company? I've got another bottle of Merlot where the last one came from." Edom and Jacob arrived, dinner was served, and while the food was wonderful, the conversation was better-even though the twins occasionally shared their vast knowledge of train wrecks and deadly volcanic eruptions. Paul didn't contribute much to the talk, because he preferred to bask in it. If he hadn't known any of these people, if he had walked into the room while they were in the middle of dinner, he would have thought they were family, because the warmth and the intimacy-and in the twins' case, the eccentricity-of the conversation were not what he expected of such newly made friends. There was no pretense, no falsity, and no avoidance of any awkward subject, which meant there were sometimes tears, because the death of Reverend White was such a fresh wound in the hearts of those who loved him. But in the healing ways of women that remained mysterious to Paul even as he watched them do. Tom was an Oregon State Police detective, as far as Celestina knew, and she didn't understand what he was doing here. The spectral singer didn't exhibit her blood-and-bone sisters' reluctance to pursue her man. Surprisingly, he received a lot of gratification from voicing this insult, even though Vanadium was too dead to hear it. Lawn before they knew that the prodigy's invisible cloak wouldn't accommodate him as it did the girl. Cool, drenching rain pounded Tom at once, and he scooped Barty off the steps as Grace had gathered up. "We'll need to talk about this a lot in the days to come, as we both have more time to think about it." The adoption records on Seraphim White's baby weren't sealed by law, because custody of the child was being retained by family. Neither of them was aware that their personal drama, in all its clumsiness and glory, had focused the attention of everyone in the restaurant. The cheer that went up at Celestina's acceptance of his proposal caused her to start, knocking the ring from Wally's hand as he attempted to slip it on her finger. The ring bounced across the table, they both grabbed for it, Wally made the catch, and this time she was properly betrothed, to wild applause and laughter. Evidently, Jacob had made a quick trip to his apartment over the garage and, with no thought for mice and dust, had not closed the back door. Junior said, "You've caused me a lot of trouble, you know." He'd been building a beautiful rage all night, thinking about what he'd been through because of the girl's temptress mother, whom he saw so clearly in this pint-size bitch. "So much trouble." Having used his body as a clapper in the bell of the Dumpster, Junior had struck a loud reverberant note that tolled like a poorly cast cathedral bell, echoing solemnly off the walls of the flanking buildings, back and forth through the fogbound night. Carrying the candlestick, he raced to the kitchen at the end of the short hall. The door stood open, but he had to enter the room to see Victoria slumped in one of the two chairs at the small dinette. Gazing into the mirror, which ought to have been clouded with self-pity as though with steam, Junior Cain searched for his anger and found it. This was a black and bitter anger, as poisonous as rattlesnake venom; with little difficulty, his heart was distilling it into purest rage. "Oil and natural-gas pipelines will fracture, explode. A sea of fire will wash cities, killing hundreds of thousands more." "Most tornadoes stay on the ground twenty miles or less," Edom explained, "but this one kept its funnel to the earth for two hundred nineteen miles! And it was one mile wide. Everything in its path--torn, smashed to bits. Houses, factories, churches, schools--all pulverized. Murphysboro, Illinois, was wiped off the map, erased, hundreds killed in that one town." Nor could she begin to imagine the nature of the disaster that had befallen him, leaving his face looking blasted and loose at all its hinges. She had last seen him at Phimie's funeral. A few minutes ago at her doorstep, she'd recognized him only because of his port-wine birthmark. "Not only coal miners. Old as you are in some ways, you're still too young for me to explain. I will someday." Round one hit Ichabod in the left thigh, because Junior fired while bringing the weapon up from his side, but the next two were solid torso scores. This was not bad for an amateur, even if the distance to target was nearly short enough to define their encounter as hand-to-hand combat, and Junior decided that if the deformation of his left foot hadn't prevented him from fighting in Vietnam, he would have acquitted himself exceptionally well in the war. "Yes, but it's a Catholic hospital, and they offer this option to all unwed mothers--doesn't matter what their religion." Through tears, that night, she asked him if the commitment he was making didn't frighten him. Junior couldn't see the lights of the nearest other houses. Either those structures were screened by trees or the neighbors weren't home. Suddenly, even in the heart of a great city, the alleyway seemed as lonely as an English moor, and not a smart place to seek asylum from a vengeful spirit. Casting aside all pretense of self-control, Junior sprinted for the next street, where the sight of multitudes, swarming in winter sunshine, filled him not with paranoia or even uneasiness, anymore, but with an unprecedented feeling of brotherhood. MONDAY MORNING, January 17, Agnes's lawyer, Vinnie Lincoln, came to the house with Joey's will and other papers requiring attention.