

**JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY AND HISTORY OF EDUCATION**  
**VOLUME 53, 2003**  
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# **JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY AND HISTORY OF EDUCATION**

**VOLUME 53, 2003**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### **1. FOUCAULDIAN “ATTITUDE”: POSTMODERN FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Susan Birden, Buffalo State University

### **6. JOHN DEWEY AND “ART AS EXPERIENCE”**

Rani Coleman, Louisiana State University

### **12. RORTY’S HYPOTHETICAL DEWEY AND THE USE OF IRONY IN THE PRACTICE OF INTELLECTUAL HISTORY**

Dalton B. Curtis, Jr., Southeast Missouri State University

### **22. THE CULT OF EASY ANSWERS: REFORM POLICIES AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE**

Douglas R. Davis, Georgia State University

### **30. AMERICAN PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THE TYRANNY OF MODERN THOUGHT**

Charles J. Fazzaro, University of Missouri, St. Louis

### **42. VIRTUES AS THE FOUNDATION OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION FROM SOCRATES TO ANDRÉ COMTE-SPONVILLE**

Charles J. Fazzaro, University of Missouri–St. Louis

### **48. SOME PEDAGOGICAL FUNCTIONS OF PLATO’S THEORY OF RECOLLECTION**

William L. Fridley, Southeastern Oklahoma State University

### **56. PERCEPTIONS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY AND ETHNIC LABELS: THE CULTURAL COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Debra A. Gutierrez, University of Oklahoma

### **63. IS SAXON MATH THE ANSWER?**

Travis Hood and Stanley D. Ivie, Texas Woman’s University

### **67. EDUCATION AS TRANSFORMATION: WHY WE NEED EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

Don Hufford, Newman University

### **81. JUSTICE, EQUITY, & UTILITY IN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY**

Andrew L. Hunt and Martin W. Schoppmeyer, Jr., University of Arkansas at Little Rock

### **85. BEGINNING THE DIALOGUE: STUDENT VOICES IN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES**

Gaetane Jean-Marie, University of Oklahoma

### **90. AFRICAN WOMEN LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES**

Alice Kabata, Malinda Hendricks Green, Susan C. Scott, Barbara Green, University of Central Oklahoma

### **100. JOHN DEWEY’S MODEL FOR “FIGURING IT OUT”: UTILIZING A DEWEYAN METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH FOR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY REFORM**

Monica L. Mancuso, Louisiana State University

**111. WHAT JOHN DEWEY’S INSTRUMENTALIST ETHICS TELLS US ABOUT EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

Spencer J. Maxcy, Louisiana State University

**120. “I’M GLAD I DID NOT GO TO SCHOOL”: THE VICTORIAN EDUCATION OF BEATRIX POTTER**

Karen McKellips, Cameron University

**129. EDUCATION, DESTINY, FREEDOM AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LIFE**

Bart McSwine, Chicago State University

**139. AMERICAN AND JAPANESE COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS**

Hideo Nagai, Loyola University Chicago

**145. THE DESTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE BY ACCOUNTABILITY: WOULD A RE-EMPHASIS ON ARISTOTLE’S INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES BE USEFUL?**

J. Wesley Null, Baylor University

**152. ONE UNIVERSITY’S ACTIONS IN MEETING STATE MANDATED REFORM IN LEADERSHIP PREPARATION**

Gerald R. Siegrist, Valdosta State University

**164. DOES “LEAVE NO CHILD BEHIND” MEAN LEAVING GENDER BEHIND?**

Deborah S. Shinn, University of Oklahoma

**171. THE METAPHYSICAL ASSUMPTIONS OF PRAGMATISM: DEWEY’S PHILOSOPHIC REVOLUTION**

David Snelgrove, University of Central Oklahoma

**179. ELSIE RIPLEY CLAPP AND JOHN DEWEY (1907-1912)**

Sam Stack, West Virginia University

**190. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: POLITICAL ACTIVISM FOR EQUITY, ACCESS AND ACHIEVEMENT CONTINUES**

James Van Patten, University of Arkansas, Emeritus, Florida Atlantic University Adjunct Spring

## FOUCAULDIAN "ATTITUDE": POSTMODERN FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Susan Birden, University of Oklahoma

The philosophical/historical work of Michel Foucault has been studied in humanities courses as diverse as gender studies and rhetoric. Despite this fact, his insights have been difficult to appropriate in the realm of education. In part, this is because he said little explicitly about education, except for one scathing comparison between schools and penitentiaries.<sup>1</sup> As a result, most of what can be gleaned for the purposes of educational philosophy and practice must be constructed from related analyses of his work.

One commonly hears that Foucault's work is too removed from the real doings of people, too tied to linguistics, too abstract to be useful. Yet, educational philosopher Clive Beck has criticized postmodernism in general and Foucault in particular for being *too* practical. He has charged that postmodernism is too much about approach, rather than outlook, that it is guided too much by "attitude," instead of cognition. He finds postmodernism fraught with problems because of what he suggests is a heavy dependence upon pragmatism that involves "a working understanding of reality and life."<sup>2</sup>

I concur with several of the labels that Beck applies to Foucault's work, even while heartily disagreeing with his negative assessment of those labels. Consider, for instance, Beck's charge that Foucauldian thought relies too heavily upon pragmatism. Foucault's pragmatist bent is both pronounced and frequently overlooked. Postmodernism and pragmatism are similar in that neither seeks to replace foundationalist epistemology. Rather, these philosophies draw life from what they investigate and oppose, relying heavily upon the potential for inquiry to disrupt theories and ideas that have previously gone unquestioned.

Beck's pronouncement that Foucauldian thought is dependent upon approach more than outlook is also consonant with my understanding of Foucault. Further, it is a critique that can be

made of pragmatism equally well. William James argued that pragmatism espoused no dogmas, doctrines, special results, or solutions.<sup>3</sup> In other words, to use Beck's terminology, pragmatism has no specific "outlook."

Beck charges that postmodernism involves "a working understanding of reality and life."<sup>4</sup> Certainly this is true and it is another characteristic shared by pragmatism. James, in fact, considered that the most important purpose of philosophy ought to be to determine what concrete, definite difference it would make to an individual to hold one world belief over another at some particular point in life. He believed that if holding one theory over another theory amounted to no discernable concrete difference then the theoretical differences between the two theories were insignificant. James was clear that pragmatists cannot rest upon theories, beliefs, and principles. Theories are regarded as instruments, not answers. Pragmatism's intent is to "unstiffen" theories by making them work, testing them, asking these theories to indicate what their acceptance would mean for changing existing reality. Demonstrating how this pragmatic attitude works, James posed his now-famous question: "What difference would it practically make to any one if *this* notion rather than *that* notion were true?"<sup>5</sup> James maintained that if one could determine no *practical* difference, then "this truth" and "that truth" are *practically* the same. James's approach unabashedly adopted what Beck called "a working understanding of reality and life."<sup>6</sup>

Finally, Beck claimed that Foucault was too much about attitude and too little about cognition. Certainly attitude has not traditionally been a topic of concern for philosophers. After all, philosophy deals with the life of the *mind*. "Attitude," deals with one's *mindset*. Philosophers pursue "Truth," or "truth," or "truths" through logic, intellectual inquiry. "Attitude" suggests that one is influenced not through valid propositions and cogent

arguments alone, but that dispositions, manners, or feelings exist *a priori*, swaying one's reception of intellectual information. In common parlance, one's students exhibit good or poor "attitudes," usually by their receptivity to our ideas or the ways in which they deal with hardship. Young people frequently use the term "attitude" in a purely negative way, referring to surly or recalcitrant classmates as having an "attitude" or perhaps a "copping a 'tude."

At first glance, then, Beck's concern that Foucault valued attitude over cognition may appear to be warranted. Foucault *is* concerned with attitude. It is here that I must part company with Beck. I will argue that Foucauldian attitude is not anti-intellectual at all, but that it stimulates greater and more diverse cognition. Further, the precedent for conceptualizing attitude in such a way comes once again from James who claimed, in fact, that attitude is the *primary* component of pragmatism. James said that utilizing the pragmatic method meant employing an attitude that looks away from first things, principles, categories, and supposed necessities, while looking instead toward last things, fruits, consequences, and facts.<sup>7</sup>

In what follows, therefore, I will argue that Beck's assessment of Foucauldian attitude was incorrect. It does not supplant cognition. Instead, like pragmatism, it entails a cognitive process that asks its user to think more deeply and from different vantage points. I believe that enormous possibilities for critical thought in educational philosophy and practice could be opened if we could appropriate Foucault's approach for thinking with "attitude."

### **Foucauldian "Attitude"**

In the late interviews, Foucault spoke about thinking with "attitude."<sup>8</sup> He cited a preliminary phase, *problematization*, wherein the goal is primarily deconstructive, followed by a constructive phase that he called *ethical inquiry*. I will discuss the phases of *problematization* and *ethical inquiry* separately then discuss how these phases come together to create "thinking with 'attitude.'"

### ***Problematization***

Foucault derived his approach to problematization from his early and middle works that are generally classified based on his chosen methodologies. His early work forms what he called his *archaeological* method. This work is based on his studies in psychiatry, medicine, and the social sciences. The *archaeological method* is a critical inquiry directed at disciplines in the human sciences, which seeks to describe the ways in which discourse and expert opinion have come to constitute what we perceive as a learned practice, and how that practice, in turn, infiltrates and shapes human behavior. The starting point for the archaeologist's research is anything within the discipline considered natural, obvious, or incontrovertible, not in order to assess its "truth," nor to offer an alternative theory, but to expose the circumstances within which it was manufactured in "discursive formations." By being attentive to confusion, accidents, aberrations, and insurrections, the archaeologist seeks out discourse that has been disqualified, labeled insufficient, or located low in the hierarchy of knowledge in order to include them in the discipline's history. The archaeological method, thus, results in a "diversifying effect" that shows the discipline to be far more randomly constructed and personality-dependent than the discipline's scientific posturing presents.

The *genealogical method* takes a similar approach, but applies it to the construction of the subject, instead of a discipline. Foucault's essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" articulates this notion: "Genealogy is gray, meticulous, and patiently documentary. It operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times."<sup>9</sup> With the genealogical method Foucault seeks to demonstrate how that which appears to be predetermined and inevitable is actually a conglomeration of blind forces. Morals, ideals, and concepts are suggested to be not discovered truths, but a pastiche of details: accidents, petty malice, suppressed deviations, complete reversals, errors, and false appraisals. This pastiche is what gave birth to the practices and ideas that we continue to

value. Reason itself, Foucault insisted, is not an extrahistorical absolute, but a term that functions as an accolade: "Examining the history of reason, [the genealogist] learns that it was born in an altogether 'reasonable' fashion – from chance; devotion to truth and the precision of scientific methods arose from the passion of scholars, their reciprocal hatred, their fanatical and unending discussions, and their spirit of competition – the personal conflicts that slowly forged the weapons of reason."<sup>10</sup> Discourse provides the context for such maneuvers to congeal into learned procedures, "regimes of truth." Foucault, then, endorses an "effective history," devoid of constants, affirming knowledge as both particular and perspectival, constituting not "Truth," but "truths" without epistemological foundations.

In his two major genealogical works Foucault challenged traditional philosophical conceptions of truth, knowledge, and power relations and puts forth his ideas about the construction of the subject. *Discipline and Punish* details how lawful punishment has changed from the violent, retributive justice of a monarch, to a supposedly more humane system of disciplinary techniques that operate through internalization of norms. The methods of normalizing judgment, hierarchical observation, and examination work to instill self-controlling habits in the individual, making the individual simultaneously a more useful and more docile body, that is, a body whose energies are habituated to external regulation, subjection, and self-improvement. Because disciplinary techniques work most effectively when the individual is complicit in the process, the individual must perceive the norms as integral to his or her self-image. The modern "soul" emerges: a creation of discourse, thoroughly imprinted by history, the "interiority" of a disciplined and docile body. Yet, it is not to be supposed that Foucault conceives of the power that produces these docile bodies to be conspiratorial. On the contrary, Foucault's conception of power is impersonal, an intense web of power relationships, a network of practices, institutions, and technologies in which actions bear upon actions, rather than dominant groups

wielding power over subordinate groups. Since there can be no individual interactions outside of power relations, neither can there be a prediscursive subject, for the subject is both constructed and subjected within power relations.

In *The History of Sexuality, Volume One*, Foucault examined the role played by norm-based sexuality, which came to be regarded as truth about our "natural" sexual natures. Foucault's premise is that power has not operated primarily by repressing sexuality, but by creating a proliferation of discourse that determined the modern forms that sexuality has taken. Through intervention into family life by religious, medical, psychiatric, and governmental experts, discourse actualized the dualities of healthy/ill, normal/perverse, and legal/criminal. These terms become an effective means of social control through marginalizing and medicalizing "deviancy." Hence, after manufacturing truth about sexuality, we then appropriate the results as knowledge about ourselves and despise in ourselves thoughts that contravene those learned "natural" selves. Therefore, since the learned discourses have created and regulated sexuality, speaking of a prediscursive "natural" sexuality is senseless, because any claim for an objective nature, or essence, is accessible only through representation and interpretation in discourse.

Foucault's main focus in these genealogical works was not the explication of power relations, in and of themselves, but how power relations operate through discourse to constitute and sexualize the modern subject. One of the most significant philosophical consequences of his genealogical work is this: if a subject cannot be prediscursive, then truth must be historical, perspectival, and without epistemological foundations. These problematizations brought into question the possibility of individual agency, even while the individual is convinced that decisions made, beliefs held, and self-improvements undertaken demonstrate such agency.

### ***Ethical Inquiry***

In the problematization phase of Foucauldian "attitude," the inquirer troubles or disturbs the

coherence of facts, the givenness of unexamined truths, the rationality of principles, canons, and established practices. The second phase of Foucauldian "attitude" is drawn from his late works, particularly the last two volumes of *The History of Sexuality*. There he shifted his attention from power/knowledge, to *ethical inquiry*, which for Foucault meant the kind of relationship you ought to have with yourself: how the individual constitutes himself or herself as a moral agent. He was particularly interested in aesthetics, that is, creating one's self as a work of art, rather than conforming to some moral code. In these two volumes, *The Care of the Self*, and *The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault explored Greek and Roman sexuality and ethics. He was clear, however, that his interest was not in imitating these models, for they, too, are historically and culturally specific, but studying them as one way in which individuals conceived of positive, enabling subjectification. Exploring ancient practices of the self suggested to Foucault that contemporary mechanisms of subjectification are culturally specific, creating a gap into which differing conceptions of self-constitution might enter in the future.

In Foucauldian thought, the subject is always subjectified. Freedom is never attained. There is no act of emancipation or arrival at an end state that allows the subject to escape the web of power relations. That said, however, freedom can be *practiced*. Individuals can incessantly and repeatedly subvert power relations. Foucault's notion of ethics, then, for positive, enabling subjectification hold out the potential for choice: one can choose some of the sources of one's subjectification.

This second phase also asks individuals to take action by disturbing the *status quo* and exploring the transformative potential of microrevolutions. Foucault was cognizant of how very fragile even the bedrock of existence seems to be when faced with the criticism of institutions, practices, and discourses. Microrefusals, he said, have demonstrated amazing efficacy in destabilizing those aspects of our existence that are most familiar, most solid, and most intimately related to

our everyday behavior. He asserted that it was highly probable that microrefusals could have disruptive effects on totalizing social structures that are felt well beyond their points of origin. This means that even systems that seem invulnerable may be fragile when subjected to discontinuous, particular, and local criticism. Viewed in this way, even small, seemingly inconsequential, microrefusals hold the potential for radical change (1980, 80).<sup>11</sup>

### When "Attitude" Becomes Food for Thought

To summarize, then, the initial stage of Foucauldian "attitude" is primarily deconstructive, in which the individual comes to understand the extent of his or her subjection. While the second stage is primarily constructive, allowing the individual the opportunity to choose to what or to whom he or she will become subjected, thus re-creating the subjected self. Foucault is adamant that thinking with "attitude" is not critique for the sake of critique. It serves a practical function, the re-creation of the self; it serves a political function, the "deep transformation" of society. Because agency is subverted under the proliferation of discourses to which the individual is subjected, one must refuse the identity ascribed to the self by "acting out" in local, discrete micropractices. He believed that this politics of resistance and refusal could become the basis for temporary communities of collective action. Thinking with "attitude," as Foucault conceived of it, does not dictate a program that should be followed, but maintains the need for an experimental attitude: a continuous cycle of questioning, action, and more questioning. As Foucault makes quite clear in the interview entitled "Practicing Criticism,"<sup>12</sup> this approach is intended to be both theoretical and practical.

Michel Foucault said that

. . . a demanding, prudent, "experimental" attitude is necessary; at every moment, step by step, one must confront what one is thinking and saying with what one is doing, with what one is. . . . I have always been concerned with linking together as tightly as possible the historical and theoretical analysis of power

relations, institutions, and knowledge, to the movements, critiques, and experience that call them into question in reality. If I have insisted on all this “practice,” it has not been in order to “apply” ideas, but in order to put them to the test and modify them. The key to the personal poetic attitude of the philosopher is not to be sought in his ideas, as if it could be deduced from them, but rather in his philosophy-as-life, in his philosophical life, his ethos.<sup>13</sup>

Returning to Beck’s critique cited earlier I must affirm with him that yes, Foucault does privilege attitude. On the other hand, as this brief synopsis of Foucauldian “attitude” indicates, this “attitude” is hardly anti-intellectual. It does not preclude cognition, but promotes it. Is Foucauldian “attitude” practical? Undoubtedly. Is it *too* practical? Is he *too* tied into “a working understanding of reality and life?” One might well

ask whether it is *too* practical to inquire about “received” curriculum, pedagogical practice that educates some students while marginalizing others, the power relations that have brought certain practices into being? Is it *too* practical to question the ways in which unwritten practice and hidden curriculum have superceded, or circumvented, policy? Is it *too* practical to ask how local politics and expert opinion have combined to establish current practice? Is it *too* practical to look away from the *intent* of our current pedagogical practice and critically examine *effect*? I suggest that even as those of us interested in education continue to work for legislative reform and large-scale programs, Foucauldian “attitude” offers a way that each of us can begin the process of change today--with discontinuous microrevolutions.

## ENDNOTES

1. See Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Alan Sheridan, trans. Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1975, translation, New York: Vintage Books, 1995, 1997.
2. Clive Beck, “Postmodernism, Pedagogy, and Philosophy of Education,” *Philosophy of Education Society Yearbook*, 1993 [journal on-line], 3-6.
3. William James, “Pragmatism,” 1907, replication 1995. *Pragmatism*, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 21.
4. Beck, 3-6.
5. James, 18.
6. Beck, 3-6.
7. James, 18-21.
8. See Foucault, “On the Genealogy of Ethics: A Work in Progress,” and “Polemics, Politics, and Problematizations,” in *The Foucault Reader*, Paul Rabinow, ed., (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).
9. “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” *Foucault Reader*, 1984, 76
10. Ibid., 78.
11. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, Colin Gordon, ed. and trans., (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 80.
12. In *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy and Culture*, Lawrence D. Kritzman, ed., Alan Sheridan, et.al. trans., (New York and London: Routledge, 1988, 1990)
13. Ibid., 374.



## JOHN DEWEY AND “ART AS EXPERIENCE”

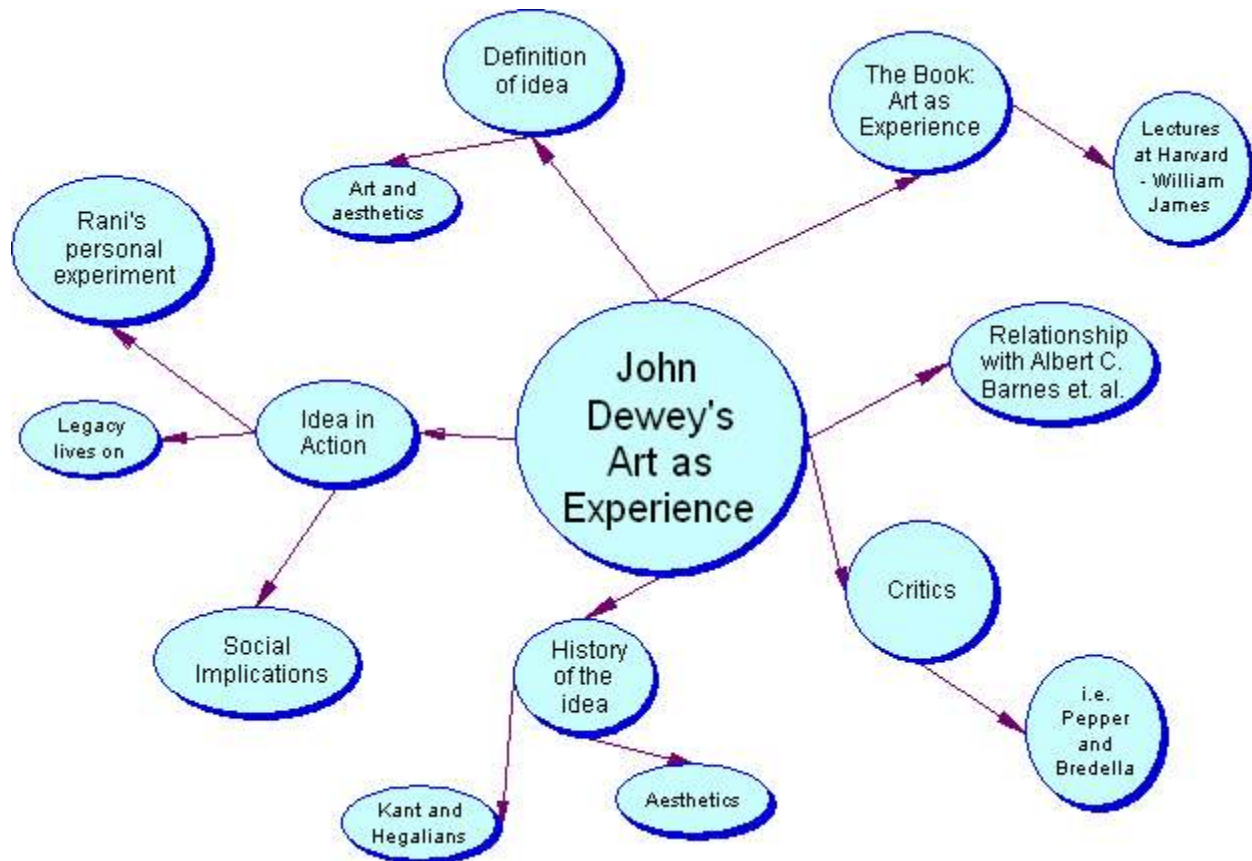
Rani Coleman  
Louisiana State University

Picture this: “Art as Experience” is the needle, and everything else is the haystack. Now, blindfold a baby and tell her to find the needle in the haystack. Yes, that is the sentiment that came along with the commencement of this project. I, too, felt like William Heard Kilpatrick when he left the University of Chicago because he did not understand and could not interpret the depth of John Dewey’s philosophy.<sup>1</sup> However, now, a few months and many, many hours of research later, I am able to give somewhat of an elementary understanding of Dewey’s ideas on “Art as Experience.”

### **The Concepts of ‘Art’ and ‘Experience’**

The idea of “Art as Experience” may be explained by laying out its many different,

intertwining components (see concept map below). To see the idea of “Art as Experience” in its entirety, one must first look at the definition of ‘Art’ and the definition of ‘Experience’ as Dewey set them out in his writings. Clearly, Dewey’s definitions were influenced by his personal experience and scholarly study. He had an intimate knowledge gained through dealing with the subjects of art and aesthetics in his writings. He had close personal relationships with people in the art community. He was influenced by George Herbert Mead’s philosophy of the act. He wrote, *Art as Experience*, and had to react to the critics of his aesthetic philosophy including Lothar Bredella and Stephen Pepper.



First of all, what does “Art as Experience” connote and denote in Dewey’s writings? Referring to this idea, Maxcy says, “At the heart of the Deweyan pragmatic program of aesthetics was the belief that art could be made the basis of experience, teaching us how to restore order over chaos.”<sup>2</sup> John Dewey believed that art was not necessarily a subject or a product but all formal and informal life experiences (what one is doing and what is being done).<sup>3</sup> For Dewey, art is not simply a pricey painting or a timeless marble sculpture; art is found in everything that we do throughout any given day of our lives. It is further possible to argue that Dewey’s ideas can be, as Sankowski says, “... extensions in which the continuities would be stressed between fictional and non-fictional artistic narrative and everyday non-fictional life narratives important to persons’ interpretations of themselves, others, and communities.”<sup>4</sup>

Dictionary definitions of “aesthetic” often refer

to “a branch of philosophy dealing with the nature of beauty, art, and taste and with the creation and appreciation of beauty or a particular theory or conception of beauty or art: a particular taste for or approach to what is pleasing to the senses and especially sight.”<sup>5</sup>

Still, John Dewey is careful to point out that a difference exists between ‘art’ and ‘aesthetic.’ These two terms are often used interchangeably. Maxcy differentiates the two ideas saying that “art” included “...all sorts of individual productions typically reserved to domestic or mechanical developments . . . aesthetics, on the other hand, was the study and critique of such artistic products.”<sup>6</sup> Dewey also asserts, “To avoid this inconsistency it is advantageous to use the word “artistic” <art> to designate the activities by which works of art are brought into being, and to reserve the term “aesthetic” for the appreciation of them when created, the enhanced or heightened perceptions in which they result.”<sup>7</sup>

One of the central themes of "Art as Experience" lies deeply in the idea that the nature of experience is "the enjoyment of the immediacy of an integration and harmonization of means ... the fruition of the readaptation of the individual with environment is realized."<sup>8</sup> One of the main points of his argument is that aesthetic experience is found in commonplace experience and is not something only for the privileged few. Concerning this, the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* says, "Whenever there is a coalescence into an immediately enjoyed qualitative unity of meanings and values drawn from previous experience and present circumstances, life then takes on an aesthetic quality – what Dewey called having 'an experience.'"<sup>9</sup> Here, I believe, one could replace the word "aesthetic" with "beautiful" and thus have a "beautiful quality." This would confirm the looser interpretations of the typical dictionary definitions. All experiences, even dull and ordinary ones, may be experiences of quality. When considering experiences induced by our human environment it may be useful and appropriate to the observer that this "aesthetic beauty" is in the eye of the beholder and the associative effect of our prior experiences color the character and intensity of current experiences. This satisfaction often occurs with the unique stirring of the senses that varies between individuals. A piece of visual art, for example, may remain on display in the commercial shop priced by the artist and the owner and it may remain there until some particular individual sees in the piece something well worth the price.

One person who had a great bond with Dewey was Albert C. Barnes, a very wealthy recluse who acquired a renowned art collection. Many people wrote about Barnes and Dewey's close connection; in fact, they were reported as influencing one another's philosophies. Barnes took classes from Dewey at Columbia University and formed a lifelong friendship with him.<sup>10</sup> He embraced Dewey's philosophy of democracy, education, and his naturalistic views. To Dewey's already present feelings about learning, Barnes' fused his own philosophy of art saying that "...art is no trivial

matter, no device for the entertainment of dilettantes, or upholstery for the houses of the wealthy, but a source of insight into the world, for which there is and can be no substitute, and in which all persons who have the necessary insight can share."<sup>11</sup> Dewey's colleague, Albert C. Barnes, goes on to place an idealist spin on the term 'art' by linking it to experience in a way Dewey never intended, "the enjoyment of art is one of the experiences which are desirable for their own sake."<sup>12</sup>

People often regard art and the lives of artists as unique, privileged, and peculiarly satisfying. Dewey (as well as Barnes) felt that the artistic productions of artists and their approach to their work were not unique to them. He states that the "reconstruction of experience that affords immediate satisfaction," although found in the creative work of artists, can be found in all "intelligent and creative human activity." Dewey goes on to suggest that a child must have an innate interest in something to learn and grow. "If he has no impelling desire of his own to become a carpenter, if his intertwining being one is perfunctory, if it is not an interest in being a carpenter at all, but only in getting a pecuniary reward by doing jobs, the tradition will never of course really enter into and integrate with his own powers," Dewey adds.<sup>13</sup>

Other philosophers and art connoisseurs disagree. They believe that aesthetic value comes through the senses. Stimuli such as color, odor, texture, etc. provoke the senses to appreciation and even enjoyment. These experts believe that the senses play a major role in the artistic construction and ultimately in aesthetic pleasure. Rudolf Arnheim says that "... art possesses certain characteristics not replaceable by other activities of the human mind. Its uniqueness consists in being able to interpret human experience by means of sensory expression."<sup>14</sup> However, Dewey did not believe that this is solely, or even chiefly, the case. He argues that "it is not only the sensible qualities present in the physical media the artist uses, but the wealth of meaning that attaches to these qualities, that constitute the material that is refined

and unified in the process of artistic expression.”<sup>15</sup> The connector that brings this process together is emotion. He points out that emotion does not refer to outbursts and such, but emotion that is used when reflecting.

During my undergraduate student teaching experience, one of the activities that was required of us on a daily basis was “reflecting” upon each day’s activities. During that activity, I was able to write down my emotions, or write down an event that caused a certain emotion within me. I could connect one occasion of emotion to perhaps something that happened many years ago. I was able to use experiences to deal with the present situations. I connected. I was able to see the beauty of my student teaching experience through the connections (and reorganizations) that I made of learning, experiencing, disciplining, etc. I also had to rethink many of the preconceptions I had about teaching, kids, and even colleagues. A particular instance where this happened was when I encountered a hyperactive child. I have always been under the impression that A.D.H.D. children should not be treated differently than other children because there was nothing really “wrong” with them. However, I encountered a few students who fit in the category of A.D.H.D. These children *are* different and *do* require special accommodations. I found that these students were my favorites to teach because of the special talents that they brought into the class. I took a commonplace experience and connected it with something of beauty and aesthetic value.

Despite the “newness” of art and aesthetic to me (as well as many others), these theories of an art and aesthetics date from Plato and Aristotle. However, Immanuel Kant was the first to give it a name within an entire philosophical system.<sup>16</sup> Kant’s philosophy greatly influenced the St. Louis Hegelians, and Dewey was under the tutelage of George Sylvester Morris, a German-trained Hegelian philosopher at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.<sup>17</sup> Even though many sources inform us that Dewey forfeited the Hegelian idealism early in his career, traces of Hegelian principles can be found in his theories of “Art and

Experience” and in his educational philosophy. Dewey admitted “... that acquaintance with Hegel has left a permanent deposit in my thinking.”<sup>18</sup>

With the exception of the final chapter, almost the entire *Art as Experience* book is devoted to the philosophical side of this issue. The final chapter is devoted to the social implications that art and experience can offer.<sup>19</sup> For example, he focuses on the working conditions of employees in a society entrenched in industrialization. He does this, it seems to me, because in an industrialized society, workers tend to do repetitive tasks that take no account of personal opinions and interests and offer no contentment in personal achievements. He believes that because of these activities, the arts are severely distanced from the commonplace life, and thus, from the experiences of learning that could take place in their individual and cooperative lives. Again, we can see how his view of democracy intertwines with his views on art and aesthetics. Nevertheless, the knowledge that their efforts have value sustains the workers, for which they are compensated in the narrow median of money, which will finance a broad spectrum of aesthetic exposure.

### Dewey’s Critics

Though I am speaking on Dewey’s thoughts of “Art as Experience,” one cannot discount the criticisms of this philosophy. Many critics believe that Dewey’s writings on this matter were quite misdirected. One of the most noted critics, Stephen Pepper, said that Dewey’s work “marked an unfortunate departure from the naturalistic standpoint of his instrumentalism, and a return to the idealistic viewpoints of his youth.”<sup>20</sup> Another critic, Lothar Bredella believes that the subjective paradigm of Dewey reduces “the literary text to mere material for the reader’s self-creation.”<sup>21</sup> These people, and others, believe that Dewey contradicted his own earlier philosophies of education. Still others believe that his thoughts are not “workable” in the sense of our contemporary situation(s).<sup>22</sup>

### My Aesthetic Experiment

To really understand Dewey’s philosophy of education and of “Art as Experience”, I wished to

test or convert a raw experience into what Dewey meant by “an experience” or an aesthetic encounter (even though I already had learned so much from the research). So, as I was thumbing through a magazine, having what I would call a “commonplace experience,” I found a picture of a wonderful mountain setting. I recorded my thoughts and connections on paper.

First of all, the painting of the mountain scene was done in colors that were dulled, giving it a feeling like it was a scene taken at dawn or dusk. I then thought of the many family vacations spent in the mountains of North Carolina, Tennessee, Colorado, etc. But this particular scene reminded me of something found on the Blue Ridge Parkway. I was thirteen years old on this family trip. We even found a place that allowed us to sift mine for precious gems in a shallow riverbed. Actually, this scene looks like the view from the Biltmore House in Asheville, North Carolina. Oh, now that is a beautiful house. It is the largest privately owned house in America. While there was no such image in the scene, my mind reflected on the extensive gardens on the property. The house contained two or three hundred rooms. The waterfall on the picture reminds me of the many waterfalls of which we would stop and take pictures on our scenic routes through mountainous terrains. The Indian scene is reminiscent of the time we spent a week in Cherokee, North Carolina. We happened to be there during the annual festival. There were dances, food, and crafts. I even ate their specialty bread. The tents and fire give it a more idealistic view than does the scene represent actual practices of today. Perhaps the painter is trying to give it an idealistic, or even a spiritual or supernatural, view. Perhaps the picture is of days gone by. Nevertheless, I still remember how happy I was on those trips. I remember how happy I was in the mountains. I definitely connect happiness with the mountains (except the van rides

with my brother and sisters – I hated those).

I did not realize, until after I performed this little experiment, that so many connections could be made through a simple task of thumbing through a magazine. First of all, I noticed that I had a few random thoughts on the picture, and then I began to branch out from these original thoughts to others, like peeking through a keyhole into a museum of preserved beauty. I then began to connect the thoughts together. Finally, I applied opinions and observations to my thoughts and to the picture. I know this is an elementary example, but it nevertheless seems to prove to some extent that art really may be had as “an experience.” Art may be found in all sorts of ordinary experiences if the impulse to create is there and the production has some sort of unity; art therefore may be found everywhere.

And, not to my surprise, Dewey’s legacy lives on. While doing my research on Dewey and his philosophy of art, I came to a website of artwork by John Dewey, a great-grandson of John Dewey, the person of focus for this particular paper. The elder Dewey would be proud of his great-grandson, for his artistic forte lies in the creativity of painting naturalistic settings of such things as clouds, rivers, and even unusual subjects such as bees’ wax and plastic. He has certainly found art in everyday, or commonplace, objects and matters.<sup>23</sup>

### Conclusions

In conclusion, I have found that though I do not feel that I have found the needle, I have found the fabrics that it stitched in my own experience, as well as interesting morsels of information in regards to “Art as Experience” that make me desire to keep looking through the haystack. Perhaps, over time, I will be able to grasp an even more intense sense and understanding of Dewey’s philosophy on “Art as Experience.”

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## **RORTY'S HYPOTHETICAL DEWEY AND THE USE OF IRONY IN THE PRACTICE OF INTELLECTUAL HISTORY**

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The current revival of American pragmatism owes much to the work of Richard Rorty. His efforts have helped to rekindle interest in the philosophy developed by John Dewey, William James, Charles Saunders Peirce, George Herbert Mead, and others in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a response to what they perceived to be the inability of rationalism and empiricism to solve the problems of a modern corporate industrial society. The renewed interest in pragmatism, according to historian James Kloppenberg, has become ubiquitous among scholars in many disciplines: "References to pragmatism occur with dizzying frequency from philosophy to social science, from the study of literature, to that of ethnicity, from feminism to legal theory."<sup>1</sup> Rorty sees pragmatism as a means of fostering his project to end the centuries-old struggle of philosophy to find the foundation of knowledge. He has written numerous books and articles dealing with various aspects of pragmatism in his attempt to encourage philosophers to cease trying to be the arbiters of knowledge and to engage in hermeneutics in order to carry on what Michael Oakeshott called "the conversation of mankind."<sup>2</sup> From Rorty's perspective, this conversation should draw on certain elements of pragmatism as means of preserving a liberal polity. He also wants philosophers to recognize the contingent nature of ideas and their historical and linguistic limitations, and thereby to act like intellectual historians in making their contributions to the great discussion.

This recommendation for the work of philosophers raises numerous questions. What does Rorty mean by intellectual history? Is intellectual history the analysis of ideas as historical artifacts in order to identify points that are useful for the continuing conversation of humanity and to reject those that are outdated? Or,

is it the placement of ideas in their historical contexts as a means of understanding their origin and influence in the conversation of their time and only indirectly ours? Is Rorty the philosopher qua intellectual historian practicing the former or latter form of intellectual history, and what are the historiographical implications of his analysis? The answers to such questions obviously ought to be of some interest to those who practice the disciplines of philosophy and the history ideas. In addition, they ought to attract the attention of students of educational thought, given that Rorty has devoted much his effort to analyzing the writings of John Dewey. One place we can find evidence of Rorty's work as an "intellectual historian" that would be of interest to philosophers, historians, and educators is in his writings about Dewey's metaphysics, especially the concept of experience. In this essay, therefore, I examine two of Rorty's articles on that issue, "Dewey's Metaphysics" and "Dewey Between Hegel and Darwin," in which he offers a critique of Dewey's ideas about existence that eventually leads to the creation of what he acknowledges in the second essay to be a hypothetical Dewey. From the results of this analysis, I argue, first, that Rorty's hypothetical Dewey seriously undermines his claim to be practicing intellectual history, and, second, that his own view of reality creates serious problems for achieving a liberal democratic society.

This glimpse into Rorty's analysis of Dewey's metaphysics is intended to complement the investigation of the metaphysical ideas of this giant of American philosophy by David Snelgrove included elsewhere in this volume.<sup>3</sup> It also is meant to identify the ethical, historiographical, and educational implications of a critique of Dewey's ideas offered by a contemporary pragmatist who purports to be engaged in the practice of intellectual history.



CURTIS: RORTY'S HYPOTHETICAL DEWEY AND THE USE OF IRONY  
IN THE PRACTICE OF INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

Since 1967, Rorty has attempted to follow his own recommendation to practice “intellectual history” in his philosophical endeavors by developing a historicist perspective on that enterprise. In *The Linguistic Turn*, a volume of essays about analytic philosophy, he asserted that the philosophy of language would never reach the scientific status hoped for by its proponents.<sup>4</sup> This claim was the opening shot in a battle to illuminate and ultimately to end the long-running effort to find objective knowledge and to make philosophy its arbiter. By 1979, Rorty had broadened the scope and clarified the point of his project in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. He noted the historicist nature of his project by pointing out that he “...intended to put the notions of ‘mind,’ of ‘knowledge,’ and of ‘philosophy,’ respectively in historical perspective.”<sup>5</sup> Then, reflecting the ideas of William James and John Dewey, he argued that the traditional problems of philosophy, “... mind-body dualism, the correspondence theory of truth, theories of knowledge and theories of language, and ultimately the entire conception of a systematic philosophy devoted to finding the foundations of objective knowledge all rested on misconceptions.”<sup>6</sup> He wanted philosophers to give up epistemology in favor of hermeneutics and to interpret the issues of human life and society instead of attempting to describe the world as it actually is. In 1982, Rorty continued his project in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, where he pointed out that we create our standards and practices, that science is merely one form of literature, and in response to the charge of relativism, that such a position is incoherent in the face of the contingent nature of all knowledge.<sup>7</sup>

Following this defense of his radical historicism, Rorty has increasingly emphasized language in his version of pragmatism. Drawing on the work of postmodernist, continental philosophers such as Jacques Derrida, he has sought to build his offerings for “the conversation of mankind” on the view that language defines reality. He wants philosophers, whom he prefers to view as “kibitzers,” to cease delving into the

“serious problems of philosophy” and instead to engage in “playful” discussions in which they create new vocabularies to describe the practices of liberal democracy.<sup>8</sup> Thus Rorty has moved away from James and Dewey, who took their task as philosophers seriously and who asked tough questions about the relationship between liberalism and the practices of democracy. It is this shift to a linguistic form of pragmatism that is apparent in Rorty’s critique of Dewey’s metaphysics.<sup>9</sup>

“Dewey’s Metaphysics” originated in 1975 as part of a lecture series at the University of Vermont on the philosophy of John Dewey, and two years later it appeared in *New Studies in the Philosophy of John Dewey*, edited by Steven Cahn.<sup>10</sup> In this essay, Rorty analyzes *Experience and Nature* by briefly comparing Dewey’s project with the work of the logical positivists and analytic philosophers who succeeded him and by showing its historical roots in Dewey’s early work. He then proceeds to criticize what he claims is the principal flaw in Dewey’s argument, namely his attempt to present a radical-empiricist notion of experience, and to suggest what Dewey should have done with that book. Implicit throughout Rorty’s critique is what would later become his hypothetical Dewey.

Rorty begins by noting that, late in his life, Dewey regretted having entitled the book *Experience and Nature* and told Arthur Bentley that he was thinking of revising it and calling it *Nature and Culture*. Rorty would prefer the latter title since he thinks the book is roughly an intellectual history of the attempts to solve metaphysical problems, but he admits that Dewey was bent on writing a book that offered a metaphysical system that would show that the dualistic-metaphysical problems identified by the rationalists and the empiricists were pseudo-problems. Unfortunately, says Rorty, Dewey presented his history of the dualisms and the attempts to deal with them, but he failed to dismiss metaphysics as trivial. Instead, he talked about experience through observation and experiment,

which Rorty believes did not accomplish Dewey's intended goal. Rather, it took Russell, Carnap, Ayre, and Black to reject metaphysics as trivial, ironically, by their narrow and artificial treatment of the problems.<sup>11</sup>

Rorty is anxious to show that even in his mature philosophy, Dewey retained the vocabulary of his early Hegelian thought. As a prelude to his analysis of Dewey's "metaphysics," he offers a critique of the language Dewey used early in his career as a philosopher. He points to the young philosopher's work in the 1880s in which Dewey equated psychology with the method of philosophy. Rorty agrees with Shadworth Hodgson who criticized Dewey at that time for failing fully to explain what he meant by that slogan. Like Hodgson, he contends that Dewey, in fact, was identifying psychology with transcendental philosophy.<sup>12</sup> Even many years after he rejected Hegelianism, says Rorty, Dewey continued to use the language of transcendental philosophy and mistakenly attempted to serve Hegel and empiricism:

Nobody can claim to offer an "empirical" account of something called "the inclusive integrity of 'experience,'" nor take this "integrated unity" as the starting point for philosophic thought," if he also agrees with Hegel that the starting point of philosophic thought is bound to be the dialectical situation in which one finds oneself caught in one's own historical period—the problems of the men of one's time.<sup>13</sup>

Rorty thinks Dewey hoped we could extricate ourselves from everyday problems and use Locke's "plain, historical method" to explain experience, but he failed to remember what T. H. Green had said—namely, that we gain nothing by conflating the vocabulary by which we explain how we gain knowledge with that of our justification of knowledge claims. To put it another way, Rorty contends that Dewey wanted to eliminate epistemological problems by offering a contemporary version of Locke's method, which contradicted what he had learned from Hegel and Green:

[W]e can eliminate epistemological problems by eliminating the assumption that justification must repose on something other than social practices and human needs. To say, as Dewey wants to, that to gain knowledge is to solve problems, one does not need to find "continuities" between nervous systems and people, or between "experience" and "nature."<sup>14</sup>

The second criticism of *Experience and Nature* offered by Rorty is that Dewey seemed to hearken back to his thoughts in the 1880s and become Kantian in his attempt to resolve the mind-body dualism. Like Kant and Green, Dewey thought that intuitions are blind without concepts and that there are no "raw" data: objects as manifest and "swirls of colorless atoms" are equally "given in experience," to use his words. Thus, the commonsense characteristics of an object, hardness, color, and shape, are qualities of one type of interaction and the scientific concepts, atom and mass, are qualities of another. Rorty says that Dewey used language such as "'transaction with the environment'" and "'adaptation to conditions'" to be both naturalistic and transcendental, which would characterize the common connection between the sensible and scientific characteristics of objects.<sup>15</sup>

At the end of his essay on Dewey's metaphysics Rorty asserts that Dewey's project in *Experience and Nature* was to shatter the idea of "Truth as accuracy of representation" and demonstrate that "... if scientific inquiry could be seen as adapting and coping rather than copying, the continuity between science, morals, and art would become apparent." But then Rorty takes a step in the direction of what he would later admit is his hypothetical Dewey when he suggests that achieving this aim would make us "... receptive to notions like Derrida's—that language is not a device for representing reality, but a reality in which we live and move."<sup>16</sup>

Rorty's hypothetical Dewey appears in an essay entitled "Dewey Between Hegel and Darwin," which was a conference paper first published in French in *Rue Descartes* in 1992 and later issued

CURTIS: RORTY'S HYPOTHETICAL DEWEY AND THE USE OF IRONY  
IN THE PRACTICE OF INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

in English in *Modernist Impulses in the Human Sciences, 1870-1930*, edited by historian Dorothy Ross.<sup>17</sup> Rorty begins by complimenting contemporary historians James Kloppenberg and David Hollinger for their recent studies of the origins of pragmatism near the beginning of the twentieth century, especially James' and Dewey's talk of experience and their panpsychism [the theory that all nature is psychical]. He then compares the early pragmatism to the revival of interest in that philosophy without a concomitant revival of panpsychism at the end of the twentieth century. Furthermore, he writes, contemporary philosophers interested in pragmatism talk of sentences not experience, and they avoid any talk of empiricism, let alone radical empiricism.<sup>18</sup> What brought about this change was the advent of the so-called "linguistic turn," which Rorty says Manfred Frank locates in the work of Herder and Humbolt who enabled us to conceive of "'transnational and transhistorical 'reason'" as itself just one more "'image of the world' inscribed in a linguistic order."<sup>19</sup>

Rorty then indicates he wants to talk about Dewey, not as a "philosopher of the *via media*" between idealism and empiricism (Kloppenberg's characterization), but as a philosopher of a *via media* between "historicism and scientism." He uses a different definition of historicism than the notion that historical events are bound to time and place. Rather, he offers a definition that in essence is a description of reality as a postmodernist, ala Hayden White and Jacques Derrida, sees it: "...the doctrine that there is not relation of 'closeness of fit' between language and the world: no image of the world projected by language is more or less representative of the way the world really is than any other." "Scientism" for Rorty is "...the doctrine that natural science is privileged over other areas of culture, that something about natural science puts it in closer—or at least more reliable—touch with reality than any other human activity."<sup>20</sup> Rorty sees the linking of historicism and scientism as a marriage of Hegel and Darwin, and he believes Dewey was "standing" between

them, or should have been—using a historicist interpretation of Darwin rather than a panpsychist one.

According to Rorty, Dewey's theory of truth should have been a theory of truth as "expediency" rather than "accuracy" or "concreteness." In other words, he wants Dewey to agree with James that "... the true ... is only the expedient in the way of our thinking, just as the right is only the expedient in our way of behaving." At the same time, he wants Dewey to reject James' "unfortunate claim" that "ideas (which are themselves but parts of our experience) become true just insofar as they help us get into satisfactory relation with other parts of our experience."<sup>21</sup> He thinks the first theory is compatible with the linguistic turn and the second is not:

The first formulation can easily be made compatible with the linguistic turn, but not the second. The second, but not the first, contains the germ of panpsychism and radical empiricism. 'Getting into satisfactory relation with other parts or our experience' will be acceptable as an account of true beliefs only if both the distinction between the propositional and the nonpropositional and that between properties of the agent and properties of her environment are blurred in the way Dewey blurs both in *Experience and Nature*.<sup>22</sup>

Rorty goes on to argue that concepts such as "experience," "consciousness," and "thought" originated as things that were seen in contrast to nature and that varied independently of nature. In epistemology, they belong to a time of "*ta phainomena*" rather than "*empeiria*." "Much of Dewey's work," he opines, "was a desperate, futile attempt to get rid of the *phainomena* versus *ontôs onta*, appearance versus true reality, distinction and to replace it with a distinction of degree between less organized and directed and more organized and directed *empeiria*."<sup>23</sup> The futility of Dewey's effort, according to Rorty, was apparent in the response of his fellow philosophers who wanted to discuss the possibility of "... being 'out of touch with reality' or 'lost in a realm of mere

appearance.”<sup>24</sup> It also was manifest, he continues, in Dewey’s response to his opponents that they had perverted experience. Rorty wishes that Dewey had stayed with the significant part of his retort: that we should examine the distinction between beliefs useful for one purpose with those useful for other purposes instead of the appearance-reality distinction.

Dewey should have eliminated the word experience from his philosophical language, says Rorty. Instead he should have concurred with Peirce who saw a gap between cognition and sensation and who believed that cognition was possible only for those who use language. Peirce thought the only relevant discontinuity was between language-users and non-language-users. Had Dewey accepted Peirce’s claims, writes Rorty, he could have gone on to look at the development of linguistic behavior.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, had the hypothetical Dewey taken this position, he would have said,

... we can construe “thinking” as simply the use of sentences – both for purposes of arranging cooperative enterprises and for attributing inner states (beliefs, desires) to our fellow humans. If we have thinking in this sense – the ability to have and ascribe sentential attitudes – we can see it as something that has nothing in particular to do with “experiences of a noncognitive sort.”<sup>26</sup>

Extending his critique of experience, Rorty considers Dewey’s moral theory. He sees it as another effort of Dewey’s historicism and as a marriage between Darwin’s idea of evolution and Hegel’s historicism. Dewey wanted us to do no more than “so act as to increase the meaning of present experience,” and that in order to do that, we do not need some revealed ideal to determine whether we are right or not. We are capable of acting by our own lights, thought Dewey. “In this attitude,” writes Rorty, “...we get a genuine marriage of Darwin with a de-absolutized Hegel.”<sup>27</sup>

Finally, Rorty concludes the description of his hypothetical Dewey by saying that “...the most Dewey can claim is that truth as what works is the

theory of truth it now pays us to have. It pays us to believe this because we have seen the unfortunate results of believing otherwise – of trying to find some ahistorical and absolute relation to reality for truth to name – and we must now try to do better.” In a similar vein, he praises Dewey’s assertion that “growth itself is the only moral end,” that, here again, we have learned from the lamentable outcomes of our attempts to seek divine guidance or eternal ideals for individual or social life. “In both epistemology and moral philosophy...we have seen the unfortunate results of trying to think of normative terms like ‘true’ or ‘good’ or ‘right’ as signifying relations of ‘agreement’ or ‘correspondence’ between something human and something nonhuman.”<sup>28</sup>

So what do we make of this hypothetical—that is, postmodern—Dewey? It is not Dewey at all. Rorty’s creation is an ahistorical Dewey who rejects radical empiricism, with its emphasis on scientific thinking, and only recognizes historicism and an element of evolutionary thought. It is a Dewey whose thoughts are devoid of the concept of experience. This characterization of Dewey ignores the context in which Dewey lived with its love of science—albeit scientism in the minds of many. In other words, this hypothetical Dewey is a figment of Rorty’s imagination that John Dewey would not have accepted.

It is true that historical writing is not an exact account of persons and events of the past since it requires the historian to employ her imagination to explain how and why events and ideas occurred. Such an interpretation is not fictitious in the fullest sense of the word. In the case of Rorty’s hypothetical Dewey, however, we have a fictitious figure that emerges from a severely restricted definition of historicism. Rorty limits historicism to the historical nature of language because he believes that language defines reality instead of reflecting it. This meaning of historicism reduces human life and the experience of the social and physical environment—that is “experience and nature”—to mere linguistic existence. Although some intellectual historians would be sympathetic to this use of the word historicism, many others

**CURTIS: RORTY'S HYPOTHETICAL DEWEY AND THE USE OF IRONY  
IN THE PRACTICE OF INTELLECTUAL HISTORY**

would reject this postmodernist definition and insist that ideas and the language that express them can only be understood in the social context of their time.<sup>29</sup> To put the point differently, Rorty trivializes experience, which leads to moral, historical, and educational problems.

Regarding the moral realm, Rorty claims that philosophy can no longer aid those who look to ethics and political philosophy for guidance in solving the problems of modern life and society. He thinks we can dispense with the vocabulary of ethics and our concerns for security and sympathy, and simply endeavor to be nice to our fellow human beings. He also contends that liberal democratic cultures are merely the results of chance. This is particularly the case since the history of ethics and political philosophy should be seen as the substitution of one vocabulary or metaphor for another, not an attempt to ground relations with our fellow humans in a language that represents some moral truth. In effect, what Rorty believes is that since historical developments are mere accidents that happen to the lives of people, philosophers need not be worried about the moral issues in the struggles over values and their application that have occurred in the past. Thus, he would reduce the history of the competing political philosophies in the United States to a story of contending metaphors for our social and political lives, rather than descriptions of the ideals that people adhered to in their struggles for freedom, community, and a moral life. He also would have philosophers seek new metaphors that would help us define our private lives and simply endeavor to be pleasant to each other in our social lives.<sup>30</sup>

This view of the moral realm is a clear departure from that of the historical Dewey who expressed the importance of our social experiences and our individual lives in relation to them when he inextricably linked the ethical and political dimensions of democracy. As another contemporary philosopher, Richard Bernstein, whose pragmatism Kloppenberg thinks is more in the tradition of Dewey and James than that of

Rorty, insists, we cannot separate our private selves from our public selves. Kloppenberg writes:

Because experience itself is social, Bernstein believes, our private selves cannot be cordoned off from our ethical responsibilities—even behind the shield of “difference.” We must always be prepared to expose our private passions and our personal choices to criticism and to engage in dialogue those who disagree with us, not because we believe that consensus will necessarily result, but because it is only through that process that we can learn to understand one another and ourselves.<sup>31</sup>

Bernstein, like Dewey before him, recognizes the interaction among human beings entailed in experience, the dimensions of language and behavior, thought and emotion, not simply the linguistic connections that Rorty believes define our lives.

Such an understanding of experience is also important for the work of historians. Rorty’s hypothetical Dewey would truncate history by limiting it to the evolution of language.<sup>32</sup> He would not be concerned with the significance of extralinguistic experiences—physical, emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual events that extend beyond our descriptions of them—such as the ordeal endured by African slaves in the middle passage. The historical Dewey, on the other hand, recognized the experiential context of language:

[A] universe of experience is a precondition of a universe of discourse. Without its controlling presence, there is no way to determine the relevancy, weight, or coherence of any designated distinction or relation. The universe of experience surrounds and regulates the universe of discourse but never appears as such within the latter.<sup>33</sup>

In a similar vein, William James expressed the idea that there are experiences beyond “verbal thought.”<sup>34</sup>

The pragmatic notion of experience described by Dewey and James, provides the historian with a powerful lens through which to view the human past. By attempting to portray the lived

experiences of their subjects, historians can offer a richer story of the past than that drawn exclusively from the language of the records the players in the events left. Despite the fact they are confined predominantly to the realm of discourse both in the evidence of the past and their writings about it, historians should seek to understand the extralinguistic dimensions of that which is expressed in words by employing evidence that goes beyond discourse. Written records combined with visual artifacts, for example, can make a powerful statement about events of the past. How else could historians have conveyed the horror of the Holocaust except through written and visual portrayals?

The early pragmatists' idea of truth, especially its political and ethical dimensions, also gives the historian a means of evaluating and resolving the competing claims of human experience. In the past, the faithful often used extralinguistic experience to justify religious foundations of truth that pragmatists of all stripes would doubt. Today, such claims are used to justify special insight into experiences grounded in race, class, gender, or other ascriptive characteristics only open to those of the particular group. As Kloppenberg points out, however, Dewey and James' idea of truth would enable the historian to deal with such competing claims of understanding:

The early pragmatists' concept of truth is crucial not only because it acknowledges those appeals [to special insight] but because, in its ethical and political dimensions, it offers a method for evaluating such claims. It thus provides a way of attempting to negotiate differences that might otherwise seem irreconcilable. The pragmatic method is democracy.<sup>35</sup>

An understanding of the differences in race, class, gender, and other characteristics manifest in our society would help us comprehend our history and it would have a salutary effect on the education of our citizens. In other words, building education at home and in school on the early pragmatists' conception of experience, particularly its ethical and political dimensions, would foster the growth of democracy as a way of life.

Although there clearly are benefits to Rorty's call for sympathy toward our fellow human beings, such a moral guide is insufficient. It suggests that all we have to do is be agreeable, not endeavor to understand others and to seek common ground upon which we can live together. Truly comprehending the experiences of others and the social context in which they have occurred and, more importantly, developing the ability to negotiate among the desires produced by those experiences, requires a richer conception of experience than that limited to language—especially if language defines reality rather than being somehow reflective of nature and our interaction with it. Without a grasp of the experiences (discursive and non-discursive) of others, our sympathy for them would be superficial, and our ability to engage in a common effort to solve the problems of society would be halfhearted—particularly if it were seen primarily as prudential. With an awareness of the lived experiences of others, we would have a basis for developing a sense of community that would enable us to see the solving of social problems as mutually beneficial, even in some instances as an altruistic enterprise.

A very important and effective means of teaching an awareness of the lived experiences of others is available in the discipline of history. Through the study of history, young citizens can learn, for example, the extent to which the ascriptive characteristics of race, class, and gender have played a role in our conceptions of citizenship, and the struggles individuals and groups have engaged in to extend the benefits of democracy to all citizens.<sup>36</sup> Although Rorty's conception of history would provide some of the material necessary for understanding the experiences of others who lived in the past, the fact that he sees history as a series of accidents effectively removes the power of deliberate actions of human beings, for good or for ill, from the story. Thus, the work of Sarah and Angelina Grimké, Sojourner Truth, Martin Luther King, Jr., Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Betty Friedan, for example, would be overshadowed by the

**CURTIS: RORTY'S HYPOTHETICAL DEWEY AND THE USE OF IRONY  
IN THE PRACTICE OF INTELLECTUAL HISTORY**

events—accidents for Rorty—that set the stage for their actions. The result would be, therefore, history as one damned event after another, rather than the story of human behavior under varying circumstances.

Richard Rorty wants philosophers to think in terms of language and metaphor, thereby taking an aesthetic stance in the human conversation. In doing so, he wants them to be what he thinks of as “intellectual historians” and to draw on the best of the pragmatic tradition, namely that which he sees as a Deweyan via media between historicism and scientism. Yet Rorty’s philosopher qua intellectual historian is a philosopher who offers an ironic perspective on the past that uses only those ideas of historical figures that would enable him to further his political agenda for the present. In other words, the Rortyan “intellectual historian” would engage in what historians call presentism—interpreting the past in terms of the present—rather than seeing the past in its own terms, insofar as that is possible. Thus Rorty uses his hypothetical Dewey to advance his version of liberalism and democracy. His linguistic pragmatism, however, reduces democracy to a mere shadow of itself. In Rorty’s democracy experience as the nexus between the self and nature is a figment of our imaginations and that all we really “experience” is defined by language. Individuals in his liberal society are supposed to emulate poets rather than scientists and scholars in creating themselves, and the best they can do for others is to show them sympathy. Such a privatized democracy eliminates any basis for building the local community, which Dewey saw as essential to the formation of the Great Community.<sup>37</sup> It ignores the historical battles over the meaning liberty, equality, and freedom. Most troubling, it de-emphasizes the importance of attempting to understand the experiences and

desires of others, save as a byproduct of the human conversation, in an attempt to find common ground for the community.

In the end, Richard Rorty’s hypothetical Dewey has departed from John Dewey the philosopher who saw democracy as a way of life created through an epistemology grounded in scientific thinking as a means of reconstructing experience and developing solutions to “the problems of men” through a communal effort based on shared agreements. Democracy for Dewey is a way of life in which individuals who understand the experimental nature of “the method of intelligence” collectively use that method to formulate solutions to the difficulties of their community and society that ultimately would further the Great Community and their own growth. In contrast, Rorty’s hypothetical Dewey is a postmodern Dewey who sees democracy as a way of life for a society made up of individuals who use language as the means of constructing reality in the form of metaphors that they offer in the human conversation. Unfortunately this conversation, albeit edifying to the participants, never seems to seek common ground to deal with problems that no single individual could solve. The apparent goal of this conversation is to foster the freedom of the individual to express her view of reality and endeavor to keep the conversation going. In other words, the end-in-view of Rorty’s democracy is individual freedom of expression, not as Dewey would have it, the shared effort among citizens to develop a hypothesis that is intended so solve some social problem. Thus the irony of Rorty’s hypothetical Dewey is that society should be constructed of an atomized liberalism in contrast to the democratic community built on shared agreements proposed by the historical John Dewey.

**ENDNOTES**

1. James T. Kloppenberg, “Pragmatism: An Old Name for Some New Ways of Thinking,” *The Journal of American History*, 83 (June 1996): 100-101.

2. Oakeshott was referring to poetry in "The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind." David A. Hollinger, "The Voice of Intellectual History in the Conversation of Mankind: A Note on Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*," *Intellectual History Newsletter*, No. 4, Spring 1982, 23.
3. David Snelgrove, "Dewey's Metaphysics," *Journal of Philosophy and History of Education*, 11 (2003): XXX-XX.
4. Richard M. Rorty, ed. *The Linguistic Turn: Essays in Philosophical Method* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992 [1967]), 1-38.
5. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 10.
6. Kloppenberg, "Pragmatism," 109-10. Kloppenberg provides a useful summary of Rorty's project in this essay, where he shows that Rorty's linguistic pragmatism departs from the pragmatism of James and Dewey.
7. Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism (Essays: 1972-1980)* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1982).
8. Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, 392-93.
9. Kloppenberg, "Pragmatism," 111-12.
10. Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, x.
11. Richard Rorty, "Dewey's Metaphysics," in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, 72-76.
12. Ibid., 77-80.
13. Ibid., 80-81.
14. Ibid., 81-82.
15. Ibid., 83-84.
16. Ibid., 86-88.
17. Richard Rorty, *Truth and Progress, Philosophical Papers, Vol. 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 15.
18. Rorty conveniently overlooks the work of prominent philosophers interested in pragmatism that appeared prior to this essay, such as Richard J. Bernstein, *Praxis and Action: Contemporary Philosophies of Human Activity* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971) and Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interest*, trans. by Jeremy Shapiro (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1971).
19. Manfred Frank, *What is Neostructuralism?* trans. by Sabine Wilke and Richard Gray (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 7. Quoted in Rorty, "Dewey Between Hegel and Darwin." 293.
20. Rorty, "Dewey Between Hegel and Darwin," 293-94.
21. William James, *Pragmatism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 106. Quoted in Ibid., 294.
22. Ibid., 295.
23. Ibid., 296.



24. Ibid., 296-97.
25. Ibid., 297-98.
26. Ibid., 298.
27. Ibid., 303-304.
28. Ibid., 305.
29. See for example the debates over approaches to intellectual history that raged in the *Intellectual History Newsletter* and the *American Historical Review* throughout the 1980s and 1990s.
30. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, chapters 1-3. For a discussion of the competing political philosophies in American history sees James Kloppenberg, *The Virtues of Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).
31. Kloppenberg, "Pragmatism," 132.
32. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, chapter 1
33. John Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938) in John Dewey, *The Later Works, 1925-1953*, Vol. XII, ed. by Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 74. Quoted in Kloppenberg, "Pragmatism," 117.
34. Kloppenberg, "Pragmatism," 117-18.
35. Ibid., 117-19.
36. See Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U. S. History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).
37. John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (Chicago, The Swallow Press, Inc., [1927] 1954), chapter 5.

## THE CULT OF EASY ANSWERS: REFORM POLICIES AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

Douglas R. Davis, Georgia State University

*You raise up your head  
And you ask, "Is this where it is?"  
And somebody points to you and they say  
"It's his"  
And you say, "What's mine?"  
And then somebody else says, "Well, what is?"  
And you say, "Oh my God  
Am I here all alone?"  
And you know something is happening here  
But you don't know what it is  
Do you, Mister Jones, Bob Dylan<sup>1</sup>*

### Introduction

The students I teach are educational leaders. Some hold administrative positions in schools or school districts. Others are teachers who have distinguished themselves as professional educators who have exhibited the leadership capacity to pursue administrative licensure. In my teaching role, I view my task as a professor from many perspectives but there is no doubt that I have strong extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to facilitate the development of school leaders who will increase student learning. The problem of how best to accomplish this goal dominates my professional, academic, and scholarly life. Yet, it seems the solution is akin to a quest for the golden fleece or the holy grail. I often suspect the promised reward at the conclusion of the quest may simply be a myth.

Regardless of my own struggle with the problem of how best to prepare school leaders, much has been written on this topic that I view as faux fleeces and grails. There are many claims suggesting appropriate program content knowledge and delivery.<sup>2</sup> While there is a strong demand for the type of work that provides empirical frameworks, this paper takes a different approach. This work explores school administrator preparation from a philosophical perspective. More specifically, the focus is a critique of what

we teach and how we teach future school administrators to be leaders. There is a need for philosophical discussion of this topic because assumptions relative to knowledge of leadership are the core to issues of program content and delivery in preparation programs. It is commonly accepted that university educational administration programs ought to teach future school leaders what they need to know to be effective leaders, and how to practice effective leadership.

Many educational stakeholders including people in business, professional organizations, state agencies and boards, politicians, school board members, parents, central office administrators, and university professors are concerned with the preparation of school leaders. Individuals representing their constituencies, or their own views, participate in political processes that seek to influence policy and programs for the preparation and certification of school administrators. While I believe these stakeholders are well meaning, I also believe that there is a false assumption consistently found in the rhetoric and the types of programs commonly promoted. I argue that this false assumption, or fallacy, actually does great harm to educational organizations and, ultimately, teaching and learning in schools. I label this common assumption *the epistemological fallacy*.

## **The Epistemological Fallacy in School Reform**

The epistemological fallacy is the assumption that it is possible to discover stable knowledge of education that can be systematically used to improve schools. In administrator preparation, stable knowledge is frequently cited in order to prepare school leaders who will raise student achievement. The problem with relying on an epistemological assumption is that for knowledge to be used in this manner, it must be consistent and universal. This requires that the knowledge be contextually stable over time and place, and results in a need to oversimplify and overgeneralize. This is harmful to educational organizations because schools are extremely complex systemic and cultural institutions. When leaders of schools are taught to approach problems through a process of determining the right answer, there is a necessary reliance on knowledge frameworks; yet, the myriad of issues and subtleties of practice associated with school leadership make precise application of any knowledge or framework tentative at best.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, administrators are expected to solve problems. Further, the meta-problem for school leaders in many rural, urban, high poverty, high minority, and high immigrant schools is low student achievement. School leaders working to raise student achievement find themselves situated in political contexts rife with competing knowledge and truth games.<sup>4</sup> As a result, school leaders engaged in efforts to improve student achievement, often find themselves faced with contradictory knowledge frames. Administrators are placed in untenable positions of having to choose or mediate between conflicting truth games concerning appropriate programs, instructional methods, curriculum, scheduling, and staffing.<sup>5</sup> Regardless of whether the administrator makes such decisions individually or through group involvement, the process is, in effect, a form of knowledge construction. Thus, as school organizations engage in decision-making and problem solving processes, certain truths are legitimated.

This process, one that is rarely evident on the surface as a choice between alternative forms of knowledge, results in an expectation that effective school administrators, those who lead, legitimate

dominant truth games. That is, effective leaders in school organizations stabilize knowledge. Effective leaders are those school administrators able to articulate rational goals and programs, achieve consensus and achieve active support from the practitioners in the organization. As a result, preparation programs for educational administrators are expected to teach aspiring administrators how to develop an appropriate vision within the organization, get everyone to buy into and support the vision, and motivate everyone to work hard in achieving the vision.

## **Visions and Standards**

My concern with this is that any school's vision is nothing more than a victorious truth game. In addition, because of the bureaucratic nature of public schools and the political nature of school policy, organizational members have little influence or control over the meaning of their school's vision.<sup>6</sup> Schools also must adapt to powerful externally determined professional and curriculum standards. Nonetheless, there is enormous pressure for professionals to buy into and support the school's vision and externally adopted standards. Professional norms often dictate that teachers must be "team players" and at a minimum, support vision statements and standards. This process is not necessarily negative as vision statements and standards are generally couched in language that is as hard to argue with as apple pie. Unfortunately, this tends to make visions and standards simple, general, and, in short, easy answers. Consider the National Association of Elementary School Principals' (NAESP), *Standards for What Principals Should Know and be Able to Do*:

Effective principals lead schools in a way that places student and adult learning at the center. Effective principals set high expectations and standards for the academic and social development of all students and the performance of adults.

Effective principals demand content and instruction that ensures student achievement of agreed-upon academic standards.

Effective principals create a culture of continuous learning for adults tied to student learning and other school goals.

Effective principals use multiple sources of data as diagnostic tools to assess, identify and apply instructional improvement.

Effective principals actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student and school success.<sup>7</sup>

Certainly, these are all laudable goals. The language is focused on service, high expectations, group processes, learning, culture, the use of information to make improvements, and community building. Who would argue with these goals?

To get back to the issue at hand, I will make two points about these types of standards. First, There is nothing new in any of these standards.<sup>8</sup> Second, and more importantly, the specific meaning of “what principals should know” and “what principals should be able to do” is open to broad interpretation and disagreement. For example, what does the “agreed-upon academic standards” in Standard 4, mean? Who agrees and how do they agree? This simple question gets at the very core of the purpose of education. (Cuban Article) While it is a simple question, there are no simple answers.

Nonetheless, universities that prepare school leaders, are expected to show how they teach such standards, how they assess such standards, and, most problematic, how their leadership students utilize such standards to improve student achievement. Yes, administrative preparation programs are expected to prove with data that their graduates have a positive impact on student achievement—a difficult correlation to validate given the best of circumstances and the most accurate data gathering methods and tools. A general acceptance of a meta-truth game has driven this effort, an accepted epistemological frame that is nonetheless a truth game that allows dominant discourse and rhetoric to control lesser truth games without question. For those of us working in leadership preparation programs, there is considerable pressure to accept this dominant knowledge frame and get on with the business of teaching people how to improve schools.

### **The Situation in Georgia**

Consider what is currently happening in Georgia as an example. Recently, the faculty in the Educational Leadership Program at Georgia State University (GSU) was informed by administrators working for the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (BOR) that our program was going to be audited this year by the board. The stated purpose of the audit is to ensure that our program curriculum is in alignment with the “Regents Principles for the Preparation of Educators for the Schools.” In addition, the audit seeks to determine the level of curriculum alignment between our program and the newly created Georgia’s Leadership Institute for School Improvement (LGISI). The LGISI:

provides education, and development for educational leaders, and is working to research, define and institutionalize a leadership model based on best practices that drive and sustain school improvement. We are also working to influence policy to establish new processes for leader recruitment, selection, preparation, development and retention based on best practices that support school improvement.<sup>9</sup>

Without input from GSU’s College of Education or the leadership faculty, the Board of Regents is in contract negotiations with an outside agent to conduct the audit. In a process that has yet to be determined, the outside agents are going to visit our campus and determine how our program’s curriculum aligns with an instrument containing 199 knowledge and performance indicators divided into eight domains. Following the audit process of identifying where our program is out of alignment with the 199 indicators, we will be required to document how we are going to bring our program into alignment.

Even more troubling, neither the instrument, nor any validation of it, has ever appeared in any scholarly presentation or publication. Further, we have not been able to get access to the 199 indicators because the Georgia BOR has not yet finalized the consulting contract with the outside agent and the indicators are only available through purchase. Yet, we have been told that the GLISI, which has paid the fee to the consulting agency,

has developed a curriculum that is in alignment with these indicators. Regardless, through this process, the goal is for our program to align our curriculum with the GLISI. The stated curriculum goals of the GLISI make this worrisome:

**1. To provide Leadership Development in the new model in collaboration with our partners.**

The institute will provide leadership development based on the new model to support and equip school leaders. We will work with a group of collaborators to provide leaders access to best-of-the-best leadership training, coaching, assessment, support, and expertise. We will provide a Core Workshop, which orients the community learners to the new model and provides participants an opportunity to demonstrate proficiency in the tasks and leadership skills required for school improvement. During the Core Workshop participants develop action plans for next steps in their schools and development plans to ensure that they and their teams are fully trained to lead school improvement. Participants will choose learning Pathways from our curriculum for leader development, certification, and recertification. A Learning Pathway for development of Aspiring Leaders will prepare new leaders to assume their roles.

**2. To institutional instructional design that ensures leaders both “get it” and can “do it.”**

We will provide our collaborators systematic instructional design training and resources to ensure courses and experiences that result in skills development and proficiency. All curriculum of the Institute will use this methodology to ensure leaders both “get it” and can “do it”.

**3. To focus resources on policy change and support for Aspiring Leader Preparation to meet the growing need for educational leaders.**

The Leadership Institute will focus intensely on developing processes and practices for preparation of aspiring leaders. We will collaborate with higher education and other collaborators to set standards for curriculum to ensure that Georgia's school leaders are properly prepared to perform their ever-evolving roles.<sup>10</sup>

The overall acceptance of positivist

epistemology evident from the language used in stating these goals combined with the “join our bandwagon for the common good” tone is cult-like. The goals need not state that “best practices” are both know and universally applicable. And who would not want to be part of “the best-of-the-best”? Not only are the answers easy, leaders attending GLISI’s “Core Workshops” will be taught them and return to their schools with “Action Plans” ready to implement. In three or four days, school leaders will learn how to improve their schools and return with ready solutions in their pockets. On top of this, the BOR has granted the GLISI a “Charter” to engage in leadership preparation that will grant participants an M. Ed. in Educational Leadership degree from Georgia State University. This is truly a cult of easy answers based on an epistemological fallacy that is typical of politically motivated reform efforts. There is no doubt that this is a sincere and well-intentioned effort to improve schools and this once again raises the issue: how should we prepare school leaders?

**A Call for a Philosophical Approach to Leadership Preparation**

Although the type of process we are experiencing in Georgia is shocking, rare, and alien to many in higher education, it is common in efforts of systematic K-12 school reform. For me, this type of program would be both absurd and humorous if the stakes were not so high and the forces behind them so powerful. Imagine an administrator working for a state board of education sending a memo to the faculty of the state’s medical school:

Because of increasing complaints over the inability of doctors in this state to cure cancer, we are going to conduct an audit of your doctor preparation program. The purpose of the audit is to see how well your program aligns with the Board’s *Principles for the Preparation of Doctors*. In addition, we desire that your program be in alignment with the program developed by the board’s newly established “Institute for the Improvement of Medical Practice.” Inspired by input from business

leaders and other collaborators, and supported through grants from the Bill Gates Foundation and Wallace Readers' Digest Foundation, the institute has purchased a rubric of 199 knowledge and performance indicators for doctors that once mastered, will enable them to cure all cancer in their patients. We are particularly excited about the "Core Workshops" presented by the institute that will provide participants the opportunity to learn the cure for cancer in four days. In addition, each doctor will return to their practice with an "Action Plan" for the implementation of their new knowledge. Through your support of this exciting new initiative, we are confident that cancer will soon be eliminated in this state.

I frequently tell my students, if I knew the answer of how to fix schools, I would tell them. Unfortunately, there is no more readily available and simple solution to fixing schools than there is a cure for cancer. Using the same metaphor, however, just as we have knowledge of cancer and medical professionals are able to treat and in many cases cure cancer, we also have knowledge of schools, are able to facilitate school improvement, and in some situations, we are able to dramatically improve low performing schools. The preparation of school leaders certainly has a legitimate role to play in all of this.

Nonetheless, in my view, it is essential that leadership preparation programs approach the problem of how to best prepare leaders from a perspective that is almost opposite from the one articulated by the GLSI and other types of one-size-fits-all reform efforts. First and foremost, school leaders must have a sophisticated grounding in philosophy because schools are in the knowledge business. Specifically, there needs to be an understanding of epistemology. Regardless of one's opinion on the purpose of public education, the service schools provide is knowledge. Whether the knowledge is for purposes of economic productivity, civic responsibility, or to lead a quality life, the function remains the transmission of knowledge in many different forms. It only follows, therefore, that

schools leaders study and understand the nature of the service they provide. Sadly, I suspect that few school administrators are even aware of the complex philosophical issues, debates and discussions that continue to stimulate epistemological discourse.

In a similarly practical matter, we live in a "postmodern culture"<sup>11</sup> where multiple versions of truth compete for legitimacy. Thus, even if an administrator assumes a post-positivist epistemological position, he or she nonetheless practices their profession in an environment of competing truth claims. It has become nearly impossible for any school leader to base decisions on any objective truth claim.

In addition, clearly a philosophical examination of leadership requires much more than the study of epistemology. That is, leadership is more than knowledge. While most standards require that leaders both "know" and "know how", there is almost always an emphasis on "know" combined with the "how." Thus, the performance requirements of individual standards remain epistemologically embedded. This is necessary if one wishes to test the knowledge required of an aspiring administrator to perform; nonetheless, all aspects of leadership may not be testable or measurable. Knowledge is also clearly embedded in demands that leadership preparation programs teach students how to lead schools. Nonetheless, there is still a difference between knowing how and actually doing. I argue that important ontological and axiological components of leadership are left out of these constructs, possibly because they are impossible to quantify and measure.

An ontological focus on leadership might be approached from two related questions. First, what is a leader, or what does it mean to be a leader? Second, what does it mean to be in a school? What are schools as places to be for kids, teachers, staff and administrators and what should they be? From an ontological perspective, these questions do not seek finite answers. There is no right answer but rather a continual re-asking of the "being" questions. These are questions about education at

the deepest level, questions about meaning and purpose. James Birx,<sup>12</sup> in his introduction to Nietzsche's, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, states that: "His remarkable genius both analyzed the problems of the modern work and synthesized a new worldview in order to give meaning and purpose to the totality of existence."<sup>13</sup>

Literature on symbolic school leadership<sup>14</sup> and authentic school leadership<sup>15</sup> has a similar emphasis on meaning and purpose. There is, however, a key difference that may best be understood through thinking of authentic and symbolic leadership as ways of doing, and ontological leadership as ways of questioning. David Farrell Krell describes the value of ontology as:

To build, calculate, investigate, create; to see, hear, say, and cultivate; to think; all are ways men and women involve themselves with beings as a whole. For humans are among the beings that for the time being are. The questions of Being is not bloodless after all, but vital.

For what?

For recovery of the chance to ask what is happening with man on this earth the world over, not in terms of headlines but of less frantic and more frightful disclosures....

For nurturing awareness of the possibilities and vulnerabilities implied in these simple words, *am, are, is*, since Being may be said of all beings and in many senses, though always with a view to one.

For pondering the fact that as we surrender the diverse senses of Being to a sterile uniformity, to a One that can no longer entertain variation and multiplicity, we become immeasurably poorer...<sup>16</sup>

This vital essence of leadership is not an act of knowing but rather an act of creating the meaning of being. It is a most human and unpredictable search; it is an art.

This brings us to a final philosophical arena germane to leadership: axiology. There is nothing new about viewing leadership as an art, but what does this mean? In some respects, axiology is

creativity and aesthetics. These are valuable areas of focus. I would like, however, to consider axiological leadership from a slightly different perspective. Perhaps, we might view leadership through difference, as something different than knowledge that is scientific, theoretical, causal, predictable, or objective. Clearly, there are aspects of leadership that are all of the above but there is also something else.

Milan Kundera<sup>17</sup>, in discussing art and literature, articulates the possibilities of creative alternatives to certainty: "The world of one single Truth and the relative, ambiguous world of the novel are molded of entirely different substances."<sup>18</sup> Kundera describes the wisdom of the novel as "the wisdom of uncertainty."<sup>19</sup>

Uncertainty is contrary to the aspirations of man because man desires to know. In contrast, the novel celebrates the complex, "Every novel says to the reader: 'Things are not as simple as you think.'"<sup>20</sup>

There is a spirit of celebration and humor to Kundera's reverence of art. Kundera fears a world dominated by the *agelates* (A Greek term for a man who does not laugh):

Never having heard God's laughter, the *agelastes* are convinced that the truth is obvious, that all men necessarily think the same think, and that they themselves are exactly what they think they are. But it is precisely in losing the certainty of truth and the unanimous agreement of others that man becomes an individual. The novel is the imaginary paradise of individuals.<sup>21</sup>

I fear the same world just as I fear that schools are dominated by Kundera's *agelastes*. The unique opportunity of the novel is the ability to explore human relationships, circumstances, and conditions. As an alternative to certainty, the novel might explore the unpredictable, the irrational, the mysterious, the burden of history, and the essential axiological quality of existence. I posit that all of this is the stuff of education, of learning, and of leadership. Leadership is a most human enterprise. In thinking about these arguments, the question becomes, how does this fit into an administration

preparation program?

### **An Alternative to Easy Answers**

First of all, many recent changes in leadership preparation are not contradictory to any of the ideas presented in this essay. Trends such as requiring more field experience, in-school mentorship, and university and school partnerships are potentially beneficial. Other trends are more troubling. In a meeting with Deans and professors from educational leadership programs across Georgia last spring, one program leader declared that the problem with school leader preparation was that it is too scholarly. I questioned if leadership preparation had ever been scholarly in Georgia but that is not the point.

At issue is a perception that scholarship is something unnecessary for school administration. This thinking results in a call for programs to be performance-based as opposed to scholarly. A deeper assumption at work here is that scholarly is akin to theoretical and that there is a wide gulf between theory and practice. The irony to me from this is that this type of thinking stems from a lack of a scholarly understanding of the meaning, role, and limitations of theory. So to begin with, I believe school leaders need a critical and reflective understanding of theory.

Performance-based programs seek to emphasize training. Students are taught how to actually perform the job. What is given up in this approach is significant time spent learning the foundations of the profession. In addition, procedures and mechanisms for proper performance are conceptually simple with an emphasis on achieving an identifiable product. There is an expectation that frameworks for reform or improvement be accepted without critical reflection. Answers are provided and disruptive “why” questions discouraged. Administrators are taught to find solutions to problems while little attention is placed on the meaning of framing the problem. Leaders are expected to be individuals

with the knowledge to understand problems and the skills to solve them. This encourages authoritarian norms at the expense of democratic norms. Finally, performance-based leadership preparation is short term—come in and learn, go out and do.

While this is an over-simplification of the issues, I nonetheless see these sets of paired-terms as valuable in discussing variations in how school leaders are prepared:

1. Performance-based and theoretical
2. Practical and scholarly
3. Simple and complex
4. Product and process
5. Acceptance and critical reflection
6. Answers and questions
7. Solutions and the framing of problems
8. Authoritarian and democratic
9. Short-term and long-term

Through the course of a program, I believe there should be some balance between most of these terms that describe what a program might focus on. In addition, I feel it is extremely important that programs be steeped in foundations, scholarly rigor, and critical reflection. The bottom line is there really is no certainty. There are no easy answers. To pretend otherwise is to do students and the future schools they will lead a great disservice. At a minimum, programs need to require extended scholarly engagement. There needs to be a focus on understanding democratic ideals, facilitating processes for framing problems, emphasis on encouraging questions and dissent, a celebration of critical reflection, a focus on process, a recognition of complexity, and reverence for scholarship. School leadership, either from administrators or teachers, is essential for any reform, or change to occur. Yet, as long as we prepare leaders to accept and encourage easy answers, in the end, what will we have? Easy answers!

### **ENDNOTES**

1. Bob Dylan, Lyrics from, “Ballad of a Thin Man”, *Highway 61 Revisited*, (Columbia Records) 1965.



2. See for example, NAESP or SREPB “Building Leadership Capacity”
3. See Spencer Maxcy, Frameworks for a discussion.
4. See Jim Scheurich for a description of competing truth games
5. Fullan
6. Sergiovanni
7. NAESP
8. Cuban, *Reform, Again, a*
9. GISLI
10. GISLI
11. Hargreaves
12. H. James Birx, “Introduction,” in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, trans. Thomas Common and H. James Birx (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus), pp. 13-27.
13. Ibid, p. 13.
14. For a description of symbolic school leadership, see Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, *Reframing the Path to School Leadership: A Guide for Teachers and Principals* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press: 2002).
15. For a description of authentic school leadership, see Robert Evans, *The Human Side of School Change: Reform, Resistance, and the Real-Life Problems of Innovation*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass).
16. David Farrell Krell, “General Introduction: The Questions of Being,” introduction in Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, edit. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993), p. 35.
17. Milan Kundera, *The Art of the Novel*, trans. By Linda Asher (New York: Harper and Row, 1993).
18. Ibid, 14.
19. Ibid, 7.
20. Ibid, 18.
21. Ibid, 159.

## AMERICAN PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THE TYRANNY OF MODERN THOUGHT

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Today the people of the United States suffer from a deep cultural malaise, and with this cultural malaise there has come a loss of faith in the public school as an effective agent in the development of a free society. In fact, there has been a gross deterioration in this respect that responsible scholars are charging that our educational operations at all levels are mindless.

William E. Drake

Southwestern Philosophy of Education Society, 1972

### Introduction

Where is humanity? We speak of living, of existing, of *being* itself, only in terms of degrees of materiality and sensory feelings of pleasure. How is your health? In what neighborhood do you live? In what good restaurants have you eaten lately? Where did you vacation this year? What is your profession? The motto of modern living appears to be, "I shop, therefore I am." Reproduction appears to have replaced uniqueness, originality. In all of this present-day, modern sense of *being*, where is philosophy? Where is education? Both the explanation and justification for the modern sense of *being* is governed by the disciplines of economics, sociology, and history. Regarding the dominance of history and sociology, the French philosopher Luce Irigaray argues that,

We should be what apparently we are, what we have already shown of ourselves. As for the rest, our becoming would be prescribed by our genes, or by what has already been deciphered of them. Our growth is to have stopped one day. We are to have become at best objects of study. Like the whole living world, destroyed little by little by exploration—exploration of what it is instead of cultivating what it could become.<sup>1</sup>

Americans have a special interest in humanity. At the twilight of the Enlightenment and the dawn of modern thought, the United States chartered itself in the Declaration of Independence on a foundation of humanity. This charter bears remembering, repeating.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all

men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among them are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.<sup>2</sup>

Both the preservation and furtherance of these Rights were to be guaranteed through the Constitution. The preamble to the Constitution states that, ". . .[to] secure the Blessings of liberty to ourselves and our Posterity . . ." The Constitution likewise valorized both the individual and the People in the enumeration of prohibitions on governments in the Bill of Rights. The First Amendment, for example, states that

Congress shall make no laws respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The word "no" in this amendment excludes all qualifications. It is a flat prohibition on the powers of government officials. It is substantive, not procedural as some might assume.

The Supreme Court has consistently recognized the legitimacy of the rights of each individual inherent in the Constitution. For example, Mr. Justice Jackson writing for the majority in the 1943 landmark *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette* stated:

The very purpose of the Bill of Rights was to withdraw certain subjects from the vicissitudes

of political controversy, to place them beyond the reach of majorities and officials and to establish them as legal principles to be applied by courts. One's right to life, liberty, and property, to **free speech**, a free press, freedom of worship and assembly, and other fundamental rights **may not be submitted to vote; they depend on the outcome of no election** [emphasis added].\* \* \*

If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or **other matters of opinion** [emphasis added] or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein.<sup>3</sup>

The lengthening history of the United States reveals little substantive progress toward fulfilling the liberal democratic promises, such as **equity, access, and freedom of speech** (defined implicitly by Justice Jackson as "opinion," thought itself) embedded in the Founding documents. Some of the Founders, in particular Thomas Jefferson, believed that it would be only through an educated citizenry that these promises, these ideals could eventually be realized. In Jefferson's words, "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be."<sup>4</sup>

Heeding Jefferson's call for an educated citizenry, all states eventually developed a system of state sponsored and locally administered free public schools. The primary, most fundamental purpose of these schools was to educate children to a level appropriate to assume the fundamental political office of *citizen*. As educated citizens, they would engage in a democratic political process that would eventually allow each citizen to fully exercise both the explicit and implicit rights inherent in the Founding documents.

This view of education for citizenship was still popular in the middle of the nineteenth century. For example, in 1849 Horace Mann, in his *Tenth Annual Report*, had this to say regarding the minimum education for citizenship

[I]t seems clear to me that the minimum of this education can never be less than such as is

sufficient to qualify each citizen for the civil and social duties he will be called to discharge—such an education as teaches the individual the great laws of bodily health, as qualifies for the fulfillment of parental duties; as is indispensable for civil functions of a school or juror; as is necessary for the voter in municipal and national affairs; and finally, as is requisite for faithful and conscientious discharge of all duties which devolve upon inheritor of a portion of the sovereignty of the great republic.<sup>5</sup>

The notion that public education likewise was to play a significant role in "leveling" the differences caused by wealth was still popular 100 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Ralph Waldo Emerson, in his 1876 essay "Education," explained the democratizing character of public-funded schooling.

We have already taken, at the time of the planting of the Colonies, (for ought I know for the first time in the world) the initial step, which for its importance, might have been resisted as most radical of revolutions, thus deciding at the start of the destiny of this country, —this namely, that the poor man, whom the law does not allow to take an ear of corn when starving, nor a pair of shoes for his freezing feet, is allowed to put his hand in the pocket of the rich, and say, You shall educate me, not as you will, but as I will: not alone in the elements, but, by further provisions, in the languages, in sciences, in the useful and elegant arts.<sup>6</sup>

But much earlier, in 1848, Horace Mann warned in his *Twelfth Annual Report* that without an educated electorate the American democratic ideals relative to the influence of wealth could not be fully achieved. Without universal education for all, the majority of the people would be ". . . the vassals of as severe a tyranny, in the form of capital, as the lower classes of Europe are bound to the aristocracy in the form of brute force."<sup>7</sup>

Considering the current rigidity of socioeconomic status (SES) in America today, Mann predicted the future with amazing precision.

In terms of economic democracy, Thomas Frank, in his popular book *One Market Under God: Extreme Capitalism, Market Populism, and the End of Economic Democracy*, reports that

[f]or the majority of American workers, wages through the [nineteen] nineties either fell or barely kept pace with inflation. But for the top corporate executives these really were the years in which to stand up and say “I Am.”

According to *Business Week* magazine, CEO compensation during the whole decade went from 85 times more than what average blue-collar employees received in 1990 to some **four hundred and seventy five times** what blue-collar workers received in 1999. . . . And these were the average numbers, remember. In 1997, Jack Welch, the much revered CEO of General Electric, was paid 1,400 times the average wage earned by his blue-collar workers in the US—and 9,571 times the average wage earned by Mexican industrial workers, who made up the increasing percentage of the GE workforce as production was moved to the region just across the border [emphasis in the original].<sup>8</sup>

Frank also reports that in 1986, 1 percent of Americans owned 35.7 percent of the nation’s wealth. By 1997 it rose to 40.7 percent. By 1995, the next 9 percent of the wealthiest Americans owned 33.3 percent of the wealth. Referring to the Gini Index, a comprehensive standard of inequality, the lowest levels of inequality was in the 1960s and the highest in the late 1920s. By the end of the 1990s “wealth polarization” was about that of the late 1930s.

In his recent book, *Wealth and Democracy: A Political History of the American Rich*, Kevin Phillips noted that in 1790, on the eve of the ratification of the Constitution,

the fortune of America’s supposed first millionaire, Elias Hasket Derby, was roughly four thousand times the assets or annual income (in kind) of the average Massachusetts family. Alongside Derby’s, the size of their wealth would have been like a car crouching at the base of Mount Greylock, Massachusetts’s highest peak (3,491 feet). That was the scale

the citizenry could deal with. Not so the biggest U.S. technology fortunes of 2000. These towered like 14,000-foot Rocky Mountain peaks over a median family income that by comparison was ant-sized and almost invisible.<sup>9</sup>

It appears that the education that Emerson said was necessary for citizenship in a democracy apparently was not what was and is being provided. Achieving the democratic ideal of reasonable economic equity through citizenship education was overtaken by prolonged periods of unbridled economic *laissez-faire* excesses resulting in the gluttonous transfer of wealth from the masses to a relatively few.

What went wrong? Why is it that over 200 years since the ratification of the Constitution, and over 150 years of generally universal public education, such democratic ideals as equity and access are still seemingly beyond the reach of many Americans, when no one should be denied? I contend that this failure can, at base, be assigned to the hegemony, the tyranny of *modern thought*, the foundation of which, we are led to believe, transcends human consciousness.

Along with others presently and in the past, I will argue that within only a few decades of the adoption of the Bill of Rights, *technology*, a particular form of modern thought exercised through the social sciences, became a tyrannical justification in displacing virtue in the politics of Western socioeconomic structuration. The notion of **technology** used herein is not the pirated modern sense, which pertains to material, electronic devices, but in the ancient Greek *techne*, the method of producing artifacts. More important, I argue that the tyranny of modern thought has been promoted through the institution of public schooling.

### Modern Thought

In my argument, **modern thought** is not to be confused with the entirety of the more familiar notion of **modernity**. I rely here on Madan Sarup’s definition of modernity as the progressive economic and administrative rationalization and differentiation [separation of fact from value] of the social world. . . . as a

summary term, referring to that cluster of social, economic and political systems brought into being in the West from somewhere around the eighteenth century onwards.<sup>10</sup>

Modern thought is more fundamental. It is the epistemological foundation, the life-blood that both explains and justifies modernity. Modern thought is expressed most prominently in the natural sciences and, in particular for the argument herein, the array of modern social sciences that acquired academic acceptance only in the nineteenth century and within only the penumbra of the epistemology of the natural sciences.

If there is only one notion that is fundamental to modern thought, it is **division**. Division in the natural world is not at issue here. In the natural world, division counts only when it pertains to what can be seen either directly or with material instruments that can physically reveal what cannot be seen with the naked eye. It is the transference of the natural science notion of division into the human sciences that modern thought endowed itself with its repressive, tyrannical power.

In the natural sciences, with division comes classification. In chemistry there is the classification of elements in the periodic table. In biology life-forms are classified by kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, and genus. Following the natural sciences, the social science depends heavily on division. In sociology, persons are divided by SES. In psychology, there is a seemingly endless process of division and classification. For example, the third edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-III) published in 1987 listed 311 psycho-pathologies that the manual claimed could be clinically diagnosed. The fourth edition (DSM-IV) published in 2000 listed 397 presumed pathologies. If the listings in the DSM are legitimate indicators, then it appears that the "science" of human behavior is so robust that on average each year since 1987 more than nine additional human psycho-pathologies have been "discovered."

In the field of education, **division** as the foundation of a science of education appears to be

even more pronounced than in sociology and psychology. Oscar Buros' first bibliography of testing, published in 1934, was only forty-four pages. By 1938, now known as the familiar *Mental Measurement Yearbook* (MMY), Buros' bibliography had more than 400 pages listing about 4000 tests.<sup>11</sup> The 1995 edition of the MMY has 1259 pages, and far far too many tests for me to estimate let alone count.<sup>12</sup>

As Ian Hacking reminds us, the problem with the wholesale transference of the notion of **classification** from the natural sciences to the social sciences is that classifications in the natural sciences are not interactive, whereas, the classifications in the social sciences are interactive. That is, in the social sciences "there are conscious interactions between **kind** and **person** [emphasis added]"<sup>13</sup> Hacking explains.

Ways of classifying human beings interact with the human beings who are classified. There are all sorts of reasons for this. People think of themselves as of a **kind**, perhaps, or reject the classifications. All our acts are under the descriptions, and the acts that are open to us depend, in a purely formal way, on the descriptions available to us. Moreover, classifications do not exist only in the empty space of language but in institutions, practices, material interactions with things and other people. . . . Only within such a matrix could there be serious interaction between the "kind" of person and the people who may be of that kind.<sup>14</sup>

In education, for example, once the notion of a Behavioral-Developmental (BD) student has been invented from observations of student behaviors in classrooms, we construct a "definite" **kind** of person. This kind of person becomes reified. Rupert's parents send Rupert to first grade as a particular person they have come to know in the years before reaching school-age. If Rupert fits the institutionally determined criteria for BD, then regardless of what he was before, Rupert is now BD. That is, Rupert's BD-defined character exists as an entity constructed with the discourses that represent the meanings of what professionals enter

on Rupert's school record. Thus, as Janine Duncan argues, the school "overwrites" the character that Rupert acquired, to a large degree, through his pre-school family-life interactions.<sup>15</sup> But as a child, can Rupert resist the power of official, professional law-like descriptions of his character? If not, then Rupert might take on behavioral characteristics of a BD child precisely because he has been so classified.

Lost also in the everyday procedures of schooling is the fact that the BD child is not the person, but only an institutionally defined "species" of person, a legal entity used by the federal government, state education agencies, local school boards, psychologists, teachers, and special education activists. Lost is the fact that Rupert is aware of what is said about him, thought about him, and done to him in the name of the legal status of BD.<sup>16</sup> Lost also is the fact that the ideal BD child was constructed from the interaction of the discourses representing three fundamentally different categories---concepts (constructs), the contexts of schooling practices, and people.<sup>17</sup> How did this conflating of the discourses, representing essentially discrete categories, acquire rational-empirical legitimacy?

At about the same time that Horace Mann was describing the kind of education necessary for American citizenship, Adolphe Quetelet (1776-1874), astronomer turned social scientist was hard at work in France arguing that through the application of the "astronomical error law," what we now call the bell-shaped "normal" curve of distribution, he could "look" into the mind, the very conscience, of any French conscript rejected for the military service because he was too short. That is, Quetelet transferred the accuracy of the judgmental power of what could be **seen**, the directly observable physical height of the conscript, to the **unseen**---the moral disposition of any particular conscript to defraud the government by evading military conscription by somehow appearing to be shorter than his actual physical height. Quetelet came to this conclusion after his analysis of a particular population of conscripts that revealed a bi-modal curve instead of the

symmetrical curve that he expected when he applied the "astronomical error law." He reasoned that because the smaller peak in the curve to the left of the population mean was at the precise height that would exclude a conscript from military service, that the conscripts at that point were somehow cheating.

Quetelet's intellectual leap across the abyss separating the bounded, observable material world from unbounded, non material human thought would be the ever shifting intellectual sand upon which much of what constitutes the modern human sciences rest, **construct validity**. Quetelet's work, when linked to that of Francis Galton (1822-1911), James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879), Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), and Karl Pearson (1857-1936), constitutes a genealogy of discursive elements that presently operate as modern technologies of subjectification which, when exercised through institutional practices, contributes ultimately to human subjugation.<sup>18</sup>

By the turn of the nineteenth century, public schools, already constituted along the lines of the factory system, were vulnerable to the infection of "scientific," rational discourses operating through the technologies of "scientific management."<sup>19</sup> These technologies in reality operate to subjugate children by justifying division, classification, and, ultimately, hierarchal stratification. Today, the technologies of subjectification currently operate most powerfully through testing, especially through the use of "standardized" tests mandated by laws, such as the recent federal legislation given the titled "No Child left Behind," which requires states to administer periodic state-wide testing in certain curriculum areas if they are to receive federal funds prescribed in the Act. But what purpose do these tests serve?

The fundamental purpose of a mental test, at least, is to separate each test taker from the others on some criteria, some **construct**. Thus, such tests inherently **divide**. More accurately, testing experts claim that the "power" of a test is its ability to **discriminate** the test takers from each other. Consistently little or no discrimination calls into question a test's **reliability** and, ultimately, its

**validity**, which, logically, should first be established. The notions of both reliability and validity are essential to claims that a test is “standardized.” The higher the reliability factor of a test, the higher the claim of its validity, regardless of whether or not the foundation of all test validity claims---the **construct** that a test is claimed to measure---is “real,” that it exists independent of value judgements.

Given the high predictability of commercially available standardized academic achievement tests, and the fact that they are essentially linguistic-discursive---thus measures of language skills---the distribution of scores along SES lines can be predicted with almost 100% accuracy before such a test is administered. So what purpose do these testing-every-student-in-sight policies serve the American society? Surely the purpose is not to measure whether or not socioeconomic stratification has been erased. But the interaction effects inherent in social science research might shed some light on the effects of such testing.

The children in the various SES categories are well aware of what is being said about them. What they come to believe of themselves, their very sense of *being*, when proclaimed testing “experts” and “professional” educators at all levels tell them who they “really” are through the results of widely publicized, often repeated, politically mandated testing as they go through their K-12 schooling years? The most devastating effect is on Rupert himself, who, after at least twelve years of being subjected to these tests, comes to believe what the “experts” say he is. To the extent that the institutionally sanctioned power to construct individuals is viewed instead by professionals within the institutions as the power simply to reveal what was always already present in the individual, this power is tyrannical.

### **Tyranny**

For my definition of **tyranny** I rely heavily on the work of Leo Strauss and his popular book, *On Tyranny*. Strauss argues that “Society will always try to tyrannize thought,”<sup>20</sup> but does so differently depending on historical periods. To this end, he distinguishes modern (present-day) from classical

(pre modern) tyranny. Strauss explains the difference.

In contradiction to classical tyranny, present-day tyranny has as its disposal “technology” as well as “ideologies”; more generally expressed, it presupposes the existence of “science”; i.e., of a particular interpretation, or kind, of science. Conversely, classical tyranny, unlike modern tyranny, was not confronted, actually or potentially, by a science which was meant to be applied to “the conquest of nature” or to be popularized and diffused.<sup>21</sup>

Given the general definition of politics as the authoritative allocation of values and resources in a society, Strauss argues that “[t]yranny is a danger coeval with political life”;<sup>22</sup> therefore, to fully understand the differences between modern and pre-modern tyranny one must turn to the political science of the classics. He believes that modern political science has its roots in Machiavelli and his *Prince*; whereas, pre-modern political science is anchored in Xenophon’s *Education of Cyrus*, in which Xenophon attempts to rehabilitate Socrates from the charges that justified his execution, of sorts.

Briefly stated, pre-modern politics was based on beliefs about the how people **ought** to live. Although pre-moderns believed this ideal way of living was inherently worthy, they likewise believed that because of chance occurrences it could never be fully achieved. Modern politics differs in that it is based on the notion that all politics should be governed by how people **actually** live and that chance could and should be controlled. Consequently, unlike pre-modern politics, modern politics is justified through at least three essential inventions. First, was the philosophy of history– historicism– where ideologies are constructed. Second, rational-empirical, “scientific” technologies for controlling chance behaviors in humans appeared. Third, is the refinement of institutional writing.

Before historicism, only great men were worthy of being remembered, of counting for something, of being committed to writing. Modern thought provided the epistemology to infuse institutions

with the power inherent in writing. As Michel Foucault explains:

For a long time ordinary individuality—the everyday individuality of everyone—remained below the threshold of description. To be looked at, observed, described in detail, followed from day to day by an uninterrupted writing was a privilege. The chronicle of a man, the account of his life, his historiography, written as he lived out his life formed part of the rituals of his power. The disciplinary methods reversed this relation, lowered the threshold of describable individuality and made of this description a means of control and method of domination. It is no longer a monument for future memory, but a document for possible use. . . . This turning of real lives into writing is no longer a procedure of heroization; it functions as a procedure of objectification and subjection.<sup>23</sup>

The political ramification of the idea that people, *en mass*, could govern themselves instead of being governed by an absolute sovereign entity were immense and far-reaching. The aristocrats of Europe feared the tyranny of the majority, of all mediocrities. Instead of exercising brute power, the powerful would soon realized that people could be controlled through institutional practices if those practices could be made to appear natural, justified through scientific rationality, thus neutral. These institutional practices, when reduced to writing in the form of scientific enumeration and professional discourses, could be used to construct individuals in the images necessary to control them, to use them. By the later part of the twentieth century, both government and commercial/industrial elites openly referred to their employees as “human resources.”

Foucault describes the transition from a ritual, upward gaze domination to an observational, panoptic, downward, gaze domination thus,

The moment that saw the transition from historico-ritual mechanisms for the formation of individuality to the scientifico-disciplinary mechanisms, when the normal took over from the ancestral, and measurement from status,

thus substituting for the individuality of the memorable man that of the calculable man, that moment when the sciences of man became possible is the moment when a new technology of power and a new political anatomy of the body were implemented.<sup>24</sup>

Foucault explains how the power of modern thought operates through a set of “disciplinary technologies” that evolved from institutional practices, such as those found in prisons, the military, and schools. Foucault explains that the success of disciplinary power derives no doubt from the use of simple instruments; hierarchical observation, normalizing judgments and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination. . . . the examination is at the centre of the procedures that constitute the individual as effect and object of power, as effect and object of knowledge.<sup>25</sup>

As public school educators today are acutely aware, the examination in the form of standardize achievement tests is the most obvious disciplinary technology operating under the guise of education.

Even before the ink fully dried on the Founding documents the technology of testing was being instituted into schooling practices in America. But it would not be in public education—still forming a generalizable structure—that testing would be used essentially to “scientifically” justify the separation of one student from another, it would be West Point. Here I rely heavily on the work of Keith Hoskin and Richard Macve. in their 1988 article, “The Genesis of Accountability: The West Point Connection.” They describe the influence that Sylvanus Thayer had on structuring education at West Point after he was appointed superintendent in 1817 (he served in this position until 1833). Thayer, having returned from Europe just prior to assuming his duties as superintendant of West Point, immediately instituted the system he borrowed from the French *École Polytechnique*. At the heart of the system was its numerical grading system. By 1819 Thayer was going far beyond what he borrowed from the *École Polytechnic* by including weekly grade reports.



The last half of the nineteenth century provided additional elements to justify and further the application of science to understanding humans, increasing the tyrannical power of modern thought. Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, published in 1859, contributed to the objectification of the human in several different ways. Although the word "evolution" did not appear in the book, the book nonetheless allowed for the invention of the notion that species evolved, not created as they presently appear. Their physical characteristics at any time, Darwin argued, were the best needed to survive the chance occurrences of changes in the environment of the material world in which they live. Some wanted to disprove Darwin. Significant among them was, for example, Louis Agassiz, a Swiss born, European educated paleontologist/naturalist who captivated many Americans by his "scientific" rhetoric.<sup>26</sup>

But others, such as Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, saw the role that chance played in human affairs as an explanation and justification for social stratification. The historian Louis Menand explains Holmes's view of the individual relative to society as:

The assumption that people are justified in defending what they have become accustomed to is obviously an assumption heavily biased toward the status quo. . . . The key to Holmes's civil liberties opinions is the key to all his jurisprudence: it is that he thought only in terms of aggregate social forces; he had no concern for the individual. The spectacle of individuals falling victim to dominant political or economic tendencies, when those tendencies had been instantiated in duly enacted laws, gave him a kind of chilly satisfaction. It struck him as analogous to the death of soldiers in a battlefield victory, and justified on the same grounds—that for the group to move ahead, some people must inevitably fall by the wayside. "Every society rests on the death of men," he liked to provide his friends by saying. He had, consequently, virtually no faith in the notion of individual human agency. On his view, successful people, like Morgan and

Rockefeller, just had a better grasp of the social tendencies than unsuccessful people did.

Everyone is simply riding the wave chance has put them on. Some people know how to surf; some people drown.<sup>27</sup>

By the late 1930s it appeared that even trusted educators believed that social class was a natural phenomenon. For example, in the late 1930s, James B. Conant, then President of Harvard, would justify social stratification as natural from a misreading of a letter that Jefferson, later in life, sent to John Adams. Nicholas Lemann, in his acclaimed book, *The Big Test: The Secret History of the American Meritocracy*, describes how Conant justified his beliefs from Jefferson's letter. In the letter, Jefferson made the statement that "there is a natural aristocracy among men," then, as a question, states that government is "the best which provides the most effectually for a pure selection of these natural *aristoi* into the offices of government," then claiming that his long ago failed attempt in Virginia to establish a system of universal public education, so that natural aristocrats could be sent to the University of Virginia where "Worth and genius would thus have been sought out from every condition of life, and compleatly (sic) prepared by education for defeating the competition of wealth and birth for public trust." For Conant, testing would be the scientific technology for identifying natural aristocrats, and the SAT would be the test.<sup>28</sup>

With the massive transference of principles and methods of natural science to the social sciences during the nineteenth century, scientific management was ready to be born, ready to be the general technology necessary to "manage" chance occurrences. Frederick Winslow Taylor, an engineer, is given credit for developing the principles of scientific management that would eventually be ubiquitous throughout the Western industrial world. Taylor would demonstrate many times that his system would significantly increase production, thus profits. Raymond Callahan brilliantly documented in his classic *Education and the Cult of Efficiency* that if not all of the principles of scientific management would be

brought into the management of public schools, the essential notion of efficiency would.

It was at the annual meeting of school superintendents in 1913 that the discourse of scientific management was formally introduced into the general discourse of school management. At that meeting, there was a call for the use of “verifiable data” to education policies because educators were “no longer disputing whether education has a scientific basis; we are trying to find the basis.”<sup>29</sup> Callahan argues that such an emphasis on scientific management principles probably

strengthened the tendencies to use standardized tests, school surveys, and other procedures such as efficiency ratings, score cards for buildings, and elaborate systems of records and reports which gave at least the impression of providing a “factual” basis for education.<sup>30</sup>

Although there has been warning and arguments against the tyranny of standardized tests, their use has gone unabated.<sup>31</sup> At the beginning of the twenty-first century the notions of scientific management have been more rigorously applied by school administrators now self-ordained as leaders.

Scientific management and all of its variants—such as Management by Objectives (MBO), Total Quality Management (TQM), and Outcomes-Based Education (OBE)—is part of the ideology of what Jean-François Lyotard calls “performativity”—the optimization of the relationship between inputs and outputs—and what Callahan meticulously detailed as *efficiency*. The discourse of *performativity* is a hegemonic expression of the high rationalism of modern thought which has effectively been used to first objectify, then measure, quantify, and categorize just about everything, including human social structures.<sup>32</sup>

Foucault describes the end result of the pervasive use of scientific-technical knowledge to both shape and justify social structures through institutional practices as the *carceral* society, because modern institutions are “. . . linked to a whole series of ‘carceral’ mechanisms which seem distinct enough—since they are intended to

alleviate pain, to cure, to comfort—but which tend, like the prison, to exercise power of normalization.”<sup>33</sup> More dramatically, Lyotard uses the term “Auschwitz” to signify just how impoverished recent Western history seems from the point of view of the “modern” project of the emancipation of humanity.<sup>34</sup>

### Conclusions

This Critical Enquiry began with the argument that the primary purpose of the American public education is to prepare children for citizenship in order that they might, through political acts, help fulfill the democratic ideals such as equity and access embedded in our Founding documents. But the enduring, persistent, and pernicious social stratification of the American society along the lines of gender, ethnicity, and economics, at least, is sufficient evidence that public education has not lived up to those beliefs.<sup>35</sup> Some high-minded social activists might argue that our Founders believed that only white male elites, such as themselves, should be accorded those Rights enumerated in the Founding documents; thus, the notion that there is the Constitution provides justification that these values were intended for all is not supportable. This is a specious argument at best. Put into a situation of being denied *access* or *equity*, for example, how many Americans today would agree that *access* and *equity*, or any Constitutional rights, are not fundamental human rights? Ought we to succumb to the current Hobbsian/Machiavellian political hegemony and write a new constitution to reflect the “realities” of socioeconomic divisions into SES classes that characterizes modern American life? Or ought we as educators, at least, to set about transforming public schooling into a liberating experience instead of the disciplinary institution it has become over at least the past 150 years? Would yet another reform movement governed by the discourse of modern thought save the schools? If the current reform movement is any indicator, the answer must be no. Characterized by the tiresome drone of the “adapt to our aspirations—or else” terror discourse of high-stakes testing presently emanating from federal and state level educators

and politicians, the current reform movement has left teachers, students, and building level administrators powerless and demoralized.<sup>36</sup> More law-like mandates to teachers and administrators are inherently repressive to some children, if not all.

Although we structure, order ourselves as a community according to law, and celebrate the fact that “we are a nation of laws not of men,” law can further exacerbate division and classification. As Roberto Calasso reminds us law does not in itself equal order; and order is not necessarily justice (*summum ius summa iniuria* — the more law the less justice). The true equation is *law* plus *sacrifice* equal *order*.<sup>37</sup> Order itself is hierarchal and justified on law alone. Nevertheless, some of our children must be sacrificed? Who among them will be chosen? Who will choose them? In current educational policies and practices the children to be sacrificed are on the lower side of the “normal” curve of distribution used to both explain and justify “standardized” tests. The power to interpret these tests, the power to choose, has been given by law to unelected educrats of all stripes to legally exercise state terror—in this capacity the educrats are indeed tyrants.

My greatest fear is that modern Americans have “settled” for a class-based society, different only in how it has been constituted and maintained. The ideals we purport to cherish are just that, ideals—dragged out of our molding closet of Americanism on election days and after tragic, national events such as 9-11. One need not cite an extensive list of statistics that “factually” justify describing the American social order as highly

stratified and generationally stable. To see the divisions first hand one must leave the smooth expressways that lead only to glittering shopping malls and the ever growing number of gated communities, distinguished for their oversized houses with three story atriums entrances and at least three oversized garages to accommodate their SUVs. One need only travel the back roads of the many rural Appalachias that dominate the American countryside, the barrios, and inner city neighborhoods to see the other America. Not unlike children everywhere, the children of the other America eagerly begin their schooling with the innocent optimism of childhood. Nevertheless, as presently constituted, the public school is merely a carousel of endless hope dutifully adorned in patriotic bunting and sound of the daily mantra of the Pledge of Allegiance. While on this carousel of hope the “other” children are soon meticulously constructed to fit more perfectly into the hierarchical social strata into which they were born, they must get off at the very same SES gate from which they entered.

Perhaps I’ve been much too pessimistic about the future of the grand voyage that our Founders charted for us over 200 years ago. We might gain perspective even from our old enemies. James Murphy, an associate professor of government at Dartmouth College, noted in a recent *New York Times* commentary about schools and citizenship that when the late Chinese premier Zhou Enlai was asked for his assessment of the French Revolution, he was reported to have replied: “It’s a bit too soon to say, is it not?”<sup>38</sup> But enemies likewise can be wrong.

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## VIRTUES AS THE FOUNDATION OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION FROM SOCRATES TO ANDRÉ COMTE-SPONVILLE

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### Introduction

The repressive, excessive, and seemingly endless attacks on the human spirit—represented by Auschwitz as a most appropriate and graphic synecdoche—that dominated the history of the twentieth century appear to be rapidly fading from our collective memory as a nation. This is troubling considering that the United States has generally taken the high moral ground as the model for all pledging democracies to further the Enlightenment ideals of social justice, freedom, and equity through active citizen participation in all aspects of government. Our Founders, at least, believed this could be accomplished through universal public education for citizenship. Although the status of humanity in this new century is yet to be defined, we hear little about the purpose of American public schools relative to preparing children for citizenship. That is, until the tragedy universally known 9-11 after which many thought that citizenship education could be done simply by requiring a daily pledge to the Flag.

After the ENRON, WorldCom, and other corporate/financial-world scandals, the shine has dulled somewhat from the Madison Avenue promoted belief that the golden state of *being* is occupied by only the corporate/commercial class. In the 1990s, children were led to believe that only successful entrepreneurs and venture capitalists could achieve that blessed state. To be eligible to enter, they would have to have survived the naturally structured sifting and winnowing process of performance-based schooling, characterized by supposedly objective technologies, such as “standardized” achievement tests. This process, the general public was led to believe by many apparently self ordained educational “leaders,” would most efficiently recognize those that truly merit entrance into that most prized state of being, wealth as success.

The mounting criticisms against standardized, uniform schooling justified on notions of efficiency might provide the public schools an opportunity to escape the grasp of the corporate/commercial class *wanabe* school administrators turned leader/managers and be taken back by teachers and administrator as philosophers. As Raymond Callahan reported, this was the hope of William Burris, Dean of the College of Teachers of the University of Cincinnati, at the 1910 meeting of the National Society of College Teachers of Education. The principal paper, “The Aims, Scopes, and Methods of a University Course in Public School Administration,” was presented by Frank E. Spaulding, superintendent of schools in Newton, Massachusetts, that called for “simple business principles of efficiency . . . [to] . . . become habit with school administrators.”<sup>1</sup> Callahan reported that Burris argued, instead, “that the school administrator of the highest type was ‘first of all, a philosopher.’”<sup>2</sup> In that capacity, Burris argued, the administrator would “know what the needs of society and the individual are and . . . help the community to a fuller appreciation of these needs as a measure of human wants.”<sup>3</sup>

As philosophers, what ought twenty-first century American public school educators know about civic education? Time and space will not allow a full treatment of this question here; thus, I will address only briefly several fundamental questions that I believe must be answered if American public schools are to fulfill their civic responsibility—to prepare children for democratic citizenship. My position is that virtue ought to be the foundation of civic education.

### What is virtue?

Simon Blackburn, in *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, defines virtue as

FAZZARO: VIRTUES AS THE FOUNDATION OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION  
FROM SOCRATES TO ANDRÉ COMTE-SPONVILLE

a trait of character that is to be admired: one rendering its possessor better, either morally or intellectually or in the conduct of specific affairs.<sup>4</sup>

Blackburn goes on to recognize that depending on the historical, cultural contexts, what constitutes a virtue and their value has been viewed somewhat differently. Both Plato and Aristotle saw a “unity of the virtues, or the way in which possession of one in the right way requires possession of the others”<sup>5</sup> and the importance of virtues for achieving happiness. The Romans saw virtue as an expression of the Greek *areté* — excellence. Unlike the classical Greek culture, the Christian culture greatly valued the virtues of humility, patience, and chastity. In the thirteenth century, Saint Thomas Aquinas tried to synthesize Aristotelean and Christian views of virtues, but as Blackburn claims, found it “impossible since the emergence of generalized benevolence as a leading virtue.”<sup>6</sup> By the turn of the eighteenth century and the dawn of modern thought, there was Immanuel Kant’s work, that great synthesis of rationalism and empiricism, ready to serve modern political thought. Kant proposed a set of five forms of his moral imperative to justify moral behavior; thus, virtue is reduced to “purely a trait that can act as a handmaiden to the doing of duty, having no independent ethical value.”<sup>7</sup> The utilitarians of the nineteenth century, such as John Stuart Mill, believed that “actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.”<sup>8</sup> It was at this point in American history that happiness was no longer a measure of relations between fellow humans. Happiness was to be measured in economic terms.<sup>9</sup>

Unlike the modern utilitarian view, and resurrecting the Classical, pre-modern view, the contemporary French philosopher André Comte-Sponville answers the question, “What is a virtue?” in the following.

[Virtue] is a force that has or can have an effect. Virtue is a capacity or power, and always a specific one. Virtues are independent

of the uses to which they are put, of the end to which they actually serve. A knife that has the capacity to cut well has no less virtue in the hands of a murderer than a cook. The knife need only accomplish its function. But where man and morals are concerned merely having a sufficient capacity is not enough. What does man’s distinctive excellence reside in? For Aristotle, the answer is a rational life, which sets man apart from the animals.<sup>10</sup>

Aristotle’s view seems to be more consistent with the expectations the Founders had for good citizenship. It is a recognition that to be human is to have a free *will*. Therefore, to be a good citizen one must act on that will so that the outcome will contribute not only to one’s personal well being, but, to the good of society as a whole—the People, as well. Such unselfish willful acts would be an expression of civic virtue, which can be defined simply as the desire to act for the good of the nation. In America, it would concern the notion of *praxis* regarding the democratic ideals explicitly and implicitly embedded in the Founding documents. But some complications might arise depending on the dominant political view of social order. In particular here, American style democracy.

**Why are civic virtues important for democracy?**

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, civic virtue appears not to be considered essential for our federal government, at least, to help fulfill the American democratic ideals embedded in the Founding documents. For example, in this regard even President Bush has a decidedly different view than our Founders about what government ought to be. In a speech in Springfield, Missouri, on 14 January 2002 President Bush said:

The role of government is to create an environment in which people are willing to take risk, in which the entrepreneur is willing to expand through capital investment.

Matthew Rothschild, an editor of the *Progressive*, commenting on the President’s speech noted that [N]othing there about establishing justice,

ensuring domestic tranquility, promoting the general welfare, or securing the blessings of liberty. [For Bush] All government should do, other than fight the evil ones, is be a front man for [President] Bush's favorite human being, the entrepreneur.<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, unlike President Bush, our Founders believed that civic virtue was important, essential for preserving democracy. In the Declaration of Independence the Founders believed that

all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among them are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of *Happiness* [emphasis added]. . . .<sup>12</sup>

As argued above, "Happiness" in the historical and cultural contexts of the signing of the Declaration of Independence still meant living a virtuous life, not accumulating material wealth as it might be conceived today. But there are other aspects of political life that must be considered.

Leo Strauss has recognized distinctly different political orientations relative to how those in a society ought to live. In pre-modern society, from the classical Greek period up to the fifteenth century when Machiavelli published his *Il Principe* (*The Prince*), the dominant, fundamental political view was that people ought to live their lives so as to help perfect the best political order. Although they believed this to be impossible because of chance occurrences, they nonetheless believed it was entirely worthy of striving for. From Machiavelli on, the modern period, it was thought that how men ought to live was less important than how they *actually* lived and that chance could be controlled.<sup>13</sup>

Richard Elliott provides other important considerations relative to attributes of governance. Elliott argues that societies are basically different in the relationship of the individual to the whole, "where the ultimate goodness resides—in the state, or the individual."<sup>14</sup> He describes this relationship in terms of how disagreements are resolved—through either *accusatory* or *adversary* processes.

States that use accusatory processes posit all truth in the state. States that allow for adversary processes place ultimate value for truth as an emergent answer that comes from a confrontation of two bodies—the state and the individual. . . . In an accusatory society, the many influence the one; and in the adversary society, the one has the opportunity to challenge the many. In the first case all behavior is circumscribed, generally by law, and any accused deviation generally means punishment. . . . a state may criminalize much activity and individuals accused by agents of the state are punished. Proof of the violation is irrelevant.<sup>15</sup>

The practices and beliefs of the current Attorney General, John Ashcroft, provide a convenient example of the accusatory process. His attack on civil rights perhaps does not equal Franklin Roosevelt's in his 1942 order to gather up about 200 thousand American citizens of Japanese ancestry into twenty concentration camps. But Ashcroft's tactics are insidious and potentially more far reaching and troubling to the American psyche. Apparently Ashcroft's policies are being seriously questioned even by many who traditionally have represented the heart and soul of American patriotism—blue-collar Americans. In a recent commentary in *The Nation*, Alexander Cockburn reported:

Merle Haggard, the bard of blue-color America, the man who saluted the American flag more than a generation ago in such songs as "The Fightin' Side of Me" and "Okie From Muskogee" . . . addressed a concert crowd in Kansas City a few days ago [early September 2002] in the following terms: "I think we should give John Ashcroft a big hand . . . [pause] right in the mouth." . . . The way things are going I'll probably be thrown in jail tomorrow for saying that, so I hope ya'll will bail me out."<sup>16</sup>

### Can civic virtue be taught?

If civic virtues must be learned, can they be taught? And can they be taught in schools? Research over many decades has shown that civic



FAZZARO: VIRTUES AS THE FOUNDATION OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION  
FROM SOCRATES TO ANDRÉ COMTE-SPONVILLE

courses have little or no effect on civic knowledge—if virtue is knowledge.<sup>17</sup> This has been debated for at least the last 2,500 years. The debate between the Sophist Protagoras and Socrates in Plato's *Protagoras* dialogue exemplifies this argument. After almost being convinced by Protagoras that virtue could not be taught, Socrates, by the end of the dialogue has Protagoras frustrated, but not convinced that virtue can be taught. In the end Protagoras took the view consistent with an accusatory political orientation where truth resides in the state. From his consideration of Protagoras' point of view, Elliott reasoned that

[f]or Protagoras, the only question that makes sense is how to get rid of disagreement[s]. Assumptions that partly underlie Protagoras' argument depend on identifying goodness with actual traditions of an existing, civilized society. How do you resolve moral disagreement[s]? Do this, don't do this. If that doesn't work, straighten the child by threats and blows.<sup>18</sup>

Given Elliott's view, Protagoras would likely have agreed with what the current education "leaders" have done relative to civic education. That is, to replace the foundation of citizenship, learning to act virtuously, with a panoptic system of surveillance, including, but not limited to, cameras in halls, urine testing for extra curricular activities, strip searches in some cases, drug-sniffing-dog locker searches, and the most ubiquitous disciplinary technology, "standardized" outcomes-based testing. Aldous Huxley described the ultimate disciplinary society in 1932 in his *Brave New World*. I recall one particular passage where Huxley has the Director explaining the purpose of "manufacturing" people—human resources—specifically to meet the needs of society.

And that," put in the Director sententiously, "that is the secret of happiness and virtue—liking what you've got to do. All conditioning aims at that: making people like their unescapable social destiny.<sup>19</sup>

If we take the position that good citizenship can be learned and be taught, then what is the record relative to whether schools actually do teach good citizenship? Regarding the current view of education leaders as to what kind of civic education is best for American students, Murphy reports that,

Advocates of civic instruction share widespread but false assumption that schools lack a compelling moral dimension. Our contemporary pedagogues define the aims of academic education in amoral terms: it is supposed to promote students with the skills to acquire and use information. But perhaps the ideal of a good student involves not just enthusiasm for the pursuit of knowledge.

In that case, what should be taught are academic or intellectual virtues like thoroughness, perseverance, intellectual honesty. If academic education has a moral purpose—namely, the acquisition of traits that lead us to be conscientious in pursuit of truth—then much of the rationale for separate instruction in civic virtue falls away.<sup>20</sup>

Like Murphy, Fred Kierstead agrees that civic education must not be simply delegated to social studies classes.

[A]lthough there is a natural tendency to place values education, character education and equity education into a curricular scheme and "do" it as a possible part of civic education . . . there is also a danger of only doing it as social studies classes. If it is taught as a subject, it loses scope, breadth and universal application. All teachers are moral agents, whether it be classroom conduct expected or educational outcomes desired. Moral deliberation is not subject-specific. Tolerance, fairness, honesty, and mutual interdependence can be learned in any class, and should be. To do otherwise is to fall into the trap of credentialing students rather than educating them.<sup>21</sup>

Consistent with both Murphy and Kierstead, I do not support the notion that civic education should be limited specific classes. As in the past,

such an approach would likely be seen as irrelevant to students. Believing civic education should be based on virtues, I would advocate a fully integrated approach, including that of teacher and administrator behaviors. This approach would be consistent with Comté-Sponville .

If virtue can be taught, as I believe it can be, it is not through books so much as example. . . . I don't believe any more than Spinoza did in the utility of denouncing vice, evil, and sin. Why always accuse, why always condemn? That's a sad ethics indeed, for sad people. As for the good, it exists only in the irreducible multiplicity of good deeds—to numerous for all books in the world—and in the good inclinations—multiple, too, though less numerous—to which tradition has given the name "virtues," which is to say, "excellences" for that is the meaning of the Greek word *areté*, translated by the Romans as *virtus*.<sup>22</sup>

#### Comté-Sponville's List of Virtues

Comté-Sponville deals with eighteen different virtues in the following order:

Politeness  
Fidelity  
Prudence  
Temperance  
Courage  
Justice  
Generosity  
Compassion  
Mercy  
Gratitude  
Humility  
Simplicity  
Tolerance  
Purity  
Gentleness  
Good Faith  
Humor  
Love

The order of the virtues in this list has

significance. "This book begins," Comté-Sponville's explains,

with politeness, which precedes morality, and ends with love, which exceeds it, is of course deliberate. As for the other virtues treated here, their order, though not absolutely fortuitous, owes more to something like intuition, to the demands of pedagogy, ethics, or aesthetics, as the case may be, than to any deductive or hierarchical scheme. A treatise on virtues, especially a small one like this, is not a system of morals; it is applied morals, not theoretical morals, and (to the extent possible) living morals rather than speculative morals. But with regard to morals, what could be more important than how they are lived and applied?<sup>23,24</sup>

#### Conclusions

Who among us are the stewards of the American ideal? Who can we trust not just to preserve the words and intent of American democratic ideals, but to see to it that they are in fact fulfilled? Children trust parents, teachers, and elected officials to do be just, to do the right things. Only a few months ago parents and educators were joined with our elected officials in celebrating, even valorizing corporate CEOs as role models for children. But after the corporate CEO corruption scandals of 2001-2002, who can we tell our children to trust now? Are our children to conclude that they can only count on themselves in a virtue less, free-for-all world governed by material wealth? What adults have the interests of children as future citizens as their major concern? I believe that it is time for teacher and school administrator-philosophers to step forward and reorient the public schools to their original purpose, to help children prepare themselves to assume the fundamental political office of *citizen*. And the most appropriate way to do this is through understanding and acquiring the virtues necessary to live in a highly interconnected world.

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## SOME PEDAGOGICAL FUNCTIONS OF PLATO'S THEORY OF RECOLLECTION

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Given the fact that Socrates is generally considered to be one of the greatest teachers that ever lived, it is baffling to discover his claim that he could not, and did not *teach*. A salient example is found in *Protagoras*, where Socrates states his belief that "virtue is not teachable."<sup>1</sup> One reason Socrates denied he was *teaching* is due to his opposition to the teachers for hire of his day, known as the Sophists. In short, if the Sophists were "teachers," then Socrates did not want to be labeled as a "teacher." Another possible reason for Socrates' disavowal of *teaching*—and the topic that I will examine in this paper—is his espousing of the Theory of Recollection. I will first give a brief description of the Theory of Recollection, and then offer an explanation of how the theory functions in Socrates' interaction with his interlocutors. For reasons that will be given later, I will call these "pedagogical functions," and I will suggest how these functions might be useful for educators. Finally, I will comment on some recent trends in educational policy that might impede the utilization of these pedagogical functions.

### The Theory of Recollection

The Theory of Recollection (*anamnesis*) is predicated on the Platonic figure of Socrates' belief in an eternal soul that in its previous existence has acquired knowledge of all things.<sup>2</sup> The process of birth and incarnation is so traumatic that the knowledge possessed by the eternal soul is repressed. Socrates, then, views his role as that of a metaphoric midwife, whose job it is to assist in the birthing of knowledge that is already possessed—albeit repressed—by each individual.<sup>3</sup> Thus, rather than transmitting knowledge, as the Sophists claimed to do, Socrates viewed his role as facilitating the recollection of the knowledge that individuals already possessed. Socrates argues for the Theory of Recollection in the dialogue *Protagoras*. In the *Men* Socrates gives a demonstration of the theory as he guides an

unlearned slave boy to *recollect* knowledge of geometric proofs.

In the master's level History and Philosophy of Education course that I teach, I often assign students to write a critical analysis of Plato's *Meno* or *Protagoras*. Students are usually skeptical about the metaphysical baggage associated with the Theory of Recollection, and in many cases their initial impulse is to dismiss the theory due to its dubious metaphysical trappings. I typically take pains to warn students to avoid such a "quick kill" dismissal of Socrates' position. Even if Socrates didn't truly subscribe to the Theory of Recollection, I caution, we should still examine the ways the theory plays out in his conversations, and consider what we can learn for our educational practice. In regard to this cautionary hypothetical qualifier that I offer, it should be noted that there *are* some who contend that Socrates *did not* subscribe to the Theory of Recollection. The imminent Socratic scholar Gregory Vlastos, for instance, argues that the Theory of Recollection is actually a Platonic invention that completes the "metamorphosis of Plato's teacher into Plato's mouthpiece."<sup>4</sup> Vlastos' conclusion is based on his understanding of Plato's progressive interpretation of Socrates' words. That is, as Plato writes his dialogues, his understanding and interpretation of Socrates' thought grows and develops. According to Vlastos, the Theory of Recollection was inserted into several of the later dialogues in an attempt by Plato to answer a particular problem in explaining the Socratic *elenchus*. Vlastos calls the idea of "recollection" an "ultra-speculative theory," and the "wildest of Plato's metaphysical flights."<sup>5</sup>

As I explain the pedagogical functions of the Theory of Recollection, I will also attempt to demystify the process and downplay its problematic metaphysics. In doing this, I will cite parallels with Sheldon Kopp's view of the

therapist/patient relationship,<sup>6</sup> and give illustrative examples from popular culture and from various educational thinkers. The parallels between Kopp and Socrates' approaches are quite striking, and will be explored in more detail later. Ultimately, both view their task as being a guide or facilitator, assisting individuals in their quests for self-discovery and self-knowledge<sup>1</sup>. Perhaps a recent quote from writer Stephen King will help to illustrate that the core notions of the Theory of Recollection (individuals possess innate knowledge that can be appropriated through self-reflection), though not expressed in those precise philosophical terms, are still alive and well.

Stephen King has to dig deep for his stories.

The author told ABC's *Good Morning America* that the ideas for his stories are in his head and the chore is retrieving them and getting them onto paper. "My job is not to create, per se, but to unearth, to get these things out of the ground as fully complete as they can," Mr. King told interviewer Charles Gibson. "But to me, I never felt like I wrote a story. I felt like I found them all. I feel more like an archeologist than a creator."<sup>7</sup>

### The Pedagogical Functions

In light of Socrates' claim that he could not and did not *teach*, then why, it might be asked, am I referring to the "pedagogical functions" of the Theory of Recollection? I will take my cue from Vlastos, who clarifies this apparently contradictory phenomenon as follows: "I would remind you of what a maverick philosopher he is: a teacher who shuns didacticism, believing that moral truth has a dimension which eludes direct expression—a depth best revealed not by instruction but by provocation."<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Vlastos contends that Socrates' comments on *teaching* are perhaps the most powerful examples of Socratic irony. In these complex Socratic sayings, "what is said both is and isn't what is meant." Vlastos explains, "He teaches saying he is not teaching. What he says is what he means if to teach is to impart to a learner truth already known to oneself. It is not what he means if to teach is to trigger in a learner an autonomous learning process."<sup>9</sup> In other words, while Socrates denied that he was *teaching*—in large part because of the reasons mentioned

earlier—he was seriously engaged in the pursuit of truth and in efforts to provoke and guide the learning of others. Therefore, I refer to the five following methods or techniques as "pedagogical functions."

### **1. He offers us a clarification of the relation of teaching to learning, and an understanding of the limits of teaching, by debunking the mistaken belief that teaching *causes* learning, and by criticizing the "transmission" conception of teaching.**

Sheldon Kopp provides this sketch of the relation between teaching and learning:

In every age, men have set out on pilgrimages, on spiritual journeys, on personal quests.

Driven by pain, drawn by longing, lifted by hope, singly and in groups they come in search of relief, enlightenment, peace, power, joy or they know not what. Wishing to learn, and confusing being taught with learning, they often seek out helpers, healers, and guides, spiritual teachers whose disciples they would become.<sup>10</sup>

This confusion between *learning* and *being taught* is a central issue of contention between Socrates and the Sophists. They treated knowledge as a commodity that could be dispensed on demand, and transmitted to others for a fee. The Sophist Protagoras was so sure of his ability to transmit knowledge and virtue to his paying customers, that he offered a money-back guarantee to those who were not satisfied with the results of his tutelage.<sup>11</sup> Because Protagoras gives no details on the number of disgruntled students that availed themselves of a refund, it is difficult to determine his degree of success. Regardless of the number of satisfied customers, Socrates clearly had no sympathy for the Sophist's system of putatively transmitting knowledge to others.

First, Socrates viewed the quest for wisdom as a sacred mission.<sup>12</sup> He no doubt found it repugnant that the Sophists rendered wisdom to a commodity that could be acquired as the result of a crass commercial transaction. Second, Socrates would surely question whether the information dispensed by the Sophists counts as knowledge or wisdom.<sup>13</sup> According to the Theory of Recollection, individuals innately possess knowledge and it can

only be accessed by relentless self-reflection, perhaps assisted by the provocative prodding of a skilled “midwife” such as Socrates claimed to be. Relying on the transmission of information from a professional “teacher” is tantamount to confusing *learning* with *being taught*. Such reliance promotes a dependence on the “teacher” and therefore leads one to neglect the inward journey that Socrates contended was the true route to wisdom.

Although not expressed in the Socratic language of *recollection*, many subsequent thinkers have sought to clarify the relation between teaching and learning and in doing so have reached similar conclusions about the limits of teaching. Sigmund Freud, for example, is reported to have said, “There are three things I can’t do: rule, cure, and teach.” He is pointing out the practical difficulty, and perhaps impossibility of an individual causing or ensuring a desired effect on another person; particularly if that person is unable or unwilling to exert a degree of cooperation with or responsibility for the process of change. Freud is likely using the word ‘teach’ in what Israel Scheffler called the “task-success” sense of the term. In this sense, the activity of teaching is successful if the desired learning has been accomplished. Through his conceptual analysis, however, Scheffler concludes that *teaching* does not imply *learning*, and that learning can take place without teaching.<sup>14</sup>

I will close this section by again citing Kopp, who addresses the matter in a Socratic fashion: “The most important things that each man must learn no one else can teach him. Once he accepts this disappointment, he will be able to stop depending on the therapist, the guru who turns out to be just another struggling human being.”<sup>15</sup> This leads us to the second pedagogical function, which I take to be a corollary of the first.

## **2. It liberates the “teacher” from the onus of responsibility for ensuring learning.**

The issue of who bears responsibility for student learning has been addressed, at least to some degree, in a legal context. I am speaking here of the so-called “educational malpractice” cases

that have been decided in California and New York. In these cases, the plaintiffs claimed that their inadequate educational achievement was the fault of the school district. Both cases were dismissed, and the judge in the New York case stated, “The failure to learn does not bespeak a failure to teach.”<sup>16</sup> For the most part, teachers are held responsible for their *teaching*, as measured by standards of professional competency established by the states, and as evaluated by local school administrators. In many recent accountability measures, however, teachers and administrators are being held responsible for student *learning* in the sense that they are rewarded or sometimes punished on the basis of the performance of students as measured by standardized tests. In many ways, these accountability measures are similar to those proposed by the Sophist Protagoras.<sup>17</sup>

From the perspective of the Theory of Recollection, the “student” already possesses knowledge, and therefore bears full responsibility for accessing, appropriating, or recalling the knowledge. In essence, the student is responsible for learning. In a similar fashion, regarding the therapist/patient relationship, Kopp views the healing or cure as being the responsibility of the patient. Kopp writes,

The therapist is an observer and a catalyst. He has no power to “cure” the patient, for cure is entirely out of his hands. He can add nothing to the patient's inherent capacity to get well, and whenever he tries to do so he meets stubborn resistance which slows up the progress of treatment. The patient is already fully equipped for getting well. Since he [the therapist] is not “responsible” for the cure, he is free to enjoy the spectacle of it taking place.<sup>18</sup>

This reminds me of the joke: How many therapists does it take to change a light bulb? One, but the light bulb has to want to change.

There is a risk, I suppose, that the teacher/student dynamic I have described might be interpreted as an “out” for teachers or as an excuse for them to “give up” on students. That is not my intent. Rather, I am suggesting that by recognizing

for whom the responsibility for learning lies, the teacher can then allow students the freedom to independently pursue their own learning. I believe this will result in more significant and substantive learning, and also help to prevent that dysfunctional and co-dependent form of teaching characterized as “spoon feeding” (or my favorite metaphor for this dynamic: the teacher as Pez dispenser). Classroom discipline guru Jim Fay refers to those who engage in this practice as “helicopter teachers.” As are many in the helping professions, *helicopter teachers* are well intentioned. They “hover” over students, solve students’ problems, and “rescue” students at the first sign of distress. “They have a tendency to create artificial situations in which they are needed and others are dependent on them.”<sup>19</sup> Fay concludes: “I realized that every time I did something for kids that they could do for themselves, I was limiting them in the long run.”<sup>20</sup> Kopp also cautions us against these dangers in the context of psychotherapy. “The psychotherapy patient may begin by trying to get the therapist to tell him what he is to do to be happy and how he is to live without being fully responsible for his own life.”<sup>21</sup> The issue of student learning will be explored further as I discuss the next pedagogical function.

**3. It places the responsibility for learning upon the student, which is likely to result in autonomous, independent thinkers who are actively engaged in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding.**

It is clear from the dialogues that Socrates saw the necessity for individuals to embark on an intellectual journey of sorts in their quest for wisdom. Direct instruction will not suffice, and the transmission of information is no substitute for such a journey. Kopp illustrates this point by giving an example from Zen Buddhism:

If he ever achieves his true nature, gets beyond the point of struggle, he may wonder why the therapist-guru did not tell him at once the simple truths that would have made him free. But as a therapist, I know that though the patient learns, I do not teach. Furthermore,

what is to be learned is too elusively simple to be grasped without *struggle, surrender, and experiencing* of how it is. As one Zen Master said to his now-enlightened pupil: ‘If I did not make you fight in every way possible in order to find the meaning [of Zen] and lead you finally to a state of non-fighting and of no-effort from which you can see with your own eyes, I am sure that you would lose every chance of discovering yourself.’<sup>22</sup>

This scenario is also depicted in the film, *The Wizard of Oz*. I am of the opinion that certain segments of the film provide some vivid analogies to the Theory of Recollection. As you may recall, Dorothy gathers a group of needy friends and they embark on a journey to find the things they believe they lack: the Scarecrow wants a brain, the Tin Man wants a heart, the Lion wants courage, and Dorothy wants to return home. They overcome a series of challenges and ultimately capture the broom of the wicked witch, in exchange for which the Wizard has promised to grant their requests. The Wizard—who turns out to be a very poor wizard, but a very good man—convinces the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Lion that each already possesses the very thing they thought they lacked. As the folk rock group America sang, “Oz never did give nothing to the Tin Man, that he didn’t, didn’t already have.” If you can endure the double negatives, I think you’ll get the point.

But what about Dorothy? When this question is raised, Glenda the good witch magically appears. She tells Dorothy, “you always had the power to go home, but you had to find that out for yourself.” Perhaps there is some incongruity between the last clause of Glenda’s statement and the fact that she explicitly informed Dorothy on the matter. What Glenda is getting at, though, is that without the experience, struggles and trials of their journey, Dorothy and her companions would have been in no position to recognize, appreciate, or appropriate what they always had in their possession. As Kopp puts it, “By speaking to him in metaphor, the guru turns the pilgrim in upon himself. He offers the seeker only what he already possesses, taking from him that which he never had.”<sup>23</sup> And this brings us

to the next pedagogical function.

**4. By not relying on *direct instruction*, methods are used (questions, metaphors, stories, allegories) that encourage self-reflection and active engagement in learning.**

Of these techniques of indirect instruction, it is *the question* that is most clearly associated with Socrates. It has been said that philosophy is more about questioning answers than about answering questions, and Socrates must surely be regarded as the preeminent pioneer of this technique. The *Socratic method* has become synonymous with a dialogical approach involving questions, responses, and more questions: many times without closure or resolution (*aporia*). As any student of Socrates is aware, the dialogues are replete with Socrates' use of metaphors, allegories, stories, myths and convenient fictions. These indirect, or non-propositional methods are used on numerous occasions for a variety of purposes. When used in conjunction with the Theory of Recollection, the intent is clear: to get the "student" to think and reflect in a manner that *direct instruction* could not accomplish. Again, there are parallels with Kopp:

The Truth does *not* make people free. Facts do *not* change attitudes. If the guru is dogmatic, all that he evokes in his pilgrim/disciples is their stubbornly resistant insistence on clinging to those unfortunate beliefs that at least provide the security of known misery, rather than openness to the risk of the unknown or the untried. That is why that Renaissance Magus, Paracelsus, warned that the guru should avoid simply revealing "the naked truth. He should use images, allegories, figures, wondrous speech, or other hidden, roundabout ways."<sup>24</sup>

The value of these techniques, according to Kopp, lies in "offering imagery that is fixed without being stereotyped, images to meditate upon, and to discover one's identity in. To these wellsprings, the seeker must bring himself, and then listen for the echo returned by the books of wisdom or by his guru."<sup>25</sup> In explaining the overriding purpose of this approach, Kopp's comments are reminiscent of the Socratic maxims:

"Know thyself," and "The unexamined life is not worth living." Kopp writes, "Coming to knowledge of the self is insisted upon throughout the pilgrimage. The helper provides one long admonition to careful scrutiny of one's own character, attitude, and motives."<sup>26</sup>

Tim Simpson has argued against the "orthodox" interpretation of Platonic philosophy, which holds that Plato is prescribing a pursuit of knowledge through the *possession* of the Forms. It is Simpson's contention that Plato's dialogues actually provide a "cautionary message to attend to the *limits* of knowledge," and suggest a "pedagogy of desire"—even a desire that often goes unrequited. To make his case, Simpson cites several characteristics of the dialogues, including their routine ending in an inconclusive state of *aporia*, Socrates' use of metaphor and other non-propositional imagery, and Plato's finite conception of human nature that is erotically yearning yet never possessing the object of its desire.<sup>27</sup> This link between the use of metaphoric imagery and a pedagogy of desire provides a fitting segue to the last pedagogical function.

**5. The idea that knowledge is universally possessed can serve a motivational function by spurring individuals to engage in the requisite search and self-reflection needed to appropriate the knowledge they already possess.**

Though a consideration of the non-democratic aspects of Plato's philosophy is beyond the scope of this paper, I would contend that the Theory of Recollection seems to buck his non-democratic impulses. By positing the universal possession of knowledge, the Theory of Recollection democratizes the playing field of learning, and serves to motivate individuals to pursue the knowledge that is within their grasp and can be appropriated by exerting the requisite effort. The motivational function of the theory is evident in Socrates' response to the so-called "paradox of inquiry," that is put forth by the sophist Meno. "But how will you inquire, Socrates, into that which you do not know? What will you put forth as the subject of inquiry? And if you find what you want, how will you ever know that this is what you



did not know?" Socrates then rephrases Meno's questions to show that he understands the issue that is being raised:

I understand, Meno, the point you are making but just see what a tiresome dispute you are introducing. You argue that a man cannot inquire either about that which he knows or about that which he does not know. If he knows, he has no need to inquire, and if he does not know, then he cannot make an inquiry because he does not know that about which he is to inquire.

Meno then asks, "Well, and is not my argument sound?" To which, Socrates replies:

I think not, and I will tell you why. . . . The soul, being immortal, has been born again many times. Having seen all things that there are whether in this world or in the world beyond, it has knowledge of them all. And it is no wonder that it should be able to call to remembrance all that it ever knew about virtue and about everything. As all nature is akin and the soul has learned all things, there is no difficulty in the soul's eliciting or, as men say, learning, out of a single recollection all that is. That is, if it is strenuous and does not faint. Since all inquiry and learning are but a recollection, we ought not to listen to this sophistical argument about the impossibility of inquiry. That is a belief which will make us idle, and is sweet only to the sluggard. The other conviction, however, will make us active and inquisitive.<sup>28</sup>

### **Concluding Thoughts and a Related Consideration**

The idea that individuals possess or have access to latent knowledge that can be appropriated through a rigorous journey of contemplation and self-reflection is not unique to the Platonic Theory of Recollection. I have already given numerous parallels with Kopp's views of the therapist/patient relationship. Additional parallels can be found in pop psychology and the "positive thinking" literature (e.g., Napoleon Hill's notion of *infinite intelligence*<sup>29</sup>, and Joseph Murphy's views

on mining the riches of the subconscious<sup>30</sup>); in theological contexts (e.g. the statements in the Gospels that "the Kingdom of God is within you," and the Quakers' notion of an *inner light*); and in the educational theory of *constructivism*.

My intent in this paper was to "flesh out" some of the pedagogical functions of the Theory of Recollection, in order to provide some possible lessons for educators. As these numerous parallels suggest, however, these pedagogical functions are far from revolutionary, and they provide few novel insights that have not already been utilized by educators throughout the ages. Maybe a timelier question concerns how these pedagogical functions are faring in our current system of schooling. In my opinion, current educational reform efforts, such as accountability measures based on standardized testing, and attempts to script a standardized curriculum, may make it more difficult for teachers to take advantage of these pedagogical functions. These potential tensions are raised—inadvertently—in a recent column by George Will:

Try this thought experiment from a 1934 critic of American schooling: If you were ill and could be treated either by Hippocrates or by a young graduate of the Johns Hopkins medical school, with his modern technologies and techniques, you would choose the latter. But if you could choose to have your child taught either by Socrates or by a freshly minted holder of a degree in education full of the latest pedagogic theories and techniques? Socrates, please.<sup>31</sup>

Clearly, this is not so much a "thought experiment" as it is a rhetorical cheap shot at colleges of education in Will's continuing efforts to discredit "educationists" and the "educational establishment." The paradox of his position, which I believe is worthy of further consideration, is that while invoking the legacy of Socrates, Will and his fellow conservatives may be advocating educational policies that thwart the possibility of the Socratic pedagogy they claim to champion.

### **ENDNOTES**

1. *Protagoras* 320B. W. R. M Lamb, trans. , *Plato*, Volume II in the Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924, reprint 1990), 129.
2. "Seeing then that the soul is immortal and has been born many times, and has beheld all things both in this world and in the nether realms, she has acquired knowledge of all and everything; so that it is no wonder that she should be able to recollect all that she knew before about virtue and other things. " *Meno* 81D, in *Plato*, vol. II, 303. See also, *Phaedo* 75C-81.
3. Socrates' most extensive explanation of the midwife metaphor is found in *Theaetetus* 148E-151D. While many methods of inquiry have been identified in the Socratic corpus (e. g. elenchus, dialectic, maieutic, eristic, and *daimonionic* assistance), I will make no attempt to distinguish between these methods and their respective applications. For examples of those who explore these distinctions, see: Ignacio L. Gotz, "On the Socratic Method," in *Philosophy of Education 1999*, ed. Randall Curren (Urbana, IL: Philosophy of Education Society, 2000), 84-92; and Francisco J. Gonzalez, *Dialectic and Dialogue: Plato's Practice of Philosophical Inquiry* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press).
4. Gregory Vlastos, *Socratic Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 37.
5. Vlastos, *Socratic Studies*, 29.
6. Sheldon B. Kopp, *If You Meet The Buddha On The Road, Kill Him! The Pilgrimage of Psychotherapy Patients* (New York: Bantam Books, 1972).
7. For this paper, I will use the terms *knowledge*, *truth* and *wisdom* synonymously. For an insightful treatment of the epistemic nuances in Socrates' disavowal of *knowledge*, see: Vlastos, *Socratic Studies*, 39-66.
8. Vlastos, *Socratic Studies*, 65.
9. Ibid., 65.
10. Kopp, *Buddha*, 3.
11. *Protagoras* 328B-C.
12. *Apology* 23B.
13. For Socrates' account of the conditions of knowledge, see *Theaetetus*.
14. The context is Scheffler's analysis of the literal purport of the slogan "There can be no teaching without learning. " Israel Scheffler, *The Language of Education* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1960), 42-44. For additional analytic treatments of the conceptual relation between *teaching* and *learning*, see: C. J. B. Macmillan and Thomas W. Nelson, editors, *Concepts Of Teaching: Philosophical Essays* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1968).
15. Kopp, *Buddha*, back cover.
16. *Donahue v. Copiague Union Free School District* (1978).
17. Pascavage has coined the term 'sophimetrics' to refer to similarities between the tactics of the Sophists and the proponents of standardized testing. Darren Pascavage, "'Sophimetrics': A Reinterpretation of Meno's Paradox Applied to Standardized Testing in Schools," in *Philosophical Studies in Education*, Volume 33, (2002): 127-134.
18. Kopp, *Buddha*, 4.

19. Jim Fay & David Funk, *Teaching With Love & Logic: Taking Control of the Classroom* (Golden, CO: Love & Logic Press, 1995), 196
20. Fay, *Love & Logic*, 203.
21. Kopp, *Buddha*, 6.
22. Ibid., 8.
23. Ibid., 19.
24. Ibid., 13.
25. Ibid., 6.
26. Ibid.
27. Timothy L. Simpson, "The Limits of Knowledge and the Desire for Wisdom," in *Philosophical Studies in Education*, Volume 33, (2002): 65-74
28. These are segments from the *Meno* 80D-81E. The version and translation that I cite is from Henry L. Drake, *The People's Plato* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1958), 159-160.
29. Napoleon Hill, *Think and Grow Rich* (Cleveland, OH: Ralston Publishing, 1958).
30. Joseph Murphy, *The Power of Your Subconscious Mind* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963).
31. George F. Will, "Accountability still key to education," *The Columbus Dispatch*, 1 February 2001, sec. Forum.

## PERCEPTIONS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY AND ETHNIC LABELS: THE CULTURAL COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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### Abstract:

A basic assumption of critical theory references the creation of social mechanisms perpetuated by the affluent in society that determine a 'natural order' as a rationale for social inequities (Kinchloe & McLaren, 1998). This paper examines how ethnic self-identification may be indicative of the internalization of such notions. A key point of analysis focuses on recent qualitative research by Gutierrez (2002) in which "Hispanic" and "Mexican American" women attending a south Texas community college completed the Acculturation Rating Scales for Mexican Americans II (Cuellar, Jasso, & Maldonado, 1995). Study results pointed to some troubling implications.

### What's in a Name?

In the tale of star-crossed lovers, *Romeo and Juliet*, William Shakespeare wrote, "would not a rose by any other name smell as sweet" as a statement of Romeo's feeling that Juliet's family name did not matter to him. Of course, it was central to the plot that Romeo and Juliet's names did matter, at least to the couple's feuding families and the townspeople of Verona. Today, what power can be attributed to a name or label, particularly an ethnic label? Is an ethnic label most descriptive of the person labeled, the person doing the labeling, or merely a marker indicative of a particular social period? What might a self-chosen ethnic label indicate about a person's reality or perception of reality? In short, what, exactly, is in a name?

These were a few of the daunting questions I pondered in reviewing a small but disturbing finding in a recent study. The qualitative study (Gutierrez, 2002) examined the experiences of first-generation college students attending one south Texas community college. The intended purposeful sample was to have been made up of Mexican American women born in the United States and were the first in their family to work toward a college degree. The study's contextual framework was that of critical theory with influences from feminism and multiculturalism. In addition to a semi-structured face-to-face interview, participants completed an acculturation

instrument (Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans II by Cuellar, Jasso, & Maldonado, 1995) that measured participants' cultural orientation toward Mexican culture and dominate American (white) culture.

The study was personally relevant because as a cultural insider I understood that much of the literature on Hispanics/ Latinos is incomplete, contradictory, and confusing. The fact is that no *one* "Hispanic" or "Latina/o" culture exists. These labels are applied to persons of diverse cultures that encompass multiple racial, ethnic, religious, and sociopolitical histories that happen to share a common linguist ancestry, Spanish, or happen to have a Spanish surname (Gutierrez, 1987; Herbst, 1997; Mendieta, 2000; Schute, 2000). In this way, the Hispanic and Latino/a labels lack a geographical and biological connection that more culturally specific labels such as "Mexican America" indicate. In addition, studies and statistical reports seldom include other key distinctions within the Hispanic/Latino population such as generational distance (first generation American, second generation...etc.), mode of citizenship (citizen by birth or naturalization), immigrant status (legal/ illegal) or age at immigration, language usage/ preference (not all are Spanish speaking), as well as gender specific findings (Hurato & Arce, 1986; Vera, 1998).

It is an unfortunate fact that of all ethnic minorities in this country, Hispanics/ Latinos

**GUTIERREZ: PERCEPTIONS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY AND ETHNIC LABELS:  
THE CULTURAL COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

suffer from the lowest educational attainment rates (Fisher, 1998; NCLR, 1997; US Census, 1999) and represent “the poorest of the poor” (Mendieta, 2000, p.44) with occupational distribution heavily concentrated in low skill, low wage jobs (US Census, 2000). Among all Hispanic cultures, Mexican Americans (who represent two-thirds of the Hispanic population) have the lowest attainment rates (Ortiz, 1995; US Census, 1999). Attainment rates are particularly low for female Hispanics (Vera, 1998; Velez, 1989). To clarify the dimensions of the population studied, I focused specifically on the college experiences of women who were Americans of Mexican ancestry, born in the United States, and living in south Texas. While ethnicity was central to the study, given the demographics of the study location, ethnic labels were not a concern until a specific incident during the pilot.

**“Don’t Call Me Mexican American.”**

Joan, age 19, was one of the first study volunteers interviewed. Her interview was memorable on several levels: she was the only participant who brought someone with her, her mother, who sat between us during the interview; her responses were terse and defensive such that her interview was a brief but painful 15 minutes long; and Joan raised the issue of ethnic labels. As soon as the tape recorder was turned off, she expressed offense at the term “Mexican American.” Joan had been taught by her father, who was very offended by the term, that she was “Hispanic” not “some Mexican,” to never refer to herself that way. Joan was taught that “Mexican Americans” were Mexicans who came to the U.S., not “real” Americans who are “from here.” I was stunned by that revelation considering the study location was less than 200 miles from the Mexican border and 91.5% of its Hispanics are of Mexican descent (GSBA, 2001).

Had her mother not been present, I might have assumed that Joan’s ancestry was purely Spanish European. Joan’s physical features were very “Spanish”; she was tall, fair-skinned, and had long, curly hair. Yet her mother’s physical features were

very “Mexican Indian”; she was approximately 5’2” tall, and had a dark brown complexion. I was left wondering what issues might have led Joan and her family to vehemently deny the possibility of Mexican ancestry. And given the fact that volunteer recruitment specifically and repeatedly asked for volunteers of Mexican ancestry, why she had volunteered? Her willingness to volunteer seemed to contradict her stated position.

Joan’s interview led to further probing during the pilot phase and ultimately expanded the study criteria to include women who were “Mexican American” or “Hispanic.” Women were asked, off tape, why they selected a particular ethnic label. Women who had selected the Hispanic ethnic label were asked to substitute “Hispanic” in areas of the acculturation instrument (ARSMAT) that referenced “Mexicans” or “Mexican Americans.” Half the participants preferred the Hispanic label. On the surface, “Hispanic” participants did not differ significantly from “Mexican Americans” in terms of their career aspirations or college experiences, though their personal stories often reflected cultural tensions with regard to ethnic labeling. For example:

**Lisa**, age 33, believed she was Hispanic because her father is white. When Lisa phoned to volunteer for the study, she wanted to verify if she could volunteer given the fact that only one of her parents was Mexican American. My response was that if she saw herself as either Mexican American or Hispanic she met the study criteria, to which she replied that she was “definitely raised to be a Mexican.” In the interview, I later learned that this statement referred to her family’s “training” in subservience to abusive husbands. Also, she stated not feeling emotionally supported by family members. As a divorced mother on public assistance, Lisa saw a college education as critical to supporting her family. Nonetheless, the “Mexican” side of her family was unsupportive of her college efforts, criticizing her as “selfish” for not exclusively focusing on her children.

**Beth**, age 20, stated that she knew she was Hispanic but was uncertain of her ethnic ancestry. Beth grew up in central Texas where her parents stressed that she was an American and discouraged any focus on ethnic heritage. Her father identified her ethnicity as "Anglo" (Caucasian) on her birth certificate. Beth has a dark skin tone. "You can look at me and see that I'm not white." Beth also expressed anger that people assume she speaks Spanish because of her skin color.

### **Who Are "Hispanics?"**

But what exactly does it mean to be Hispanic? The term was created during the Nixon administration in the seventies as a classification for collecting census data of the growing number of Spanish speaking people in the country (Herbst, 1997; Marin & Marin 1991). Unlike the terms "Latina/o", the "Hispanic" label is used only in the United States. Hispanic/ Latino scholars may argue many points of cultural inclusiveness, yet most agree that one is not born a Hispanic but is labeled as such to indicate minority status (Gutierrez, 1987; Mendieta, 2000). The Hispanic label is "imposed by others" rather than being "self-derived" by members of the group (Schutte, 2000, p.61). As such, the term is viewed as politically charged in certain areas of the country. In California the term is generally accepted as pejorative such that the Los Angeles Times has barred its usage; while in Florida and Texas, the term is widely preferred over the term "Latina/o" (Herbst, 1997). In his definition of "Hispanic," Herbst indicates that "persons to the center or the right of center politically and those who seek assimilation, prefer (the term) Hispanic" (p.108).

Another consideration in identifying with a particular ethnic label is the context; i.e., how a person identifies themselves ethnically is related to the status of the person receiving the information (Herbst, 1997; Hurtado & Arce, 1987; Schutte, 2000). "Hispanic/ Latino" are most often used when communicating with cultural outsiders; regional and geographic labels, such as "Mexican American" or "Chicano," with cultural insiders; and more traditional labels, such as "Mexican" or

"Mexicano," with certain family members.

### **Assimilation: The Cultural Cost of the American Success**

Assimilation is the process by which a person is absorbed into a new culture with a loss or rejection of the original cultural identification (Domino, 1992; Mor Barak, Cherin, & Berkman, 1998); while acculturation is indicative of cultural pluralism, a widening of cultural identity that allows a degree of comfort in other cultures with continued acceptance of the original culture (Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1999). Neo-conservative scholars such as Richard Rodriguez (1982) promote the notion that assimilation is a natural, even desirable process indicative of the social mobility most often sought by minority group members.

Multiculturalists, feminists, and critical theorists dispute this position (Bacca Zinn & Thorton Dill, 1994, 2000; Grant, 1995; Grant & Sleeter, 1986; hooks, 1981; Kincheloe, 1999; Raisiguier, 1994; Rivera & Poplin, 1995), viewing assimilation as a type of "cultural taxation" that often leaves the assimilated with only limited "membership" in the adopted culture. Such nebulous cultural standing is common among first generation college students (London, 1992; Richardson, & Skinner, 1992).

Acculturation is the more desirable process; yet society itself prompts assimilation as a social equalizer, for instance, in the myth of the melting pot theory. Schutte (2000, p. 63) reflected on the complexity of assimilation, acculturation, and social mobility in speaking about the precarious position of Hispanic/ Latino scholars in their mission of encouraging the presence of underrepresented groups in higher education:

Even as we may refer to group rights or the need for inclusion of members of underrepresented groups in higher education, for example, what we are actually doing is promoting conditions for the assimilation of members of the underrepresented groups into the mainstream.

The main difference between today and yesterday, however, is that in the past the conceptual

**GUTIERREZ: PERCEPTIONS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY AND ETHNIC LABELS:  
THE CULTURAL COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

framework marking the assimilation (the melting pot theory) referred to persons graining inclusion in terms of their *individual merits*, whereas today that framework is given, more often than not, by identifying person as members of a group deserving *special attention* (emphasis mine).

In the language of critical theory, deeply embedded power relationships define social convention, establish value systems, create biased knowledge bases, influence individual thought, and ultimately serve to perpetuate the status quo via social reproduction (Kinchloe & McLaren, 1998). The maintenance of such social conventions reinforces and perpetuates the status quo in a manner that perpetuates the oppressive state of others and “explains” these condition as the natural order of society. Is the level of assimilation, in this context, an indication of a person’s acceptance of such “social conventions?”

#### **Hispanics in the Study**

With regards to the entire study sample, acculturation scores (ARSMII-Scale One) had high Anglo (white culture) orientations. Because the entire sample was highly Anglicized, the level of acculturation or assimilation as a factor in educational and career goal setting could not be determined. The discovery of such high Anglo orientation in an area of the country where these first generation college students had plentiful contact with Mexican American/ Hispanic role models, teachers, and cultural visibility/ contact was disturbing. Ramirez Largo’s findings in a study of Mexican American graduate students implied that assimilation may be a requirement for successfully attaining graduate degrees. Do study findings here imply that high Anglo orientation is a prerequisite for *entry* into higher education, even in open admissions institutions?

The Scale Two score of the ARSMA II measures of the level of acculturation. The primary difference between scores of “Hispanics” in the study and “Mexican Americans” was that “Hispanics” tended to score as assimilated and cultural separated, while “Mexican Americans”

tended to score as bicultural (acculturated). Most Hispanic participants attached a meaning to the label that translated as either being more “American” than Mexican Americans, or not being marginalized like Mexican Americans. The Hispanic participants seemed to have internalized a natural order that implies why Mexican Americans are marginalized, and in labeling themselves “Hispanic” they were attempting to prevent being associated as a less desirable ‘social other.’

Yet given the social and cultural history of the region, most of the participants did have Mexican ancestry. It is the researcher’s hunch based on the full scope of the data collected that Hispanic participants were not only more assimilated than Mexican American participants, but that they experienced more tension with regards to their ethnic identities, as well as gender roles associated with cultural socialization. Such tension led to personal ambiguity in evaluating their own susceptibility to both gender and ethnic barriers.

#### **Conclusion**

Cultural identification impacts all levels of development by establishing an individual’s understanding of accepted behavioral, affective, and cognitive norms; especially, with regards to understanding gender roles, relationships with others, and social, educational, and economic outcomes (Arbona, 1995; Herr & Cramer, 1996; Neimann, Romero & Arbona, 2000). Yet in today’s multicultural world, individuals often navigate contradictory socio-cultural parameters that do not promote individual advancement, social improvement or social justice. Concepts of both culture and race vary in perspective and in impact. According to Mendieta (2000, p.55),

For Hispanic America, race was about one’s skin color and hair type, but never about one’s humanity. For Anglo America, race was a means of dispossessing others of their humanity...race crystallized in objective institutions, legal regulations, political dispensations, and cultural prescriptions, thereby becoming a social fact that refused to

acknowledge its fictional character. Race was read as a biological fact, and as such, it becomes nature: ineluctable, irreversible, uncircumventable. Race became fate.

Are ethnic labels a reflection of the institutionalization of “race as fate?” To what degree might such stifling beliefs still be

embedded in learning institutions? Is education still being used as a tool to culturally mainstream demographic ‘others’ via assimilation, and seen as part of adopting a professional persona? I encourage educators at all levels of education to ponder both the questions and their implications.

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**GUTIERREZ: PERCEPTIONS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY AND ETHNIC LABELS:  
THE CULTURAL COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

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## IS SAXON MATH THE ANSWER?

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### Abstract

International studies show American students make abominably low mathematics scores. America scores at the bottom, along with third-world nations, in international rankings. These results forecast grave consequences for a technological society. Mathematics is the language of science and technology. Can the nation sustain its technological lead if its students are ignorant of mathematics? Educators agree something must be done to improve the teaching of mathematics. What this something should be, however, is a matter of dispute. Could the answer be as simple as adopting a novel approach to the teaching of the mathematics? Saxon math seems to offer one promising possibility.

### Introduction

Educators generally agree that mathematics is one of the most poorly taught subjects in American public schools. American school children score close to the bottom in every international survey. The reasons for this dismal showing are legion—cultural apathy toward mathematics, inadequately trained classroom teachers, and poorly designed methods and materials—only to mention a few. American schools are successful in turning out some of the world's best athletes, but they falter when it comes to producing mathematicians. What can be done to correct this paltry state of affairs? One mathematics teacher, John Saxon, thinks he has discovered the answer.

"The solution to declining test scores in mathematics," Saxon (1982) informs us, "is to introduce topics in increments and practice every topic in every problem set" (p. 484). When this is done, "outrageously higher test scores result" (p. 484). To prove his point, Saxon, an algebra teacher in Oklahoma, conducted a study in the 1982. His study compared his incremental-based Algebra I textbook (unpublished) to other algebra books used in Oklahoma public schools. The study consisted of 1,360 students in twenty different

Oklahoma schools. The students were administered a mathematics pretest selected from the California Achievement Test. Participants were divided into experimental (541 students) and control (841 students) groups. The experimental group used Saxon's unpublished algebra book. The control group used whatever textbook the school had previously been using. The same teachers taught both the experimental and the control groups. When the data from the experiment were tabulated, Saxon found that the experimental group had made a 159% gain over the control group. The progress of the experimental group was even more dramatic when it came to story problems—where the gain was 289% over the control group.

Klinge and Reed (1984) conducted a study to check the validity of Saxon's findings. They reported their findings in the *Phi Delta Kappan*. Klinge and Reed studied the effects of Saxon math on remedial algebra students at the University of Arkansas. Before students were divided into experimental and control groups, they were administered the ACT. Mean scores for the two groups were found to reflect no significance difference. Klinge and Reed accumulated data on 296 students who used Saxon's textbook, and 299 students who used a more traditional algebra book. At the end of the semester, students who had used Saxon's materials performed 24% higher on the departmental exam and 22% higher on a basic algebra test administered by the university than students who used the more traditional textbook. Klinge and Reed concluded that Saxon's "incremental approach to teaching mathematics produces greater student achievement than the traditional approach used by the great majority of mathematics textbooks" (p. 713).

Clay (1998) conducted an experiment using Saxon math with eighth grade algebra students. His study utilized a pretest and post test control group design. After taking an algebra pretest,

students were divided into experimental (Saxon textbook) and control (traditional textbook) groups. Each group received nine weeks of instruction in algebra. At the end of nine weeks, both groups were administered a post test covering the material in the two textbooks. Clay found that “the experimental group improved approximately 65% more than the control group” (p. 19).

Not every study has shown phenomenal results from using Saxon math. Dickens (1990) discovered mixed findings when he divided 134 seventh-grade math students into four separate groups. The first two groups were composed of low achieving students; the third and fourth groups were made up of high achieving students. One of the high achieving and one of the low achieving groups used a Macmillan textbook. The other two groups (high and low) used the Saxon textbook. The Stanford Achievement Test was used to assess student performance. When all the data was evaluated, Dickens concluded Saxon math had not shown a significant effect on the scores of high achieving students, but it had demonstrated a significant effect on the scores of low achieving students.

Mathematicians tend to give Saxon math high marks. Wayne Bishop (1997), a professor of mathematics at California State University, Los Angeles, reviewed mathematics materials submitted by different publishers for second, third, and fourth grade students. He reported his conclusions to the Core Knowledge Foundation in May of 1997. Bishop gave Saxon math the highest rating, saying that Saxon math not only presents students with more word problems to solve, but it represents “a fully developed philosophy of incremental review” (p. 5). With Saxon math, Bishop adds, “nearly all of the Core Knowledge items are covered and the level of incremental review is so thorough that students will almost certainly know the material” (p. 5).

Most of the literature dealing with Saxon math addresses its effectiveness with high school

algebra students. There is very little literature related to its use at the elementary school level. The following study was conducted in order to examine the relevance of Saxon math for elementary school programs. The Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) was used to measure the level of students’ mastery of basic mathematics concepts. This data was collected from the TEA Web site.

The design of the study called for selecting two elementary schools with similar demographics. One school (Chico) used the Saxon math program; while the other school (Poolville) used the Ex-Cel math program. Chico and Poolville were selected because they are both small, rural schools. They enrolled roughly equal numbers of minority and economically disadvantaged students. They had similar numbers of fifth grade students taking the TAAS in 2001, Chico (43) and Poolville (45). Chico had used the Saxon math program for the past eight years, and Poolville had used the Ex-Cel program for the past five years. The teachers at Chico and Poolville were equally well versed in the mathematics programs used by their respective schools. A comparison of the TAAS scores for the two schools from 1998-2001 [Table 1] shows that a larger percentage of Chico fifth-grade students passed with a score of 80% than similar fifth-grade students enrolled at Poolville. On average, Chico students had a 7.3% higher passing rate than Poolville students. The difference was even more dramatic for students who achieved high scores. Chico students who scored 80% or above made 17.7% higher scores than their peers at Poolville. Similarly, Chico students who scored 85% or above made 21.3% higher scores than their counterparts at Poolville. The data suggest that Saxon math not only facilitates the acquisition of more mathematical knowledge, but it also helps to elevate achievement test scores. This is particularly telling when we consider that both schools, Chico and Poolville, serve significantly large numbers of disadvantaged students.

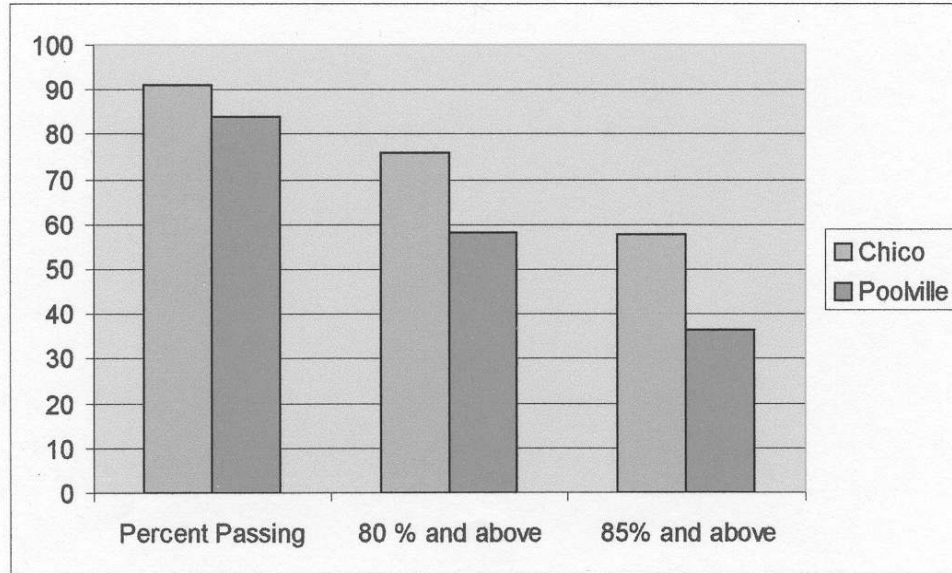
Table 1  
Fifth Grade Math TAAS Scores

# HOOD AND IVIE: IS SAXON MATH THE ANSWER?

## Chico and Poolville Elementary Schools

Schools	Years	N Students	Percent Passing	80% and above	85% and above
Chico	2001	43	98%	79%	72%
Poolville	2001	45	84%	67%	47%
Chico	2000	41	93%	85%	63%
Poolville	2000	42	88%	62%	45%
Chico	1999	51	94%	81%	69%
Poolville	1999	28	75%	50%	36%

Chico 1  
49 8  
59% 2  
Poolville  
98 2  
89% 5  
18%  
**Chico**  
**46 9**  
**76% 5**  
**Poolville**  
**35.8 8**  
**58.3% 3**  
**Chico**  
**9**  
**7.3% 1**  
**21.3%**



998  
0%  
7%  
19  
8  
4%  
**Mean**  
**1.3%**  
**7.8%**  
**Mean**  
**4%**  
**6.5%**  
**Higher**  
**.2**  
**7.7%**

The bar graph shown below [Graph 1] provides a visual representation of the data described in the above table. The test scores for Chico (Saxon math) are represented by the lighter bars. The test scores for Poolville (Ex-Cel math) are demonstrated by the darker bars. The graph illustrates that Chico students achieved higher TASS scores than Poolville students, thus lending credence to the claim that Saxon math promotes higher achievement test scores for students at the elementary school level.

Is Saxon math the answer to America's dilemma—how best to raise mathematics scores? That is a large and complex question. No single

study, or even series of studies, can offer a satisfactory answer. Much of the problem is rooted in American culture—which places a low premium on mathematical knowledge. Can the schools reform the culture? Not very likely! Schools are better at reflecting than they are at reconstructing culture. Such an admission, however, is not to suggest that schools are impotent. Educators are allowed a little wiggle room. In a time when politicians are mesmerized by standardized test scores, Saxon math offers educators a viable approach to improving student performance. Certainly it is worth a try.

**GRAPH 1**

Fifth Grade Math TAAS Scores  
Chico and Poolville Elementary Schools

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## EDUCATION AS TRANSFORMATION: WHY WE NEED EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

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“The use of the term ‘transformation’ is a strong indication of the goals implicit in the model. . . . This is a high order for any educational enterprise.” Carman St. J. Hunter

### Introduction

A significant number of Schools of Education have recently hitched a metaphorical ride on the *Transformation Express* as it speeds down the track of educational reform. Mission statements promise to empower students with the knowledge to “*transform* self, school, and society.” Conceptual models present visual, pictorial images of how *transformation* fits into a school’s guiding educational philosophy. Books are written to explain “education as *transformation*,” global alliances are founded for the purposes of “*transforming* education,” and the transformation theme has given birth to a variety of educational conferences, web sites, and themes for academic journals. The concept of *transformative* praxis and the powerful possibility of a pedagogy of *transformation* have been added to the educational lexicon. Those who till the fields of educational philosophy are encouraged to work from the assumption that “as educational philosophers we are in the midst of a *transformative* moment (Burbules, p. 38).”

From a historical perspective there is a certain continuity here: “The history of reform has had many acts with many actors. It’s had its moments of heroism and farce, wisdom and folly. All along there has been a never-ending search for ways to adapt . . . to ever higher (educational) expectations (Tyack, p. 5).” One can only hope that wisdom and heroism will trump farce and folly in defining educational expectations. The direction of any transformation will be mapped with regard to the implications derived from the expectations.

It is the *quality* of the expectations, not catchy phraseology, that should be of concern for those of us who define ourselves as teacher educators; and quality relates to ideas. Transposing George Bernard Shaw’s literary understanding to education, we are reminded that, “the quality of the play is in the quality of the ideas.” The ideas

giving birth to expectations for K-12 schools are many and varied. They are as diverse in quality, and as confusing and paradoxical as the vested interest groups who march under different political, religious, cultural, and socio/economic banners. And the ideas often spawn ideologies. As we prepare future teachers for these schools, we are caught-up in the ideological rhetoric that penetrates calls for educational reform. One specific problem that this presents is that too often we teacher educators are *reformed* rather than being *reformers* – *transformed* rather than being *transformative*. We choose to be followers rather than leaders. We march to someone else’s drumbeat. We do not challenge the status quo; rather, we are pulled into its powerful undercurrents. It may just be that a former Dean of a school of education in Manitoba, Canada has her finger on the pulse of the teacher education process in both Canada and the United States:

Yes, teacher education is in a terrible muddle. With many faculty members wedded to a transmission/expert model of teaching, with the government grabbing control of the teacher education agenda, with the Teachers Society fighting for survival, a thoughtful, reflective restructuring of teacher education isn’t likely (Newman, p. 5).

“Thoughtful” and “reflective” are significant descriptors here. Too often educational reform movements emerge from the shadows of politically inspired answers to the wrong questions, rather than from thoughtful reflection upon ways to ascertain the right questions as a preliminary to action. In reality, if we have the philosophically valid questions we may be able to “live the questions now . . . then gradually . . . live along some distant day into answers (Rilke, p. 35).” Too often decisions follow a format suggested by then President Bill Clinton. Speaking in March, 1999, to the Washington, D.C. Press Club Clinton

remarked (in jest, it is assumed): “Never mind the questions, here are answers.” These words give birth to a certain *de ja vu* feeling. An image comes to mind of those vested interest groups that have historically handed out educational answers, often before understanding – or even asking – the questions. “How much easier it is to give an answer than . . . struggle with the question (McEwan, 264).”<sup>1</sup>

### **Philosophy of Education and the Prophetic Voice**

*Education should help people to assume an increasingly critical attitude toward the world, and so to transform it.*” Paulo Freire

It is because questions need to be thoughtfully and reflectively formulated – and answers questioned – that those who represent philosophy of education in schools of education have a significant opportunity, and a responsibility. The opportunity is to establish an atmosphere in which critical inquiry flourishes. The responsibility is to assume a prophetic role. Jewish theologian Abraham Heschel has defined the prophet as one who “asks the challenging questions,” and we have been reminded by an educational philosopher that

(t)he value of questioning cannot be neglected in (educational) inquiry. Perplexing, frustrating, and sometimes confusing questioning is a process of seeking fundamental premises about the nature of what we are doing and who we are . . . Questioning serves as an intellectual check to ensure that we observe, analyze, and interpret what happens about us (Hansen, 91).”

There is an intellectual “fit” here; prophet and educational philosopher – questioner, challenger, risk taker . . . transformer. “The prophet is an iconoclast, challenging . . . beliefs cherished as certainties (and) institutions endowed with supreme sanctity . . . The prophet is a watchman, a servant, a messenger . . . an assayer and tester . . . the prophet’s eye is directed to the current scene (Heschel, pp. 10, 20-21).” Those who speak for educational philosophy are in a unique prophetic position to ask the challenging questions; to venture forth in search of alternatives to handed-

down, officially certified educational dogma; “to develop a discourse and set of assumptions that allow them to function more specifically as transformative intellectuals (Giroux, xxxiv).”

Admittedly, the prophet is a risk-taker. In the world of academia, she/he will be forced to seek out a special kind of courage; “for the transformation of one’s being as well as one’s world . . . a new beginning is demanded and attempted. This is . . . the *courage to be* (Tillich, p. 111).” Here Paul Tillich was speaking as a theologian, but the prophetic educator is faced with similar demands and possibilities. Those who bring educational philosophy to the academic table should exemplify such courage. Brought face-to-face with difficult choices, however, we don’t always choose “the courage to be.”<sup>2</sup> Timothy Reagan has noted an example of a failure to make courageous choices in the academic arena. He cites the role that philosophers of education played in maintaining officially sanctioned apartheid in South Africa. In this situation transformation was not the goal of the political power structure, and the educational system surrendered to a political agenda. Educational philosophy was tooled to fit official expectations, not to question or challenge an entrenched, socially sanctioned legal injustice. Reagan discussed

the historical role played by philosophers of education in South Africa in the perpetuation and justification of apartheid . . . Certain aspects and features of English philosophy of education in South Africa (did) in fact serve, albeit indirectly, to buttress apartheid in much the same way that philosophy of education in the United States, at least indirectly, serves to support a status quo that remains both ethically and politically problematic . . . If there is a lesson to be learned from the South African case, perhaps it is the necessity for us to become activists . . . (W)e, too, live in a society in which academics, and even philosophers of education, contribute to the maintenance of fundamentally unjust and inequitable social relations (Reagan, pp. 59, 64, 68).

There may, of course, be challenges to this



portrayal of American society, and there are those who are not sympathetic to the call for educational philosophers to be prophetic social activists. However - for the educator - the very word, "transformation," should imply an activist involvement in interpreting the meaning and implications of justice and injustice within the educational system, and within the wider social/political community. Otherwise, the call for transformation as an educational goal is no more than "a sounding gong and clanging cymbal." It is important to expose those who aspire to be teachers to the reality that "education for transformation can be understood as a consciously counter-ideological effort toward different options for the human situation than those embodied in the status quo (Kennedy, pp. 237-238)."

If schools of education expect to be conduits of transformation rather than purveyors of the status quo then those faculty members who speak for educational philosophy have a significant role to play. We have been reminded that "every radical transformation requires a 'lucid vanguard' (Freire, 1994, p. 59)." In manning the front lines of transformative possibilities, we must speak out with stronger, more lucid and more activist voices. We must "fit" educational philosophy to the call for transformation. We have a responsibility to interrogate the existential meaning of "to transform," and to fit the vision of educational transformation to a philosophically reflective lens. We are obligated to ask serious questions about what should be expected from our teachers, our schools, our students -- from the social/political/economic system we call "education." The technical *what* of teaching should be predicated on an understanding of a philosophical *why*. "Why?" is the question that is too often neglected in today's contentious debates regarding educational reform. We would do well to consider Friedrich Nietzsche's admonition: "The most personal question of truth . . . what I am doing, and why am I doing it? That is the question of truth which is not taught in our present system of education; we have no time for it (*Daybreak*)."

Perhaps, however, we have reached an educational

*kairos*.<sup>3</sup> Now is "a time of opportunity" to place a greater emphasis in schools of education on this most personal and most important question of truth -- *why*?

It is an auspicious time to stimulate the philosophical, prophetic spirit, and let it infiltrate schools of education. Philosophy of education as subject matter -- and perhaps more importantly, as an *attitude* -- is uniquely situated to provide a prophetic impetus for teachers-to-be. Philosophical thinking generates the transformative power to provide a counterpoint to the technocratic, empiricist, behaviorist, entrepreneurial models that so dominate the content of educational discourse. Teachers-to-be should be given opportunities to try on a prophet's robe. With alterations made by a philosophical thinking process, it just might fit. To be certified as an educational professional should signify more than possession of a piece of paper verifying the absorption of discrete pieces of knowledge and technical expertise.

It is important to have a philosophical understanding of professionalism. We will then understand the importance of decision-making based on asking basic "why" questions, and asking "for what purpose?" and "whose interests are being served?"

In asking these, and other important questions that stimulate vital discussion and dialogue, there is always an underlying question. Transformation begins with the philosophically existentialist query, "who am I?" -- not just as an educator, but as a person. It is as that feathered philosophers/teacher, Jonathan L. Seagull, reminded us: "you need to keep finding yourself a little more each day (Bach, p. 124)." There is perhaps no stronger argument for educational philosophy as a "fit" to transformation than the struggle of the teacher-to-be to define the self within the complexities and uncertainties of *becoming* an educator. "Right education comes with the transformation of ourselves . . . to transform the world there must be regeneration within ourselves (Krishnamurti, 1953, pp. 50, 54)." The prophet's passion for transformation begins within the self.

Even as educators are being *provided* with – or even creating – educational successes in the form of methods, measurable objectives, techniques, accountability standards, best practices, teacher-proof curriculum, and accreditation guidelines – there remain the *who* and *why* questions to be asked, and pursued. Also of importance is the often overlooked responsibility that educators have to question the answers that we have been given and *assume* to be adequate. Many times “adequate” is not enough. It is at this point that philosophy of education fits into the continually evolving equation of educational reform.

When the philosopher begins work, the dominant trait is to start asking questions. Questions, as a matter of fact, constitute the raw materials of the trade; philosophy is the study of questions . . . questions that are relevant to the subject under study . . . the kinds of questions whose answers make a real difference in how we live and work (Morris and Pai, 1976, p.19).

The educator influenced by an academic atmosphere that is impregnated by the content and the spirit of educational philosophy understands that reform and transformation are ongoing processes, not once-and-for-all accomplishments. Each answer raises a new question, and “the question finds its beginning in the answer (Lee)”

Rather than a static event that occurs at a particular time and is immediately and virtually complete, transformation is the process of becoming; it possesses a quality of livingness and vitality . . . Its dynamic quality makes it difficult to observe because in its unfolding there may be no simple defining moment in the dynamic process of change (Jorgensen, p. 248).

Ideologues who profess to have simple solutions to complex educational problems misunderstand the *process* that is transformation. Those who are too certain of their certainties may need to be intellectually awakened with the shock exerted by a prophetic encounter. Historically, education seems to be continually searching for some transformative magic, a pedagogical fountain of youth; with new goals, new methods, new

visions being presented as ways to restore, revitalize, or rejuvenate the educational process. Or – in some cases – the transformation called for is a “back to the future” return to the good old days. We have educational classics - one going back 3000 years - to remind us that the search is not new: “One might argue that Plato’s *Republic* offers an example of educational transformation, as does Rousseau’s *Emile* and Dewey’s *Democracy and Education* (Haroutanian-Gordon, p. 256).” The search for a transformative vision continues.

If we have grasped for something without being able to reach it; if we have looked for something for a long time without being able to find it; if we have longed for something . . . without being able to fulfill our longing, then we stand on the threshold of transformation (Nassal, p. 19).

Perhaps, as educators, we will always stand on the threshold, wrestling with the door that opens into visions of the possible. Yet in the wrestling we grow intellectually stronger. Perhaps we will open the door, and transformation will be the reward. Whatever the reality, we need educational philosophy as a prophetic voice in schools of education to help us frame questions and question answers – and seize opportunities. We need philosophical thinking to help us “fit” the powerful transmission/expert/ standardized model of teaching to one in which the “motivation is puzzlement, curiosity, a desire to understand, not a desire to produce uniformity (Nozick, p. 13).”

### **Transformation as Journey**

*“Rather than a static event that occurs at a particular time and is immediately and virtually complete, transformation is in the process of becoming.”* Estelle Jorgensen

For the purposes of this discussion we must ask a couple of preliminary questions: Why is the concept, “transformation,” so pervasive in educational discussion? Do we really understand what we mean when we insert the concept into our mission statements, our academic papers, our books, our syllabi, our goals for teacher education programs? First, a caveat: “Meaning is not ‘in’

words. Meaning is in people, and whatever meaning words have are assigned or ascribed to them by people (Postman and Weingartner, p. 106).” There is a hermeneutical process at work here, and it is the responsibility of those who represent philosophy of education to continually ask questions of meaning and purpose. We are reminded that when we seek to define and set in motion a process of educational transformation that

(t)he task of practical implementation is political, messier, and more ambiguous than its theoretical ideal might suggest. Unexpected consequences flow . . . alternative visions compete . . . vested interests jockey for power and prestige, and the task of realizing the idea is a daunting one . . . (But) with a more philosophically robust if also problematical notion of transformation, one is now in a better position to evaluate its usefulness both as an idea and as a descriptor for educational change (Jorgenson, p. 250).

Any school of education that aspires to a transformative role in society will examine purposes and meanings with a philosophically robust attitude. This requires more than one perfunctory class in some “foundations” of education as a token offering in response to the NCATE standard which requires a look at “the social, historical, and philosophical foundations of education, including an understanding of the moral, social, and political dimensions of classrooms, teaching, and schools (NCATE Standards, p. 17).” It requires integrating philosophical thinking and the prophetic spirit into the basic curriculum. To even *pretend* that transformation is an academic/pragmatic goal demands a total education program imbued with a prophetic spirit. It demands creating a school-wide culture in which philosophical thinking, exemplified by an intellectual quest, is impregnated in every syllabus, and encouraged in every lesson plan, in every classroom discussion, in every faculty meeting. We must challenge the all too prevalent expectation that the future teacher should be handed concrete solutions to most

problems, how-to responses to difficult issues, and complete preparation for the front lines of teaching.<sup>4</sup>

Such expectations represent a misunderstanding of the uncertain journey of transformation that is teacher education.

The reason why the journey of transformation raises more questions than it provides answers is found in the journey itself. A journey is a quest, the root word of “question,” which in Latin means “to seek.” If all of our questions had answers, the quest would end, the journey would be complete . . . (T)he wisdom of the *Tao* suggests that our destiny is found in the journey and not in the destination. The questions we encounter along the way remind us that we are seekers, not settlers. With this truth safely tucked into our knapsacks, the journey continues, the quest commences again (Nassal, p. 75).

Rev. Joe Nassal here speaks of a theologically tinged spiritual quest, but his words are applicable also to a teacher’s pedagogical journey of transformation. They also connect to educational philosophy’s connecting fit to the journey.

The future teacher’s hope for certainty, for quick-fixes and replicable recipes, is outside the realm of philosophical inquiry. The desire for certainty causes courses with such non-practical titles as “philosophy of education” to be seen by many future and current teachers as pragmatically useless in – or at least peripheral to – the real world. Reality in teaching is too often interpreted to be the concrete world of objective facts, effective discipline, standardized tests, accountability, and measured success by competitive numbers. The thrill of the teacher’s *journey* is too often negated by a bureaucratically ordained requirements established as markers for achievement and efficient, measurable *outcomes*. We encourage our teachers “to do,” and neglect the importance of “to be.” In so doing we offer obeisance to “a new orthodoxy . . . (which is) queuing up uncritically behind an organized leadership that is seeking the ‘holy grail’ of

effective teaching . . . (and asks) how will philosophy, or history, or sociology of education make any real difference . . . to teaching (Tozer and Meretzky, pp. 109-110)?” The new orthodoxy is, of course, new only in terms of names and faces. Its doctrinal dogma is not new.<sup>5</sup> Its influence on teacher education is not new. Several years ago Richard Brosio wrote:

(T)eacher education is characteristically “practical” and “how-to” in its orientation, the theoretical insight necessary to understand how teaching and education relate to the larger worlds of power – or lack of it – is not usually learned effectively. The domination of teacher education by “how-to-ism” is supplemented by a psychological orientation that seldom allows the whole system into question . . . the theoretically empowering potential from the study of philosophy of education . . . is not very significant in the educational experience of undergraduate students (Brosio, pp. 323-324).

This is not to be interpreted as meaning that the “how-to” (method) or the “what” (subject matter) of teaching is unimportant or to be neglected. Rather, it is a plea for inserting the philosophical “why” as a question-provoking counterpoint into the intellectual mixture.<sup>6</sup> In our rush to judgment regarding how to transform the preparation of teachers for our nation’s schools we must not forget the meaning of an observation made some time ago:

The central task of teacher education is to provide teachers with a sense of purpose, if you will, a philosophy of education . . . Schools cannot be transformed unless colleges and universities produce a new breed of teachers educated to think about purposes . . . Certain kinds of intellectual experiences are necessary if students are to understand WHY they are doing what they are doing . . . They need knowledge about knowledge . . . They need insights into their purposes as a teacher . . . Hence the study of the history and the philosophy of education must occupy a central place in teacher education (Silberman, pp. 472-473, 481, 489, 491).

It was thirty years ago that Silberman hoped for a *remaking* of American education. In the twenty-first century we seek to *transform* the system. The meaning is the same, or at least there is a fresh opportunity to make similar interpretations of meanings.

Perhaps remaking, or transforming, or reforming education is important because “to be a member of a democratic public is to be constantly in a state of re-formation . . . to be a breaker and maker, as well as a finder and user (Giarelli, p. 14).” This statement might be interpreted to indicate that enlightened participation in a democratic process presupposes the ability to wrestle philosophically with epistemological uncertainty, diverse axiologies, and changing metaphysical interpretations. Democratic decisions are not based on absolutes, or on unshakeable truth; but on varied experiences, careful reflection and interpretive responses to issues – on a *search* for truth. The protagonist in the Public Broadcasting System’s series, *Oliver’s Travels*, grasped this understanding metaphorically: “Truth is not found on the main road. It is more likely to be found on the back roads.”

Philosophy of education allows us to explore the back roads with an understanding that the truth we seek as a democratic public and as a democratic classroom community, is not a static quality. It is alive, energetic, evolving, creative. It is not merely confirmative, it is transformative. To understand educational philosophy’s “fit” to a search for transformative truth is to understand that “all true philosophy is educational, and all true education is philosophical (Lipman, p. 43).” John Dewey understood the implications here of using the tools of philosophical inquiry to help fine-tune the meaning of “truth,” and his legacy encourages us to translate the implications into our pedagogy.

Any person who is open-minded and sensitive to new perceptions, and who has concentration and responsibility in connecting them has . . . a philosophic disposition . . . If we are willing to conceive education as the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and

emotional, toward nature and fellow men, philosophy may even be defined as *the general theory of education*. (Dewey, 325, 328).

For those who teach at the college/university level this means encouraging a philosophic disposition so that “education as transformation can become the epicenter of education . . . dedicated to graduating students ready to engage a world of complexity and diversity (Keen, P. 212).” For teacher education programs this translates to helping students welcome the uncertainties of change, and encouraging the prophetic spirit - - allowing the questioning, challenging attitude that is implicit in educational philosophy to flow freely. To downplay the importance of educational philosophy in favor of more “practical” training geared to the “standards phenomenon” is to negate the possibility of helping teachers become, in Henry Giroux’s phrase, transformative intellectuals. It is to deny the connecting link – the “fit” - between the philosophical and the transformative. If we are to view formal education as transformative we must recognize that schools are not product-producing machines, and teachers are not merely technicians. We must get beyond the “widespread view that school is a machine. You insert a child at 9 am and extract it at 4 pm improved and standardized (DuBois, p. 342 ).” W.E.B. Du Bois, a prophet without due honor in his own land, issued this warning eighty years ago. Its meaning reverberates from school walls today.

### **Interpreting a Worldview: Opportunity and Responsibility**

*“Personal transformation comes from earthquakes in our worldview.”* Tobin Hart

If schools of education are really to graduate transformative intellectuals then a philosophical disposition and prophetic spirit – emboldened and deepened by an exposure to the inquisitive desideratum of educational philosophy - will be required. This attitude and spirit are translated into encouraging and helping students to reflect continually upon who they are, what they are doing . . . and why. It is possible to infuse this way of thinking into the very heart of a school, and, thereby, “contribute to the gradual transformation

of learners into strong presences in the world (Freire, 1998, p. 33).”

For an educator, such reflective thinking makes possible an understanding of how a personal worldview influences decisions. There is an ethical imperative for those of us in teacher education to help students examine their worldviews. Here we have the opportunity, and the responsibility, to “fit” a philosophical attitude to the transformative possibilities that, even if not explicit in a school’s mission statement, are implicit in the vision of teacher education. WE *do* seek to transform self, student, classroom, school, and society.

A worldview is the lens through which a person views the self, other people, events, and ideas. It involves knowledge, prejudices, attitudes, assumptions, beliefs, habits, doubts and hopes . . . perhaps, now-and-then, tid-bits of wisdom. A personal worldview evolves from transmitted traditions *and* from lived experiences. A synonym for worldview might be found in the phrase “philosophy of life.” It involves a metaphysics (what is real/true?), an epistemology (how do I know what I know?), and an axiology (how do I define the good and the beautiful - what do I value?). A worldview is influenced by – and expressed through - my religion, my politics, my relationships. My self-definition – *who* I am –is influenced by my worldview.

The Indian philosopher/mystic, Jiddu Krishnamurti, has used a term that one may interpret to be expressive of a person’s non-interrogated worldview, *the hidden mind*. He notes the social/political/cultural conditioning which influences our sense of self and of the world:

The hidden mind . . . is a repository of . . . memories . . . For centuries, we have been conditioned by nationality, caste, class, tradition, religion, language, education, literature, art, custom, convention, propaganda of all kinds, economic pressure, the food we eat, the climate we live in, our family, our friends, our experiences, every influence you can think of – and therefore, our responses to every problem are conditioned. Are you aware that you are conditioned? That is the first thing

to ask yourself. (Krishnamurti, 1996, pp. 107, 112).

It is imperative that a teacher-to-be seek to understand the hidden mind – to extend her/his intellectual/emotional capacities beyond the technical skill level of what to teach and how to teach. There should be an ongoing interpretation of one's worldview, a recognition of the social/cultural/political conditioning that has been involved in its development, and an understanding of how it affects personal and educational decisions. A worldview often contains hidden and/or unexamined philosophical assumptions that are reflected in what we say and do. Often decisions are made based on a "tacit" worldview. This is an unspoken, often unacknowledged (perhaps unrecognized) way of interpreting experiences, ideas, other people – even ourselves.

Some worldviews are based primarily on the cerebral, cognitive, and rational. Others find more room for the emotions, intuition, and the imagination. Some cause the individual to emphasize rigorous thinking, objectivity, and *doing*. Some will emphasize feeling, subjectivity, and *being*. Some of us will be influenced by a worldview that influences us to think in terms of absolutes and the objective. Others will find their decisions are influenced by the contextual and the subjective. Most of us will be philosophically eclectic, in keeping with Emerson's caveat that "a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of small minds." Individuals do, however, tend to lean in a certain worldview direction. It is important for the educator to be aware of the external conditioning process involved, and how a worldview impacts educational decisions. Here is an important role for philosophy of education.

Schools of education fail in a major responsibility if they do not provide a comfortable fit for educational philosophy in the curriculum. It is important to help students seriously interrogate how and why they think and do what they do. Much of the reality of *becoming* a teacher involves evaluating, shaping, verifying *or* changing, and/or fine-tuning a worldview. Most often this happens on an unconscious level. But, in teacher education

programs we can also help students become increasingly aware of the assumptions and presumptions which are the foundation stones of a worldview. To do so involves an *hermeneutical* process – personal interpretations of transmitted and constructed knowledge. It involves reflection on personal experiences leading to Why?-type questions that challenge transmitted givens.

Engaging in such philosophical thinking requires critical, reflective processes involving: (1) acquiring (not just absorbing) knowledge (facts and *ideas*)– (2) assessing, interpreting, and questioning data, and the *why* and *who* of ideas – (3) awareness of the underlying worldview assumptions which influence not only the interpretations but also the strength of any emotional response – and, (4) recognizing stereotypes and clichés which may lead to biased judgments. Bias is bound up with those opinions and attitudes that flow from prejudice (unreflective preconceptions), rather than from thoughtful, reasoned analysis. Bias is often supported by unwarranted generalizations (examples: the public school system is failing, welfare mothers are lazy, those of African descent are less intelligent than Caucasians, legalizing prayer in public schools will cause our society to be less violent and more caring, Christians are more compassionate than agnostics, etc.).

All of us make life-altering choices based on assumptions, presumptions, generalizations, suppositions and - yes - prejudices. A responsible educator seeks to understand how these thought processes define his/her life philosophy. To understand requires asking *why* certain choices are made. All too often we are not aware that we are acting on assumptions that cannot be validated either by the rational mind, by experience, or even by the intuitive mind. As I better understand my *whys* – seek to excavate the foundations of my personal worldview – I become more existentially authentic. I become more sensitive to the *whys* of others. I have less difficulty "hearing" the other (person, idea, concept). It is this intentional "hearing" (more than just "listening to") that encourages us to reflect on our personal

worldview, and to perhaps recognize a prejudiced analysis, a biased reasoning process, and/or misinterpretation of data. And so . . . we continue the ongoing process that is a never-ending, transformative educational journey.

A school of education that encourages a philosophical disposition and the prophetic spirit to flourish will be one infused with conversation, discussion, and dialogue. There will be shared ideas, beliefs, values. Even political, social, cultural, and religious ideological assumptions will be shared and dissected. It is acknowledged that we learn from each other, and from continuous examination of those assumptions that are part of a personal worldview. We better understand our decisions, both personal and educational, when they are placed in connection – or analyzed in counterpoint – to other, and diverse worldviews. This way of thinking philosophically

stimulates the intellectual imagination . . . by showing that there are a number of different ways in the which the world can be conceived . . . (and) practice in appreciating these different word pictures stretches the mind and makes it more receptive of new and perhaps fruitful hypotheses (Russell, p.8)

In recognizing the pedagogical strength of this possibility, we may endow our classroom experiences, both as teachers and as students, with opportunities to learn from each other. As teachers we don't just transmit, we receive. We listen. We learn *with* our students by way of a dialectical process in which critical interpretations and challenging questions – even those antipodal to our personal worldview – are allowed to flow freely in the marketplace of ideas. A worldview can be liberating or constricting. It can result in pessimism about what is possible for self, others, or institutions. It can cloud the soul. Or it can be optimistic and revitalizing. It can reveal vistas of possibility and enrich the soul. The educator needs to understand this paradox, and to wrestle philosophically with the implications.

To give “how to” and “best practices” procedures to the teacher-to-be is not enough. To certify that he/she is well-versed in subject matter

is necessary, but not sufficient. To provide easily followed road maps through a licensing process doesn't go far enough. We must provide opportunities for the *becoming* teacher to struggle with soul-clouding dilemmas and the uncertainties, incongruities, and divergent possibilities that come from intellectual struggles that stretch the parameters of a personal worldview. Without these struggles being integral to a teacher education program, transformation as an educational mission is only a word that comes trippingly off the tongue (or the writer's typing fingers) as a way to impress accrediting bodies. It takes the prophetic spirit to breathe life into the meaning of transformation. And . . . the prophetic spirit is – or *should be* – a seed that is planted and nurtured by schools of education. This will be an easier task if the “fit” that connects philosophy of education to a school's transformative mission is tight and secure.

The British philosopher, Bertrand Russell, has made a telling observation regarding the importance of philosophical thinking. He may have stretched a point, but we should consider the implication of his words as we reflect upon the content of the education of teachers.

The philosophic outlook is a matter of degree. Some can achieve it more completely, others less. But to achieve it in any degree is to do something towards the salvation of our distracted world (Russell, p. 10).

We may reasonably interpret the theological concept, salvation, to be a most powerful synonym for a life-changing, or society-changing, transformation. Teachers don't usually phrase discussions of their work in such theological terms. Translating Russell's words to education, however, gives us pause to consider how important a philosophical disposition is to the committed teacher. Even a small achievement facilitates a teacher's process of *becoming* a transformative intellectual.

### **A Few Closing Thoughts**

*“It is only when we teachers are in touch with our own transformational processes that we can create learning environments which become sites of*

*positive transformation for others.” Carol Flake*

This writing had its genesis in reflective moments focused upon the significant role that the concept of *transformation* plays in the world of education, particularly education of teachers. Reflection led to consideration of the importance of educational philosophy and philosophical thinking as necessary, not casually dispensable, ingredients in the education of those who have responded to a “call” to teach. A question arose: how does philosophy of education “fit” the prevalent educational mission to transform self, student, school, and society . . . and why? These questions take on special significance today as the teaching area we term educational foundations - especially philosophy of education - is being systematically minimized, even eliminated in some cases, by the power of an educational “orthodoxy.”

This discussion has been incomplete, as philosophical dialogue tends to be. But, as such dialogues tend to do, questions have been raised, and “the value of questioning cannot be neglected in inquiry. Perplexing, frustrating, and sometimes confusing questioning is a process of seeking fundamental premises about the nature of what we are doing and who we are (Hansen, p. 91).” In this inquiry scant attention has been given to the great historical figures whose philosophical thinking has influenced education. This may be interpreted as an incompleteness when discussing educational philosophy. We might have brought into the discussion many pivotal thinkers who provide educational philosophy with intellectual bridges between today and the past; thinkers whose ideas continue to influence educational dialogue and practice. As important as these thinkers are to educational thinking, the discussion has taken a different approach.

There has been no recognition of the philosophical “isms” or movements that metaphorically provide intellectual coat racks upon which to hang our ideas about the how, what, who, and why of education. To understand the ideological aspects of various philosophical “isms” (Idealism, Realism, Pragmatism, Existentialism, etc.) can be helpful in understanding a personal

philosophy of education, or worldview. Even the eclectic thinker finds it helpful to reflect upon the direction of her/his philosophical “lean.” Educational decisions are influenced by the direction. The teacher who has a better understanding of his/her “lean” is more intellectually prepared to formulate educational questions, and to intellectually wrestle with the *why* of the answers. Here again the primary attention of this reflection has focused elsewhere.

The focus here has been on the importance of a “philosophical disposition” for the teacher, and for the formulation and implementation of the transformative goals of teacher education. The intent has been to analyze the “fit” which is established between an important ingredient in educational philosophy, critical inquiry, and what we mean and intend to accomplish when we define educational purpose as “to transform.” When we impregnate a school of education with the spirit of critical inquiry and give birth to philosophical dispositions in the classroom, we empower the teacher-to-be to

keep alive the sacred spirit of wonder and to fan the flame that already glows . . . to protect the spirit of inquiry, to keep it from becoming blasé from overexcitement, wooden from routine, fossilized through dogmatic instruction, or dissipated by random exercise upon trivial things. (Dewey, 1997, p. 34).

It is through exposing future teachers to philosophical thinking that we encourage a questioning philosophical disposition that fans the flame. It is the philosophical disposition, intellectually flexible rather than fossilized by dogma, that provides a counterpoint to an educational orthodoxy that is so enamored of certified, standardized, measurable, objective answers.

Perhaps the “fit” between educational philosophy and transformation will stimulate schools of education to seriously question and critically interpret *meaning* and *purpose* and *mission*. Possibly the reality that that is deep within a philosophically considered definition of *transformation* will penetrate the hard crust of



measurable objectives. It is even conceivable we will find transformative meaning in the words of the protagonist in the recent movie, *Mr. Holland's Opus*: "We've been playing the notes on the page. There is so much more to music than notes on a page."

Educational philosophy has the potential to inspire a student to evaluate – and perhaps restructure (transform) – his/her personal worldview. This involves a pedagogical process that – in the transformation – inspires a personal philosophical disposition that may motivate the student to "play the sunset (*Mr. Holland's Opus*)", rather than to be totally focused on the scripted "notes." In musical terminology, philosophy of education may be, metaphorically, the jazz experience of a teacher education program: "Jazz can help you think. It is both disciplined and unpredictable. It gives you tradition, but doesn't let you set into preconceived notions (Santoro, p. 48)."

The teacher with a creative pedagogical exposure to philosophical thinking is more likely to appreciate and build upon the history and traditions of the profession; but also to encourage the fresh air of critical inquiry, innovation, and change to enter the classroom. She/he "jazzes up" the classroom environment with a spirit influenced by a musical idiom – an understanding that "improvisation is the soul of jazz . . . Jazz requires constant invention . . . you take risks and you can't foretell results (Weinstein, 3)."

Educational philosophy has the power to inspire improvisation, risk taking, and an acceptance of the intellectual adventures that are heightened by encounters with ambiguity and the paradoxical. A teacher will do well to consider Soren Kierkegaard's thought: "A thinker without paradox is like a lover without passion." A consideration of paradox and ambiguity is,

however, not highly prized on many campuses as a measurable objective. The academic subject (philosophy of education) and its "outcome" – a philosophical disposition – are being minimized in schools of education primarily because they do not "fit" easily to the educational orthodoxy's transmission/expert/standardized, entrepreneurial model of *training* teachers. This gives rise to an interesting dilemma. This same orthodoxy that deflates the role of educational philosophy tends to commend schools that place various visions of *transformation* prominently within statements of mission, conceptual models, and strategic planning documents. The dilemma is highlighted when we recognize the tight "fit" that philosophy of education has to *transformation*; to reflecting upon, interpreting the meaning of, and questioning the validity of various expressions of how and why to transform the self, students, schools, and society.

The connecting link between educational philosophy and a school of education's dedication to *transformation* should not be disconnected, as is happening in many schools where performance-based and skill-based standards trump philosophical disposition. It should be made more secure. When we secure the "fit" we advance the possibility of challenging the dominant educational discourse of achievement, competition, and standardization; and of stimulating the public and the profession to reexamine the relationship between our highest aspirations and the prevailing notions of schooling (Purpel, pp. 59-60).

And, ... in challenging and stimulating, questioning and reexamining, and restating – reinforced by the critical inquiry expectations of educational philosophy – we have a better understanding of *why* we should encourage the transformation of self, student, school, and society.

## ENDNOTES

1. Maxine Greene, reflecting on her retirement after a distinguished career as an educational philosopher reminisced: "I really believe in the cause of teaching (students), that what you give them is that 'not yet feeling' of 'being on the way,' and that the question is not yet answered. I want students to love the question and the wonder and the mystery of it (Greene, 2000a, p. 4)."

2. Rollo May has defined a similar kind of courage in terms of creative possibility: "Every profession can and does require some creative courage . . . Teaching (is) in the midst of radical change and requires courageous persons to appreciate and direct change (May, pp. 21-22)." This statement written well over twenty-five years ago indicates that change (transformation) is not a once-and-forever process.

3. *Kairos* is one of several Greek words used to designate a specific concept of "time." In Christian theological tradition the New Testament Greek word, *Kairos*, has been translated as "a time of opportunity or fulfillment."

4. Even the first lady of the United States, also a former teacher, Laura Bush, gives evidence of misunderstanding the teacher's journey of transformation. In a July 26, 2001 address to a group of classroom teachers she is quoted as saying: "My biggest challenge was that I was not really prepared to teach (*Wichita Eagle*, July 27, 2001)." One has to wonder how many teachers who voice the "unprepared" sentiment do not understand that personal transformation is a continuous process. No amount of handed-out "how to" recipes will be enough. "You are always striving for completion, for a kind of wholeness, that, if you ever achieved it, you'd really be dead (Greene, 2000b)."

5. In discussing a particular vision of education, Parker Palmer described this educational orthodoxy and its doctrine as objectivism:

The orthodoxy I want to focus on for a few moments is the one called objectivism. It is an epistemology, a way of knowing, whose doctrine and creeds are at the heart of academic practice – at the heart of how we conduct both our research and our teaching – in exactly the same way that the doctrine and creeds of any formal religious tradition are at the heart of its practices. On second thought, there is one difference. The religious community is more straight forward than the academic community about the fact that it has doctrines and creeds (Palmer, 17).

6. Too many teachers-to-be misinterpret the journey of education. They expect to be "trained," not educated; to become a finished product by virtue of attaining a level of skill in specific techniques. This translates to somewhat of a trade school mentality. We need to help such students understand that "we can be changed by education when we learn a new skill or trade. Transformation, in sharp contrast, involves the whole person; feeling, beliefs, everything (Montuori, p. 61)." There is a difference between training and education.

7. The philosophy of jazz is not unlike a personal philosophy of education. Note the similarities: "The philosophy of jazz is simple. It is all about finding your own true voice. It's about reaching down inside and discovering your feelings, your unique message, your God-given abilities – then expressing them. (Morning program – April, 27, 1997, *Jazz Worship Service*, College Hill United Methodist Church, Wichita, Kansas)".

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HUFFORD: EDUCATION AS TRANSFORMATION: WHY WE NEED EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

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## JUSTICE, EQUITY, & UTILITY IN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

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Technology abounds and permeates every aspect of society. It has been said and repeated that we are living in the midst of a digital revolution, and unlike previous societal revolutions such as the Agricultural Revolution and Industrial Revolution, the digital revolution has changed everything over a very short time. The economy of the twenty-first century has accelerated as an economy based on the exchange of information processed into knowledge at a rapid pace. Tapscott (1996) coined the term *digital economy* to refer to an economy where gathering, analyzing, and processing information into knowledge is the key commodity. "On-demand information will dominate the digital life of the twenty-first century" (Negoponte, 1995, p. 169). The technologies required for *on-demand* information are a necessary part of the curriculum in preparing today's students for the competitive market of the twenty-first century. "There is no longer a question about whether the new technology will be used in schools. . . . Many believe these technologies are necessary because competency in their use is an important feature of career preparation" (Wise, 1997, paragraph 20). The cost of technology continues to be a major concern and challenge for school personnel. Securing hardware and software, infusing the infrastructure, developing open areas of access and lab space, as well as, the continual maintenance and upgrading of hardware and software in an industry where a thought is outdated as soon as it is conceived is too much for school budgets, and demands too much time of school faculty.

Emerging within the *digital revolution* is a fascinating, cost efficient alternative that may be of interest to educators – *Handheld technology*. "More powerful than the first Macintosh or Windows computer, . . . more functionally agile than a graphing calculator, and less expensive than a laptop but offering the same one-to-one computing ratio, the handheld computer may just

become the technology that revolutionizes the face of learning" (Shields & Poftak, 2002, p. 24). Increasingly, educators and school officials are inching closer to giving all students access to computers, as well as, Internet technology. Shields and Poftak (2002) indicate, "handhelds offer portability while at the same time packing enough computing power for writing, crunching numbers, and surfing the Web. . . . infrared beaming offers opportunities for real-time student collaboration, and with pricing near half the cost of a laptop, the days of one computer for every student may be tantalizingly close at hand" (p. 24). Dean (2002) states, "Schools are inching closer to putting a computer in the hands of every student, and a number of educators believe that handheld computers are the best and quickest way to make it happen" (paragraph 1). However, what is really happening with technology in education? Is this a utopian scenario? What is really happening with technology in the classroom?

This paper evolved from previous work of the authors. In *Cost of Technology in Education*, it was identified that key issues of training, inservice, management, and experience played a key role in the teacher's use of technology in the classroom.

**Training** How are teacher education programs training candidates to use technology in the curriculum? **Inservice** How are inservice days being utilized to teach teachers the effective use of technology? **Management** How are teachers managing the various elements of a technology driven lesson plan? **Experience** How do teachers obtain the experience for evaluating software/hardware needs, appropriate websites, effective usage of technology? Sally Bowman, Executive Director of the Computer Learning Foundation, suggests, "Now the challenge is finding the time and most effective methods for showing teachers how to make the best use of the equipment they have in their classrooms" (Marsh,

2000, p. 3).

In *Technology: What Teachers Really Want*, it was found that teachers want technical tools and a supportive climate to help their students develop the skills necessary to be competent for the work place of the twenty-first century.

“Unfortunately, many schools have spent thousands of dollars to purchase computers or to upgrade their instructional computing capacity with the hope that the mere presence of these technologies will promote positive instructional changes. These schools quickly discover that technology alone does little to support changes in the way teachers think about teaching and the way students think about learning” (Hasselbring, Barron, & Risko, 2000, p. 13).

Digital Equity, for the purposes of this paper is defined as occurring “when all students have quick, easy, and appropriately functional access to equipment and the Internet both in and out of school, as well as the expert guidance required to ensure effective use across a range of functions” (edu-cyberpg.com). However, digital inequity does exist. “There are more telephones in New York City than in all of rural Asia, more Internet accounts in London than all of Africa. As much as 80% of the world’s population has never made a phone call” (Digital Dividends 2001a, In *Spanning the Digital Divide*). Poverty, diversity and ethnic background are key aspects related to digital equity. In school settings characterized as predominately poor and ethnically diverse access to technology is limited. “Students from diverse ethnic backgrounds, students who live in poverty, bilingual students, and students with disabilities have the least access to technology in their schools” (Wolfe, 1986, In Brown, Higgins, & Hartley, 2001, pg. 32).

In addition, technological instruction and pedagogy is reported as being different between the affluent, homogeneous schools and schools marked as poor and ethnically diverse. In affluent schools, teaching and learning incorporating the use of technology is learner initiated. That is, technology is controlled by the learner to generate

knowledge. This type of learning environment would be incorporating problem-based learning through technology. In contrast, students in ethnically diverse, poor schools experience technology (if technology is available) where the computer is in control of the learning environment. That is, teachers are using technology for rote, stimulus-response delivery. The question emerges why is there a difference in students’ experiences with technology? Is it an equity issue? Is it a justice issue?

Simply having access to technology is not going to solve digital inequity, although physical access is an essential step. The real disparity in digital inequity is the teacher’s attitude and training as related to technology in the curriculum. In *Becoming a digital teacher*, Besonen & Hunt (1998) state, “For those who are willing to change, the challenge is daunting. Schools are rushing to install technology. . . . However, wiring the schools is not going to make much of a difference. In fact, it is probable that minimal use is being made of most technology in the schools and universities. The information age is complex. Teachers are being asked to provide instruction with technologies that they do not understand. A music analogy: Imagine giving every teacher a piano and telling them to play without any training. Some will be at the Twinkle Twinkle Little Star level. We want the teachers to be at the first recital level. The potential of information technology is at the Vladimir Horowitz level” (pg. 3).

**Bridges.org** has identified 12 issues to determine if there exists real access to instructional computer technology.

1. *Physical access* – “Worldwide, there were 311.2 PCs per one thousand people in developed countries, but only 0.7 per one thousand in least-developed countries such as Mali. Africa has only 0.25% of all Internet hosts in the world, and that percentage is decreasing (World Bank 2001).”

2. *Appropriate technology* – local need and conditions must dictate what is appropriate to the needs of the community.

3. *Affordability* – “US citizens pay 1.2 percent of

their average monthly income for Internet access, compared to a crippling 614 percent of a worker's annual income in Madagascar, 278 percent in Nepal, 191 percent in Bangladesh and 60 percent in Sri Lanka (UNDP 2001).

4. Capacity – technical training and continued training must be present to realize the full capacity of the technology usage.

5. *Relevant content* – “Content is only relevant when its substance is interesting to users given their culture background, and accessible given their reading, writing, and language skills.”

6. *Integration* – the technology must be of use and interwoven into daily life.

7. *Socio-economic factors* – gender, race and socio-economic conditions must be considered and identified and not hinder technology usage.

8. *Trust* – are the uses of technology trustworthy?

9. *Legal regulatory framework* – how has the governmental structure been established in relation to technology usage?

10. *Local economic environment* – “The local economic situation will determine the level and frequency of technology use. Technology that can be used to foster economic growth will foster use in the community.”

11. *Macro economic environment* – “National economic policy that creates a favorable macro-economic environment for technology integration is a critical element of bridging the digital divide,

for example in terms of transparency, deregulation, investment, and labor issues.” And,

12. *Political will* – “National governments can play a fundamental role in creating an environment that will foster technology use and encourage investment in ICT infrastructure, development, and a skilled workforce, but governments must have the political will to drive change and they must enjoy strong public support” (Real Access to ICT – bridges.org).

The twenty-first century will continue to accelerate as an economy based on the exchange of information processed into knowledge at a rapid pace. In this economy, knowledge is the leading commodity and knows no boundaries. Are schools willing to change and reduce digital inequity? Or is it likely that much of what is going on in school is largely irrelevant in this digital world? Several concerns must be addressed if teachers want to reinvent themselves as digital persons. Nicholas Negroponte in *Being Digital* argues that people must become digital. They have no other choice. Either you become digital or you are left behind. Currently, most teachers and schools are being left behind. They are becoming increasingly irrelevant. How have state lawmakers and educational policy makers addressed each of the twelve issues outlined by bridges.org? Failure to address such issues only broadens the digital divide – this is no longer an option

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## BEGINNING THE DIALOGUE: STUDENT VOICES IN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

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Educational reform has been the subject of a continuing debate in America since the late nineteenth century and the landmark study, *A Nation at Risk* (1983) ensures that reform of American education will continue to be a major issue well into the twenty-first century (Stevens et al., 2002). Debates from the federal and local levels offer a number of perspectives concerning what reform measures will address the educational problems and conditions of our schools, hence the mandate, "No Child Left Behind." Largely absent from many of the discussions have been viewpoints from marginalized groups – the "other voices."

One group in particular is the perspectives of school students to engage in dialogue about the recurrent problems of our educational system. In general, students feel ignored or demeaned by their schools whose responsibility it is to provide them with a quality education with their best interest at heart. Students' cynicism about what school represents is displayed sometimes through behavioral problems, regular school absences or indifferent attitudes. However, I consider these to be students' attempts to "cry out" to those in whose care parents, caretakers and the community leave them. Why should we expect them to take an interest in learning if they are not drawn into discussions and considerations about their education?

In this time of intense educational reform, we [educators and policymakers] are confronted with the urgency for diverse voices to engage in critical analysis on educational policies and practices. With this in mind, the purpose of this paper is to examine the concept of "other voices" in the debates of educational reform and practices that considers the voices and experiences of students of diverse background. Hooks (1994) compels us in the educational community to create a "democratic setting where everyone feels a responsibility to

contribute as a central goal" in creating learning environments that are inclusive. To extend that idea, Freire (2000) and Greene (1991) propose dialogue with students as the way to extend opportunities for individuals to participate, ask questions, respond to matters that necessitate their participation in making meaning for themselves.

### Constructing the "Other"

The complexity of our population through race, sex, gender, and social class yields categories into two juxtapose groups: majority and minority. Reducing individuals according to aggregates based on the factors mentioned above, encompasses certain behaviors and characteristics that are distinct to each group, a rather false assumption. "Aggregation assumes that those who share a master status are alike in "essential" ways" (Rosenblum and Tavis, 2000, p. 24). Socially constructed, the majority group (white, Anglo-Saxon men) is assumed to possess wealth, power and domination over the minority group thereby creating a social divide between the two. The minority group (women and people of color) which is less powerful becomes the object of contempt and is viewed as profoundly different, is categorized as "other" (Rosenblum and Tavis, 2000). This stigmatization has had a profound effect on how minorities are treated in this country that can be explained through the widespread economic and educational disparities visible in minority communities. So, the discourse of "other" is pervasive in American culture and greatly influences how we perceive and treat those categorized as "other."

A similar parallel can be drawn about the categorization of students in the educational institution. In school, students are at the bottom of the hierarchy when we consider whom the constituents that make up our educational community (administrators, teachers, parents, community etc.). They are viewed as the least

powerful and often seen as the “other,” those who have little or no relevancy in influencing decisions and policies that in effect impact their schooling and educational experience.

Maxine Greene (1991) talks about the continuous attempt of educators to not distance themselves from persons who are different but often fall into that very same trap:

Despite our recognition of the damage done by racist exclusion, tracking and humiliation in the schools, we are still likely to make members of minority groups “other”, and to objectify them that may be another way of distancing. (p. 543).

Asserting that the distancing is perpetuated by the lenses through which we view marginalized groups, Green (1991) avers that they become invisible to us when they do not fit particular dispositions to appease our self-serving righteousness. The divide caused by the distancing makes us more detached from those we classify and objectify as “other.” By their failure to recognize the multiplicity of needs, educators do not seek to be inclusive of multiple voices. It should not greatly astound educators why marginalized students, as “others” sometimes resist authority and become disinterested in learning and school. Recognizing their “otherness,” many students are disenfranchised and unconnected from the educational system. An unforeseen consequence of their dissonance is the alarming rate of students being suspended and dropping out of school. This is especially true for students of color.

Despite the voluminous research suggesting the “whys” and “hows” to address these problems, the alleged successes do not compare with the dismal realities of public schools failing to meet the needs of increasing numbers of students. Those involved in policy and decision-making are not always knowledgeable about the diverse needs of learners who come from different walks of life. Reflecting on a personal experience as an educator and former program administrator, I recount a situation with an African-American male student who was labeled, “deviant” to bear more analysis to the topic of discussion.

### **Is anyone listening to Malik\*?**

Malik was a ninth grade student in my communications skills class at a pre-college program. This program offers disadvantaged students from public middle and high school grades in the area an opportunity to receive college preparatory courses, cultural experiences and career development to achieve academically and personally. Most of the students come from single-parent, troubled and low socioeconomic homes. As a consortium with two other universities, students have an opportunity to attend a six-week summer program and Saturday sessions during the academic year. Under normal circumstances, these students’ chances of entering college were slim; however, a relatively small number of students who were making the marks [grades] were also admitted into the program. Malik in particular was in the former category and upon admission into the program, he expressed an interest in securing a better future for himself.

Like Malik, a number of students who were admitted did not have the discipline to make it through the rigorous coursework and demands of the program. Quite early in the program, I became aware of how difficult it was for him to conform to the work expectations of my class and rules/regulations established by the program in order for students to remain. He would regularly come late to class. He was lackadaisical in completing classroom assignments, rarely did any homework and was very resolved to challenging authority. It appeared he was doing everything he could to deter the program’s effort to offer him an alternative direction to academic and career success.

Seeing the benefits of the program, I was bothered that this student was acquiescent in demolishing his own future. To understand what was troubling this student, I had to go beyond the surface level of his behavioral problems and outbursts. On the rare occasions when he did participate in class, complete assignments and attend the program, he demonstrated his intelligence. He had the potential but his behavioral problems overshadowed his academic

abilities. In this situation, I could have effortlessly ignored Malik and focused my attention and energy on the remaining twenty-five students who were interested in their learning and reaping the benefits of the program.

My predicament was that I could not disregard Malik because he represented many of our alienated students who act unruly and, as a result, they are dismissed or categorized as the “problem child”. So, I took an interest in Malik as a point of intervention by seeking opportunities to know more about him as an individual and his home life. As someone whom he saw as an adversary (teacher-student relationship), Malik was averse to opening up to his teacher. I, however, was persistent in my efforts by asking him to remain after class or I would seek to talk to him during our lunch period and the “walls” he had put up slowly began coming down. In our conversations, I learned about the difficult life of a teenage, African-American male in an urban community. He was constantly negotiating how to survive in his “world” filled with the temptations of drugs and alcohol which were, unfortunately, the everyday experience of many of his family members and friends. An unstable family life made it even more tempting to succumb to this lifestyle as a way of escaping his home reality. Yet at the same time, he wanted an education but found it difficult to work within the structure of school. My becoming aware of the circumstances surrounding Malik’s life shed light to how I could best work with him to make better choices and guide him in a more positive direction. Though this may be viewed as too simplistic, Malik needed an adult to listen and understand him.

My experience has taught me that students, whether from unstable homes or more privileged ones, all yearn to be listened to and to be included in discussions that impact their lives. What do they have to offer? What knowledge and experience do they have that can contribute to educational reform? These probing questions are quite relevant but how would we know what they may or may not offer if we do not seek to ask them? For many students, there is more that can be done. I think

about the “Maliks” in my many classes who had serious behavior problems. But, as I interacted more with them and learned about them as individuals, they became less problematic. They were individuals who wanted to be heard/listened to. Years later after leaving the program, in my graduate study, I came across Freire’s writings and have often reflected on the “Maliks” I encountered through my work in public schools and educational programs.

### **Dialogue and Existence: A case for Inclusion of Students’ Experiences**

To this end, I turn my attention to Freire’s notion of “existence” and “dialogue.” Freire (2000) posits, “To exist, humanly is to name our world, to change it . . . Dialogue is the encounter between me, mediated by the world, in order to name the world (p. 69). Freire’s (1993) writings on the educational system critique the banking concept of teaching and learning. He charges that schools are primarily concerned with transmitting knowledge to students rather than creating possibilities for individuals to make meanings for themselves. Students in essence are “filled” with knowledge that is deposited and disconnected from their lived experiences. Freire (1993) argues,

It follows logically from the banking notion of consciousness that the educator’s role is to regulate the way the world “enters into” the students. The teacher’s task is to organize a process which already occurs spontaneously, to “fill” the students by making deposits of information which he or she considers to constitute true knowledge. (p. 57).

Freire calls our attention to educators’ subconscious exercise of domination to indoctrinate students into acclimatizing naively to the world. Students are being misguided when we do not teach them to question and seek truths for themselves but rather they rely on the knowledge being deposited in them. Provocative in his critique on the educational experience of individual learners however, Freire does not end there but provides an alternative approach to transform educational practices.

The alternative Freire proposes to a banking

concept is problem-posing education that develops a dialogical relation. Specifically,

Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach (2000, p. 67).

Teacher and student jointly share in the responsibility to teach each other. What they teach each other derives from different processes but what is vital in this is that education becomes the “constant unveiling of reality”. As the teacher presents the materials to her students, they question and reflect on the knowledge that is being presented in relation to their lives and consider its truth as engaged learners.

Two examples of dialogue with students illustrate the inclusion of students’ voices. The first is from Vivian Paley’s book, *You Can’t Say, You Can’t Play*. Paley (1992) teaches kindergarten at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools and has done extensive work on the uses of the storytelling technique in the classroom. In this particular text, she examines the moral dimensions of her classroom by introducing a new rule which is the title of her book. At the age of 60, she is more aware of voices of exclusion in the classroom which begins by these stinging three words, “You can’t play”. She asserts:

Certain children will have the right to limit the social experiences of their classmates (p. 3)... Being told you can’t play is a serious matter. Everyone knows the sounds of rejection. The rejected children know who they are, whether or not they tell us (p. 14-15).

For many of these children the classroom is their first real exposure to the public outside the protection of loved ones. Paley notes:

Children are required to share materials and teachers in a space that belongs to everyone. Within this public space a new concept of open access can develop if we choose to make this a goal. Here will be found not only the strong ties

of intimate friendship but, in addition, the habit of full and equal participation, upon request (p. 21).

As this story unfolds between Paley and her students, they consider the complexities of exclusion written into the game of play which becomes the game of life. What is particularly revealing about this story is the exchange between the teacher and her kindergartners. Paley, the teacher, writes the new rule on her door, informs her students of the established rule and waits for their response. Only four of twenty-five children in Paley’s kindergarten class find the idea appealing noting that those four are the ones most often rejected. As the other students mull over whether this rule is fair or not, what ensues is the discussion among the children and Paley about why this new rule is unfair to someone who may not necessarily want to play with a classmate. Throughout the weeks, the students engage with one another and their teacher to consider whether this rule will work or not. Anticipating how her students might respond differently, she uses storytelling to dialogue with her students and each other.

While this story takes a life of its own in the remaining pages, I was captivated by how Paley creates an environment to include her students’ voices into rules and regulations that impact these five year olds. Because the rule, as she notes, was flexible, it created an opportunity for students to interrogate its meanings and consider the lasting afflictions of rejection. This constructive process of engagement diminishes the teacher’s control over her students but rather empowers students to assert their voices of objection, acceptance and doubt.

### **The Lessons of 9/11: The Voice of Children to Bring Understanding**

Another example of how students’ voices were considered was the terror of September 11<sup>th</sup>. The aftermath of 9/11 prompted many to seek a better understanding of ourselves and the world around us. Consequently, in search of understanding, media personnel sought the perspectives of scholars, politicians, leaders, lay persons and that

of children also. Peter Jennings broadcasted a forum with children of diverse background (race, religious and school experience) that ranged in age from five to seventeen years to seek their interpretation of what had occurred to our country. What was significant about this televised program was the wisdom coming from the “mouths of babes”. They were teaching the adults how to begin the healing process. I wondered how many of us were listening to them.

There is a tendency common in schools, media, family and other institutions to consider multiplicities of voices when major catastrophes occur. We exhaust our efforts to dialogue with students/children under the assumption that only in the case of catastrophes should we warrant contact with adolescents to hear their voices. But, what we fail to realize is the daily cataclysm occurring in schools among many of our students. We have blinders on that do not permit us to see what is occurring daily in our schools. We proceed in our tasks, policy implementations and curricular decisions with the failure of not capturing the truths concealed in our schools. But as the two examples have depicted, students’ voices are vital to the processes that impact their lives.

### **Dialogue with Students for their Empowerment**

By dialoguing with our students, as educators, we can adequately respond to the concerns and ideas that are important to them. When we dialogue with students, we acknowledge them by consenting to let them articulate their visions, fears, and experiences to make meanings. We in education need to insist upon, I believe, the search for the voices of our students through dialogue.

Dialogue with students provides us with the opportunity to know and understand their experiences and world. They can provide us with new lenses to (re) examine pedagogical practices that attempt to address the problems of alienation, devaluing and inequality. There are no guarantees that we can bridge the distances caused by their alienation and devaluing but a meaningful effort to correct the inequities through care and compassion is a step in the right direction for them as well as for us. I concur with Maxine Greene (1991) who asserts what we can capture when we listen to them [students]:

There will be diverse, untidy dreams. The perspectives will differ dramatically; and what they disclose will sometimes be in conflict. (We need only consider what might be revealed through lenses of fairness or entitlement used by different viewers.) . . . We have, however, to keep searching for a language of compassion, if only to enable persons to speak with us and with one another about the dissonances they feel, the gaps, the voids, the consciousness of what is not yet – and what might be, what ought to be. (1991, p. 552-53).

Only when we seek our students can they become empowered and contribute to their education by examining their role and responsibility of what education can and should be. Finally, by including/seeking student voices, we are also empowering them to be “co-investigators” with the teacher (Freire, 2000). As co-investigators, they begin to search for their own significance through the guidance of their teachers. After all, isn’t that what education is about?

\*Pseudonym – For the purpose of anonymity, I chose not to use the actual name of the individual I am writing about in this paper.

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## AFRICAN WOMEN LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES

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### Abstract

This study explored culture shock as experienced by African women living in the United States during the spring 2002. Problems encountered because of first time experience in the U.S. were explored along with problems of re-entry shock when returning to Africa after some time in America. Data collection involved interviews with six women from different parts of Africa studying at a metropolitan university in a southwestern state. Using a questionnaire to structure the interview, the personal experiences including the arrival and adaptation process in the U.S. of these women were explored. Results included commonalities of costs, benefits, advantages and disadvantages these women of Africa experienced in the United States. Implications for institutions of higher education are discussed.

People come to the United States with visions that are partially correct and partially incorrect. Fears, apprehensions, and half-truths accompany their impressions that Americans are outgoing, friendly, strong, beautiful, and happy. America, being familiar with the idea of diversity, has a long history of integrating immigrants by assuming no matter where they came from they can adjust. Most women come to the United States because their aspirations had reached a level that could not be satisfied by local opportunities (Fatima, 2001). The United States is as foreign as any other country for immigrants. The American culture is known around the world via movies and television. In Africa, images of America are largely transmitted through hit series like "The Bold and The Beautiful," "The Fresh Prince of Bel Air" and "Days of Our Lives." Some of these media versions depict the life of a multimillionaire; others the relaxed atmosphere of American colleges; and others invite the viewer to the warm and cozy world of African-American population. These images have turned America into a virtual reality for a large segment of the African population. Refinement and fashion are among the concerns of the African women who assume they know America. The false expectations generated by the media's glamorous "America" often results in shock and hurt feelings when these women confront reality.

### Culture Shock

Culture shock is a potentially confusing and

disorienting experience when one enters a new culture (Lonner, 1986). The extent of the shock may be determined by how much control one has over the initial experience, intrapersonal factors, spatial-temporal factors, and geopolitical factors. Culture shock is also the discomfort or uneasiness that people feel when they deal with a different society, including its customs, institutions, inventions, language, technology and values (Kottak, 2001). The culture shock experience in an academic setting is much more complex as it can be a break or merger for the individual (Kottak, 2001).

People can suffer while adjusting to any new environment, especially if they are from a developing or third-world region like Africa. Problems encountered include lack of English proficiency, discrimination, and Americans' lack of knowledge about other cultures and countries. People cope with problems by finding out which systems worked best for them, then using these to handle the new situations (Fatima, 2001). Problems encountered by students at community colleges include lack of proper English language preparation, low interaction with domestic students, difficulties with bureaucratic functions like visa applications, securing housing in the surrounding area, and financial hardships (Chase & Mahoney, 1996; Hoenhauser, 1990; Mewwörter, 1992; Pfaffenroth, 1997).

Another difficulty experienced by nonnative students is attending class lectures and the



problems caused by instructors assuming the students' shared common knowledge. Lynch (1994) pointed out that shared background knowledge was a key component of lecture comprehension and that problems arose when instructors failed to take into account the fact that overseas students lacked this background knowledge frequently prerequisite for the building of new knowledge.

Graduate students revealed that they commonly experienced difficulties adapting to the host society and the acquisition of the 'social literacy' of the host society (Huxur, Mansfield, Mnazar, Schuetze & Segawa, 1996). Huxur et al. recommended that higher education institutions provide comprehensive and up to date information regarding academic life which would familiarize students with expectations before they arrive. Individuals intending to live or study abroad are encouraged to learn about the other culture, to acknowledge and come to terms with differences, including responses they may have toward the host culture, the negative ones in particular. The students need attitudes and culture traits that provide culture contextual learning (Hess, 1997).

### **Women in Africa**

Women of Africa have been denied access to the political realms and marginalized from the formal economy where they exist unrecognized. They do not have the power to protest against this economic model that not only deprives them of opportunities for self-realization but also shifts to them the entire burden of maintaining social cohesion within families and communities. In the poor African countries, powerful men make millions of dollars everyday on the backs of unpaid women's labor. Women in Africa occupy the low paid jobs. Education in most African countries does not favor upward mobility of women. African cultural elements and schools perpetuate the social system and tend to discourage girls and women (Otieno, 2001). These are the major reasons women are looking for a break-through. America is perceived as providing that opportunity to African women who consider America as a source of empowerment for

themselves to end the violations, abuse, and exploitation of the patriarchal male driven process.

African women see America as an answer to poverty. For many African women who live in a world where the possibilities of survival diminish every day, the United States is the vessel into which they can pour their dreams for a better life (Silvestre, 1991; Talton, 1992). As a central figure, the United States provides African women with cultural markers they need to feel a part of a world culture. They face the anguish of an uncertain future and endeavor to carve out a better life for themselves. Cultural factors arising from West Africa arise from a 'triple cultural heritage,' African, Euro-Christian, and Islamic (Quist, 2001) making life even more difficult for women in that area.

Another reason why African women come to the United States is education. Education in Africa is a privilege for the girl child; so every mother's dream is to have her daughter go abroad. The African woman wants her daughter to get what she wished for, but most fathers will pay school fees only for boys and not for girls. The Americanization of children, especially girls, is the African mother's hope so that her daughter will not have to experience bondage as they have. America with its better culture that will have considerations for them is the wish of every mother, even the poorest, to obtain a higher education for her children.

In the book, *African Woman*, by Silvestre (1991) and in a later edition, Talton (1992) narrates stories of two African women. Aminata Diop fled Mali in October 1990 at the age of twenty-two to escape from genital mutilation and an arranged marriage. She took refuge in France before coming to the United States where she was denied asylum. Fauziya Kassindiya from Togo was seventeen years-old when she fled her home with the help of her mother and sister escaping from an arranged marriage, termination of her studies, and genital mutilation she was to undergo that day. These are just two stories the African woman can tell but there is more that goes on to make these women seek a solution in America.

### **Coming to America**

Some African women will come to the United States on a limited budget which causes suffering and difficulty. However, higher education is expensive in America, but the financial aid and scholarships for bright students encourage most of the African women students. Men face the same barriers as women on a variety of issues like culture shock (Piet-pelon & Hornby, 1992) making it encouraging for the women. African women are also inspired into the academic realms by the knowledge of specialized training which allows them to enter the job market (Perry, 1989). David Perry described how the American system could equip students with the technical expertise that they would need to land a good job. Another important reason for African women coming to the United States is to escape mocking and misery of being a single parent because in Africa, it is considered a shame. They know that the American system can give them a chance to be someone and have some rights.

Most women find a solution with the help of others who want a better future for them. Travel and study abroad opens students to three major areas, the host culture itself, new perspectives of their own culture, and self learning. Culture shock could be used for students' growth (Levy, 2000). International students on campus broaden the global and cultural perspectives of American students (Mahoney, 1996; Desruisseux, 1998; Gomez, 1987; Hatton 1995; Segal, 1994) as they provide a learning opportunity for the American students regarding global awareness, cultural sensitivity, and diversity (Erwing, 1992).

### **Re-entry to Africa**

Another issue the present study examined was re-entry shock. Women find re-entry more problematic than men (Forsynthe, 1978; Koehler, 1980; Wallach & Metcalf, 1980) and it could be more severe than adjustment problems in a foreign country. This is because in the African society nothing changes. So the changes in a person who lives in another society can cause a lot of conflicts between them and their native society.

People raised in different cultures learn space

and time as children, past experiences lay the foundation for present perceptions. People are adaptable, and perception enables them to erase past experience or, more importantly, alter perception of learning (Hall, 1966). When people live in a foreign country for a long time, their perception will shift to a different use of space and time. Space and time is a manifold (meaning world or product of the senses) that shapes all patterns of behavior. If people do not share a culture's sense of space and time, they find it difficult to behave properly in social situations. This can in turn affect emotions among friends and the environment. Reverse culture shock causes feelings of anger, frustration, nostalgia, loneliness, depression and sadness as one is different and does things differently from others.

### **Investigative Focus**

Institutions of higher education are uniquely situated to facilitate the inclusion of non-American students into the American cultural milieu. To enhance our collective institutional insight into the unique challenges faced by women of Africa who seek their own dreams within our intellectual tutelage, the present study examined the experiences of six African women who came to study in America as a means of escaping the many negative potential life events. Through qualitative methodology, the researchers explored the experiences of these women as they navigated a southwestern plains state's academic culture with anticipated, but mainly unanticipated outcomes. Additionally, two women revealed their African re-entry with its many unforeseen consequences.

### **Method**

#### **Informants**

During the spring of 2002, six African women were selected among those pursuing their studies at a single metropolitan university in a southwestern plains state of the United States. Participants were assured of confidentiality which encouraged them to share information some of which appeared to cause them to become less than comfortable. The informants had been in the United States for more than one year which indicated that they had adjusted to the

environment. Out of the six participants, two had returned home to Africa so that a picture of re-entry challenges could be drawn. Also, the participants chosen had to be comfortable releasing information to the interviewer without fear of intimidation or immigration connections. Although one of the participants had dropped out of school, she was still listed as a student according to the university records. Among the participants, two came from wealthy African background, two from economically poor African background, and other two from middle income background with educated parents. Getting this range of subjects helped in creating a more complete picture of the type of students that come to America, their experiences, and their varied backgrounds. The women were between the ages of 18 and 35 years old. Only one of the participants was married, the other five were single. All were pursuing a degree either graduate or undergraduate.

### **Instrumentation**

An outlined-interview was developed containing questions that were intended to explore the particular points of interest with each of the participants. The questions provided a starting point of each conversation and the participants were encouraged to expound on the issues and provide details of their own perceptions and interpretations of events. All responses were noted in a journal which was secured in a lock box. A copy of the outlined interview questions is provided in the Appendix.

### **Procedure**

The interviewer arranged with each informant a convenient time for the interview. During the telephone conversation a briefing of the study was provided to solicit participation. Each initial interview was conducted at the restaurant of the informant's choice which provided a comfortable environment that would support the personal discussion. After the discussion over lunch, the interviewer and the participant composed an outline of the responses. A second meeting was then arranged. This was a more serious meeting that brought about the documentation of the

information released earlier. During this meeting, points of interests not covered earlier were raised or clarity on some of the points was obtained. The participants were afforded the opportunity to make changes or corrections to the documented work in order to confirm that information released was the way the participant wanted it. A final copy of each interview was checked by that participant and a consent form signed to allow release of the information. This procedure was followed for each of the six participants.

The responses to the interview questions were compared for emergent strands. During the data collection, traits of the study that were similar or differed were noted together in blocks so as to bring about a clear picture of the situation. Then themes in the data were compared. Thematic questions had been created before the interview processes that were used in the comparative stage of the findings.

### **Results**

Of the six women interviewed, five admitted that they experienced culture shock when they arrived in the United States. One participant did not suffer from culture shock although she still had to go through the adapting process. The reason she indicated for not experiencing shock was that she had visited the United States before with her parents and had lived in Europe for two years before traveling to the United States. She also was from a country with a stable economy, a rich family and was the only child of educated parents. Her parents could afford to pay all her expenses in America. They understood that she needed help.

The second participant had suffered mildly from culture shock because of loneliness and being homesick. She had never been as responsible as she had to be in a foreign country and she never knew how to do basic things for herself. Being homesick made her resent the country and everything that came with it yet, this turned out to be her solution for culture shock. She was from a background of privilege, but her parents, who were uneducated, thought she only needed a plane ticket and her first semester tuition fees to become rich enough to support herself.

The third participant suffered culture shock because America did not meet her expectations. Quitting a managerial position and luxurious lifestyle in Africa, she came to America on the pretext of education which she currently felt was a big mistake. The elegant lifestyle hoped for was nowhere in sight. It was disappointing for her to discover that she had to spend more than she had. Her parents were not willing to take care of her, as they thought she should have married a rich man who would have also improved their status instead of flying away and “forgetting them.” Her mother had assisted this woman without the knowledge of the father. Now that she was here, she believed her mother was waiting for a plane ticket to come to America enabling the mother to get a job and thus run away from a system that doesn’t accept divorce.

The fourth participant suffered severe culture-shock that resulted in poor grades and suspension from school for a semester. Her reason for culture shock was that everything was so different and the pace of life in this country was too fast to keep up with. People were not as friendly to her as she hoped they would be. She did not have any money with her. She had a fund raiser at home with friends and family to enable her to come for further studies. She had hoped to get a job immediately and pay her tuition. With all the extra money she wanted to build a new house for her family and at least provide food and clothing for them. The family hoped she would be their key out of poverty.

The fifth participant suffered from mild culture shock, but stated she did not have the experience for long in that she knew that she was here with a purpose and had no time to be shocked. She had come to America with a purpose and she was going to accomplish her goal no matter how hard it would be. She arrived at the airport with \$75 in her pocket, leaving a child behind, and running away from mockery and poverty. She was determined not to drop out of school but to better herself, her child and her family. The experiences she shared were eating from the garbage and sleeping on the floor for six months. She reported surprise and

some disappointment.

The sixth participant suffered from culture shock as she had come together with her husband who decided to exploit her and her children. They were surprised about the new environment and she felt the shock when her children felt it. She was running away from a war-torn country with her husband and children with no money. When amnesty was not granted, she turned to going to school to keep her family here instead of being deported. She had a story to tell about her first time experiences and how being new in an environment contributed to her current situation.

From the results of the women’s experiences, culture shock is a major problem facing African women living in the United States, but the extent of the experience varied with the individual. The reasons for culture shock varied with individuals as their experiences vary with wealth, attitude, and purpose for their coming to America. Most of the individuals who came from poor backgrounds did not experience the shock for very long, did better in school, and met their goals of survival.

The results also suggest that when they suffered from culture shock the women tried to develop solutions and ways to get themselves out of their situations. Most of them had strategies which resulted in differing degrees of success for each woman. Although most of the women had succeeded, Participants # 3 and # 4 had their family members living with them or had become the advisors of new students coming in with similar situations.

The first participant did not have a problem with culture shock and is still in school. Her living style is below the rest of the participants as she doesn’t have a car and still lives in the school housing, so she sometimes seems to be a burden to others. She has not always performed as would be expected of her academically. Also, she felt she put a financial strain on her parents as life in America is far more expensive compared to life in Africa. Although they have money in Africa, her parents cannot afford everything in America and as a result her brothers and sisters have not been able to travel abroad and get the education she is

getting. She indicates her hopes to go back after she graduates to look for a job in a country where unemployment is 40%.

The second participant did suffer cultural shock. Her mother visited her to comfort her because she had received a letter from the school about her daughter's severe stress condition. Her mother moved her from California to the lower paced rural state where this present was conducted. The mother helped her daughter settle down and begin a new school. This informant reported that she now had a work permit and was doing odd jobs in restaurants to make ends meet. She indicated that if she were to re-live the experience she would have stayed home and gone to college there.

The third participant had severe consequences of culture shock. She quit school where she was pursuing her second masters degree. As she could not imagine doing odd jobs to maintain her lifestyle, she married somebody to get past immigration, and then divorced him. The culture shock was so severe that she suffered stress which developed to depression, but was receiving treatment at the time of the interview. Her sister had since come to the United States to help her and they were living together.

The fourth participant did suffer culture shock and it affected her grades making her find a reason to get the shock away from her. She resolved to work illegally for two semesters and then went back to school as she cleared her school fees that were in arrears. She reported she now works two jobs and goes to school full time. Although she had little sleep, she was still in school and planned to graduate in fall 2002. Additionally, she had been successful in providing all necessities for her family back home including a new home.

The fifth participant got out of her shock quickly as on her flight she had plotted solutions. Although it was not as easy as she had hoped, it took her just two weeks to get adapted as she had to reach her goal. The first days she did not have anywhere to go and could not afford a home so she left her luggage at an apartment office and looked for a job. She worked three different jobs and went

to school full time. Her solution to culture shock was working and having no time for the shock experience. She was in her final semester in college, worked just one job with a work permit, had brought her son and sister to live with her, and had acquired enough property at home in Africa to make her a rich person upon her return. She had a story to tell about her first day experiences, "experiences are the way you take them but eating or sleeping under poor conditions does not mean you'll be like that for ever. You have the choice of your conditions."

The sixth participant suffered a secondary culture shock from her children. She decided to go to school to improve her life and be independent. She had divorced and it was much easier as she had adapted to the society here. She helped her children out of culture shock by reminding them of the conditions they had left behind and how privileged they were to be alive. She also went through the first time experience by enrolling in college which in turn offered her a job. Her first times were psychologically tormenting, as the new environment was too good to be true compared to where they had come from. She felt the worst problems were living with the past and being in a society that did not seem to understand her problems.

While only two of the informants had been back home back to Africa, the other four indicated that the main reason for not returning home to Africa was that their visas had expired which meant that they are aware that going back would be final. They all indicated a conviction that going home would be disastrous, as acquiring a visa to return to the US would be a problem they did not believe to be feasible. Coming to America had been only a chance in "a million" which could not be repeated.

Two years ago, one participant traveled home to visit her family and move them to a new house. She also went to purchase some investments. She indicated she hoped to return home and live better than she did before she came to America. When she returned home she suffered re-entry shock worse than she had when she arrived in America.

This was because she had changed according to her family; she talked “louder” than she had before, and she “dressed badly” as far as they were concerned. It had taken her some time to adjust to the “cultural respect” demanded by her family and community, but she still believed it had been worth going back. The other participant had gone home to Africa to get her child and to invest the money she had made in America. She also wanted to make sure her family was using the money she had sent them “for a good cause”. She felt that although things were different and she seemed to be boastful that she did not need a lot of time to adjust. She just prepared herself psychologically and that made it easier to adapt to the different environment.

### **Discussion**

The emergent theme revealed by these women was the necessity of finding a strategy to deal with their problems. Radiating from this core was the intrinsic drive to never “give up” or “turn back” from the goal. The informants discussed common strands which included a process cluster, such as decision making, dropping out of school, and coping strategies, and a product cluster, such as language discrimination, ignorance toward their culture as well as their own of the American culture, and re-entry shock. The women also made several suggestions regarding others who deal with similar situations. Each woman had made the decision of leaving her home in Africa for a better future and had elected to pursue an education was one pathway to their goals. These women had left Africa to escape poverty, forced marriages and customs that do not recognize them as humans and equal citizens. When they came to America hoping to get help, they were faced with the reality of restrictions in the job sector and many opted to work illegally to make a living, rather than being beggars.

### **Dropping out of school**

The university these women attended had a high rate of retention of African women students when compared to other similar colleges in the United States. Out of the six women interviewed only one had dropped out. These six African

women living in the United States were aware that one day they would return home and, therefore, they considered education paramount. They had minimized their expenditures in the US in order to save as much money as possible for properties and investments back home in Africa. They have also succeeded in pulling their families out of poverty.

### **Language discrimination**

In the recounts of first time experiences, the participants did have a problem particularly with the difference between the American English and the British version which they were familiar with. The two participants from French and Portuguese speaking countries had far more difficult time with the language of America. It took most of the participants some time to adapt to the different language usage; use of idioms, jokes and other traits were very difficult.

### **Ignorance**

Most of the women had to face people who were ignorant of African heritage and cultures. They had to face the reality of not being known as being from a particular country, but as African. Basic things like directions were difficult to get as most people knew their own neighborhoods but seemed as lost as the foreign-born informants were when it came to locating businesses, addresses, etc. out of the immediate vicinity. Questions that Americans frequently asked made the women feel like unwanted people. Some of informants indicated they felt troubled that people could ask them how they came, perceiving them as coming on “animal back” which made their adaptation process much harder.

### **Coping strategies**

Culture shock is a reality and does affect people differently according to their situations, but African women did try to find solutions in the host environment as they looked forward to the long term benefits. They were patient with the adaptation process maintaining their hopes for the end successes. Many women expressed satisfaction with having met someone who made their lives easier by showing them around the community or university as well as explaining the processes of how things are done in this culture. A

common strategy to deal with work restriction which limited their financial resources was that of working illegally for the first nine months just to be able to buy food and survive in a much faster world than they had been accustomed. Some of the women had family, particularly parents, who could afford to come over to help settle their daughters when things seemed to be impossible or if their daughter had threatened to return home. Another common coping strategy reported was that of making American friends who assisted in the transition. Most of all, the burning desire to succeed kept the women focused making it easier for them to cope with culture shock.

### **Re-entry shock**

Re-entry shock was also an experience two had to undergo and all will someday face upon returning to Africa as the countries are not changing. Upon returning to their homelands, the women will be expected to change their foreign ways which result in accusations of being boastful, proud and spoiled. Most people think of any woman who has studied in America as rich and will, therefore, expect handouts or assistance from them.

### **Future suggestions**

The participants also offered several tactics which could help newcomers with culture shock. The women made the following recommendations:

1. The university could provide incoming foreign students tours of the campus and surrounding community when they arrived as this could help familiarize the new immigrant with the new surroundings.
2. The university could collaborate with the

governmental regulatory agencies to ease restrictions on working as there appear to be enough jobs. This collaborative effort could ensure that the new arrivals were not treated with hostility and suspicion as they are harmless people who just want to make a living while attending school.

3. The 20 hour work week restriction on an F-1 visa (student status visa) should be eased as these women considered themselves are proof that one can work hard and still make good grades in school.

4. Pairing each new foreign born student with American host parents through the university was another notion which deserves consideration. The six women indicated strong support for host parents not just for African women but for all international students rather than a chosen few.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined a group of students that has been too frequently overlooked by the universities, women from Africa. Assistance for students from vastly different cultures would make the adaptation process far less traumatic. Host parents appear to be the principle recommendation of the informants as the best way to assist non-American students as they become acquainted with a new place, a new institution, and a new culture. Host parents could meet the students in the planning stage so proper communication could be well established before their arrival in the United States. Such host parents would be able to guide the student on basic things like money management. Such a support-structure would assist in eliminating the loneliness commonly felt by newly arrived international students.

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## **APPENDIX 1.**

### **An outlined interview.**

The interview questions were in the following order.

1. The participant's name.
2. Their country of origin.
3. State living in the United States.
4. Their year of arrival.
5. Their expectations of America before arriving.
6. The participants were requested to describe their reason for coming to the United States.
7. Had their expectations of the United States been met? If the response was yes, how? If the response was No? Why?
8. The participants described their first month's experience in detail, from their point of arrival. Who met them? How did adjust? And what problems did they face?
10. The participants were questioned if they did experienced culture shock. If yes, they described when, how, why subsequent adjustments were made in their behavior or beliefs. If no: Why did they think they were not affected?
11. If the participants were to re-live the experience, would they still make the same choice or would they opt for some other country or state?
12. They described how their experience had affected their length of stay on personal levels; whether positive or negative.
13. They also discussed the changes that need to be made to make things easier for women coming from Africa.
14. Each participant summarized the cultural differences between their community at home and the American culture.
15. They each described their present feelings and how long it took to adjust.
16. The participants also gave advice to friends traveling from Africa to the U.S.A.
17. The participants were also questioned on what they thought their response to their culture would be if they returned home.
18. They described their expectations of their first time experience upon return to their home countries and for those who had already traveled back home, they described their first week experience.

This study was supported in part by Department of Education, University of Central Oklahoma. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Dr.Malinda H. Green, UCO 100 N. University Drive Campus, Box 176, Edmond, Oklahoma. Phone:405-974-2107.

## JOHN DEWEY'S MODEL FOR "FIGURING IT OUT": UTILIZING A DEWEYAN METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH FOR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY REFORM

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### Abstract

This paper seeks to address John Dewey's scientific method as it led to school reform in America during the early part of the twentieth century. Two questions will be explored: 1) What was John Dewey's method of analysis and how did he use the methods to investigate social problems in America for the purposes of proposing school reforms in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? It is claimed that Dewey engaged in observations and communicated his findings in the form of a "democratic purposing" for schools, so as to set the standard against which all school practices were to be measured. Dewey's pragmatic method, often referred to as "instrumentalism," has often been credited with reforming teaching and learning practice in America for more than a half century. 2) If Dewey actually applied his pragmatic method ("figuring it out") to America's turn of the century social conditions, and subsequently formulated a template for school reforms nationwide to reconstruct such conditions, can his methods and template be applied to our twenty-first century social and cultural conditions to suggest new school-based reforms?

### A Deweyan Challenge for Twenty-first Century Reformers

Professor Philip Jackson of the University of Chicago, speaking before a group of educational researchers in New Orleans at the spring of 2002 meeting of the American Educational Research Association was asked, "What would John Dewey say about school reform today?" He replied, "Wouldn't he (John Dewey) want us to figure it (school reform) out ourselves?" Jackson's response presupposed that problem solving, tempered by the employment of ongoing critical analysis, of the kind that John Dewey so thoroughly practiced and endorsed, could allow educational scholars and practitioners to ferret out solutions for today's social problems. To discover how one might do this, it is first necessary to examine John Dewey's methods of social analysis. Next we must seek to determine if they can be employed to make sense of some of today's educational reforms such as school accountability, and so forth. Finally, we need to test their power to reconstruct both the problematic conditions as well as the factors that create them.

### Rationale for a Deweyan Approach/Template Ideas of Others – Living and Past

John Dewey often remarked that he did not lead the "progressive" or "New Education" reforms of

his day, but rather observed trends and capitalized on them (Dewey, 1939). Instead, he was in the habit of using the ideas of others to fill out his philosophy of social change. "My philosophic views did not develop in a vacuum and that I took seriously philosophic doctrines that were current" (Schillip, 1939, p. 522). In this statement we see that Dewey both respected the pedagogy of others, and adopted and adapted these theories and practices for his own educational reform ideas.

For example, while a professor at the University of Chicago and head of its "Laboratory School," Dewey met with Colonel Francis Wayland Parker, (often considered the "father of the progressive education,") head of the Cook County Normal School to "set his educational watch" and get Parker's views about instructional techniques and curricula reforms. He was also a close friend of Jane Addams, the founder of Hull House and inspiration for the "Settlement House" (social work) movement, from whom he learned about teaching techniques. Dewey's daughter, Jane wrote of her father, "Dewey's faith in democracy as a guiding force in education took on both a sharper and a deeper meaning because of Hull House and Jane Addams" (Schillip, 1939, p. 30).

Dewey also relied heavily upon the educational theorists of the past. For example, he relied on

MANCUSO: JOHN DEWEY'S MODEL FOR "FIGURING IT OUT": UTILIZING A DEWEYAN  
METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH FOR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY REFORM

Jean Jacques Rousseau for his belief in the importance of the child engaging in natural experiences and the significance of the child's senses in development. Dewey differed from Rousseau where the latter assumed the development of native abilities was an end in itself. Instead Dewey argued that such experiences were, a means to social efficiency "in terms of rendering external service to others" (Hickman & Alexander, 1998, p. 264). Thus we can see that Dewey relied on other learned individuals, both living and historic, but he deviated in areas where his own more pragmatic thought and observations led him to different conclusions.

### **Dewey's Laboratory Schools**

Actual reports of how John Dewey's Elementary School operated at the University of Chicago are presented by teachers, Catherine Camp Mayhew and Anna Camp Edwards. At the later termed, "Laboratory School," new approaches and methods were developed with findings posted for others to view. The school operated as an experimental school – with the aim to test working hypotheses. "The test of learning was the increasing ability of the child to meet new situations through habits of considered action which were even more social in character" (Mayhew & Edwards, 1936, p. vi). Several of these new ideas need comment here.

The social setting of the school itself was designed to form a community. It was felt that the young could only be trained to social life if the school functioned as a community. Mayhew and Edwards note, "The social phase of education was put first (Mayhew, 1936, p.467).

In addition "imagination" was identified as the means of an expansion of the student's "horizons and internal deepening within the child's present experience" (Mayhew & Edwards, 1936 p. 172). Within this experimental setting, students pushed meanings toward those things that were beyond what was physically present.

Finally the curriculum was organized to represent the "occupations" found in the society at large. Students were taught how ordinary products

such as the milk they drank during lunchtime and the clothing they wore were first raw materials and then the subject of industrial methods of production and distribution.

The point of the teaching methods in addition to the curriculum in the Laboratory School was to link the child to the community by creating a microcosm of that larger community within the classroom. School became a miniature society within which children learned the values of cooperation, intelligent inquiry, problem solving, and the application of findings to changing social conditions (Axtelle & Burnett, 1970, 270-280). In short, they learned to "figure things out."

### **Observations in *Schools of To-morrow***

Dewey's observations of schools as reported with his daughter, Evelyn, help to illustrate another of Dewey's methods employed in "figuring it out." His descriptions in *Schools of To-morrow* illustrate how Dewey practices his own species of pragmatism. Dewey wrote, "We hope that through the description of classroom work we may help to make some theories living realities to the reader" (Dewey, 1915, preface p.2).

Dewey's school selections appeared random, thus easing any regional criticisms as the schools were from different states – Alabama, Missouri, Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio. His "figuring it out" was global—not confined to one specific setting/geographical location. His pluralistic pedagogy was applicable to all with each teacher or pupil engaging in nuances to address their own specific community. It illustrated a concept of common purpose in a large pluralistic country by utilizing schools from regions of the country that were markedly different.

### **Descriptions in Written Form**

Besides making his observations, Dewey also engaged in communication by putting his descriptions in written form for others to adopt, critique, and/or refine. Dewey was not bound by speaking theoretically, he communicated his work and then subjected it to reading by others. Once published (communicated), Dewey used public reviews of these ideas to re-fashion his philosophy

of education. One can think of Dewey's book publication as a means of determining trustworthiness of his observations. Thus, submitting of one's observations to others is still considered one of the most important credibility checks.

### **Dewey's Method to "Figuring it Out"**

#### **Pragmatism**

How does Dewey define his own methodology - pragmatism? Pragmatism, as envisioned by Dewey, is "instrumentalism." Dewey argued in his books such as *How We Think* and *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, that it is "the rule of referring all thinking, all reflective considerations to consequences for final meaning and test" (Winn, 1959, p.105).

It is important to note that pragmatism was not born with Dewey. John Dewey acknowledged that his pragmatism was inspired by Charles Sanders Peirce. Dewey wrote, "what Mr. Peirce has happily termed 'the laboratory habit of mind' extended into every arena where inquiry may fruitfully be carried on" (Winn, 1959, p. 105). This definition of pragmatism further led to Dewey's engaging in academic discourse positioned on the evolution of academic thought by others as a means of "figuring it out." The criterion for successful thinking is measured by subjecting the inquiry activities ("laboratory habit of mind") to the test of their impact (real consequences). Hence, Dewey's view that ideas operated like "instruments" (Dewey, 1910) resulted in his version of pragmatism emphasizing the "figuring" side of the thought-practice in his educational experiments.

#### **Scientific Approach to a Problem**

Before one can look at how one might approach a problem it is useful to recognize how Dewey defined a problem. "A situation that is indeterminate may become problematic when there is not only confusion but doubt" (Kennedy, 1970, p. 65). These situations of doubt compel a method of inquiry. Dewey's method of inquiry went beyond getting the facts and finding out what was true in the existing social order. "Dewey's scientific method had a great deal to say about

what ought to exist. Otherwise, the scientific inquiry was subordinated to predetermined ends" (Leys, 1970, p. 135).

Inquiry compels intelligent behavior instead of blind direction. This intelligent behavior "yields a higher degree of understanding and control" (Kennedy, 1970, p. 67). One comes to know or to possess knowledge in the "context of inquiry and inquiry itself is a self-corrective process" (Bernstein, 1966, p.112). Dewey elaborated his method of inquiry by stating "meanings are capable of being separated from the special cases of knowledge in which they originally appear and of being incorporated and funded cumulatively in habits so as to constitute *mind*, and constitute intelligence when actually applied in new experiences...." (Dewey, 1939, p. 564). Dewey recognized the evolutionary revelation of knowledge as new experiences and new times challenge our previous ends to inquiry. "Conclusions of a given inquiry become means for carrying on further inquiry" (Dewey, 1939, p. 573).

#### **Critical Components of a Deweyan Template**

"Democracy" and "adjustment to societal changes" are two more components that must take center-stage in any academic realm of Deweyan philosophy. Dewey espoused a democracy of "associated living" which if not taken in context of societal changes does not accomplish the task of making sure "its members are educated to personal initiatives and adaptability" (Dewey, 1916, p. 88). Dewey felt that the school should mirror the activities, aspirations, and interests of society. He felt a school should not be a monastery, which was divorced from the larger society, but instead a miniature community within that society (Mayer, 1962).

#### **Education as a means for a democracy**

A democracy, as John Dewey (1916) described it, is:

... primarily a mode of associated living of conjoint communicated experience. The extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to

**MANCUSO: JOHN DEWEY'S MODEL FOR "FIGURING IT OUT": UTILIZING A DEWEYAN  
METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH FOR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY REFORM**

consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and national territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their activity (p.87).

Dewey promoted schools being institutions of democracy in order to teach children in preparation for participation in a democratic society (Maxcy, 1991). Education allows the person to escape from their social group to which they were born (Dewey, 1916). Education becomes regarded as the means for all to enjoy and participate in a democratic society.

**Educational adjustment to societal changes**

Until the time of Dewey, traditional methods of education embodied a "pouring in" of knowledge. Students were "little adults" dressed in the attire of adults, sitting in neat rows of desks with a classroom set up for listening. The traditional school was viewed as a self-contained, single-room institution with only one teacher. The school was at the center of a philosophy of American individualism (Dewey, 1899).

John Dewey's model of schooling recognized the importance of social progress. It rejected the traditional model that saw society as determined by outside forces such as evolution, chaos, or rationality. Dewey's model was necessary as a response to the many changes brought on by the industrial revolution. Printing was invented along with the locomotive and telegraph providing intercommunication. All currents of society were able to access knowledge. Dewey's concept moved training, which was once handled in the home, into the school. The thought was that children would become more useful and prepared for life as a result. The goal was to prepare each child into societal membership. This included a saturation of the spirit of service and an instruction in self-direction. This was to guarantee a larger harmonious society (Dewey, 1899).

Dewey recognized that the traditional model of schooling would not meet the needs of a democratic society in a new and emerging

industrialized state. The traditional model was agrarian and it lent itself well to a continuation of a society with a marked division of social classes. One was born into a social class, was educated within that domain and remained in that domain. Social progress, marked by industrialization, allowed Dewey to make adjustments in educational thought whereby everyone could access experiential knowledge. It was important that individual thought remain prevalent to stand guard in ensuring a discourse to address emerging societal concerns. Thus, the school adjusted to the societal change.

**Summary of Deweyan Approach**

Dewey's "figuring it out," then, incorporated learning from other experts, living and dead. However, it also included a reconstruction of their ideas when Dewey deemed this necessary. Oftentimes, researchers look for "the answer"; however, Dewey found the appropriate response to be in the critical discourse between individuals as they communicate their thoughts and observations. Dewey modeled his approach by communicating what he observed in practical situations. Once published (communicated), he used public reviews of these ideas to re-fashion his philosophy of education.

**The Application of Dewey's System of "Figuring it Out" to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Conditions**

This system of analysis in which Dewey engaged may be used in looking at today's educational reforms in their social contexts. Inquiry, which goes beyond determining the facts, would be the method that John Dewey would use. Setting the inquiry upon the theorists – past and present, along with observation, communication, and critique would supply us with the instruments necessary to address school reform toward "terminating in an art of social control – the way that Dewey and his mentor, T. H. Green, believed philosophy should operate" (Dewey, 1929, p. 127, Kennedy, 1970, p. 62). Pragmatism as our own "figuring it out" may test the fruits of our post-modern school reform efforts in the twenty-first century.

### **“Figuring It Out Ourselves” – Following Deweyan Methodology**

While many indeterminate situations are creating doubt in modern educational reform efforts, John Dewey would probably characterize several issues as offensive direction rather than development toward a democratic school purposing. It is for this reason that these situations of doubt merit addressing by modern educational philosophers as one adheres above all else to Dewey’s democratic purposing for schools. These issues are current accountability measures, a lack of response to societal changes involving social relationships within the school, and a lack of response to societal changes within the community.

#### **Accountability**

Standardized test scores are currently being used as a measure of a school’s effectiveness. Criterion and norm-referenced tests are administered to assess students’ performances on benchmark knowledge. Other factors such as dropout rate and attendance rates may also be included. These measures describe a school’s effectiveness and for some in the “community” the measures speak of the school’s “success.”

Assessment through a testing instrument constitutes a type of “pouring in.” Here the “pouring in” involves a standardized package of knowledge acquired through some forms of critical problem solving. The problem arises when the standardized package is not tied to associated living in a democratic society. School conditions should favor “learning in the sense of discovery and not in that of storing away what others pour into them” (Dewey, 1916, p.159) even if it has some aspects of problem solving. The methodology involved in preparing for testing and then testing would constitute movement back toward traditional education accommodated through desks in rows and uniformity of learning. Individualism and individual problem solving, rather than group processes of interacting in a democratic process and society, would take precedent.

Dewey warned educators against general ends

of education that are ultimate (passing the test). When these ends are cut off from any specific context and are unrelated to situational problems, these ends become “platitudinous ... creat(ing) additional problems”(Dewey, 1916, Axtelle & Burnett, 1970, p.264) Passing the test can be looked at as “attaching interest as a feature of seductiveness to material otherwise indifferent” to all learners and to secure attention and effort by offering a bribe of pleasure (passing to the next grade). Dewey regards this as “... ‘soft’ pedagogy; as a ‘soup-kitchen theory of education” (Dewey, 1916, p. 126).

Denying equal importance to the inclusion of vocational course work as a means of industry training would not hold well against the Deweyan template. The child’s time devoted to understanding of how all components of industry interact through vocational training would be devoted to remediation of deficit skills, which would be assessed on the accountability instrument. However, there remains a need for industries training.

An example is provided much as was the pragmatic method employed by Dewey whenever he needed to make a point. The example is gleaned from an observation. It addresses the need for contemporary industries training. (This was typical of Dewey’s illustrations in Schools of Tomorrow). It would go like this. A young man enters a convenience store and places a bottle of orange juice on the counter. He then proceeds to get a cup of ice from the ice machine. The clerk registers one orange juice, one cup, and a small fee for the ice. The young man becomes enraged as he claims that there should be no cost for ice and that the clerk is overcharging him. The clerk tries to present a mini-lesson on the need for the charges. The mini-lesson proves not to be sufficient to calm the lack of understanding for the charges. Vocational course work in schools provides a foundation for understanding the industry of the larger society. The need remains today; however, with class time consumed with teaching for the general aim of passing the test and remediating deficit skills, the purpose of schooling slowly

becomes altered. One of the means (standardized curriculum content) toward educating for a democratic society has strong potential of becoming the "end." This "knowledge" toward passing a test is accumulated and then displayed (Dewey, 1916). This goal displacement is often a criticism of organizations (Etzioni, 1964). Dewey was alert to this potential in the educational organization and the Deweyan template does not allow for this goal displacement of educating toward a general aim of passing a test prescribing interest.

### **School Effectiveness**

Assessing an entire school's effectiveness without consideration of how the school and its individual members respond to difficulties and capture the democratic process has not been included in the new accountability by testing instruments. In Dewey's eyes, holding to a democratic purpose is the best measure of a school's effectiveness, but today's formulas ignore it completely. Democratic processes are the basis upon which society renews itself. It is the conveying of a community experience (Dewey, 1916).

The consequence, or Dewey's true test of inquiry activities, of continuing to substitute the goal of today's effectiveness for schools as the socialization agency for a democracy would for Dewey constitute a return to what he termed "traditional education." However, here it is the urban, high-poverty student that is unable to be educated into a democratic process for social mobility. The measure of the student's schooling toward inclusion in a democratic society goes without report.

In summary, today's student and teacher accountability and school effectiveness programs would be educational reform efforts creating doubt. It moves the schools toward a model of "pouring in" standardized knowledge in which interest is provided by a bribe of pleasure or pain. The accountability and effectiveness programs ignore schools as holding to a democratic purposing. There is also a displacement of

industries training for remediation for testing. These educational focus factors would be one of the places where school reformers should "figure it out."

### **Lack of response to societal changes – social relationships within the school**

John Dewey's view of progressive education recognized that social progress had an impact and the schools needed to adjust. The impact related to the industrial revolution and the training of students, which was once handled in the home, but the manufacturing would now have to be handled in the schools (Dewey, 1899). This change was marked by learning methods of living within the context of a school community.

What is needed is a transformation of education to address the conditions and realities, which define the twenty-first century much like what took place with John Dewey at the beginning of the twentieth century—tasks, which previously were left to the homes, must now be taken care of in the schools. "Community" must ensure provisions to encompass gaps in socialization brought on by social changes: technology of cellular and surveillance devices displacing nurturing and personal relationships, Welfare-to-Work initiatives, single-parent households, latchkey children, grandmothers raising children, the Women's Right's Movement, and many other changes which have added to impersonalizing social interactions. These components of social change must be recognized and accommodated in the schools much the same as manufacturing was included. Education is a means of this social continuity of life (Dewey, 1916, p.2). It is important that schools adjust as society changes.

The true test of how educational design can accommodate the social change comes from parents who are able to exercise a choice (parents who have resolved the "problematic situation" marked by "doubt"). This choice is often relegated by monetary means of being able to pay tuition. Local public schools become overlooked as parents of means select schools for their children based on the means to be able to afford to do so.

Which schools are the parents choosing?

Sergiovani (1996) finds it interesting to note the school organizations of those schools, which are not selected.

Few business leaders, however, want to send their own children to schools that are organized in such a way ... as any other business theory – to function effectively. Most prefer to send their children to schools that function more like families, learning communities and moral communities. This is why so many business leaders (and political leaders too) choose to send their own children to smaller, more intimate, more family-like more personable, yet more challenging religious and non-religious independent schools. When they do choose a public school for their children, it typically shares the same community features of independent schools (pp.18-19).

Further evidence is provided by Elam, Rose, and Gallup (1996) in assessing the public's attitudes toward the public schools through their poll. When asked as to the purposes of the nation's public schools apart from a basic education, 86 percent of the respondents rated "to improve social conditions" as either "very important" or "quite important" as a response. Eighty-four percent of the respondents rated increasing "happiness and enriching lives culturally" as important purposes of public education. These responses seem to indicate the current recognition of the public schools as agents of social impact.

Utilizing present philosophic thought as Dewey did, one looks to modern philosophers for help in "figuring it out." Spencer Maxcy (1995) portrays a value-driven school, "termed qualitative or naturalistic, as either virtuous, moral, or aesthetic" (p. 146). He alerts one to the realization that a virtuous school with Far Right influences may return schooling to Puritanism philosophy influences - "little red schoolhouse." His moral or caring school model embraces an ethic of care in the contemporary chaos of American schools. Preparation programs for school principals should include an ethic of care. "The aesthetic school imports value consideration into schools by

infusing all experiences and spaces with an aesthetic quality" (Maxcy, 1995,p.155).

Discussion of moral or caring leadership must include critical pragmatism (Maxcy, 1991,1995). Maxcy formulates a design of community, also based on Dewey's philosophy (living and past experts providing expertise), on the school meeting societal changes through critical pragmatism. Bogotch, Miron, and Murray (1998) describe moral practice in this manner:

The critical pragmatic imagination, informed by critical theory, seeks to attach moral leadership to a deeper sense of humanity aspiring to its full human potential. Critical pragmatism envisions schools becoming communities and the leader of these communities as servant leaders who exemplify a moral-ethical character with an aesthetic and creative capacity to encourage the process of school change. Critical pragmatism does not see management and administrative practices as synonymous with leadership. Both practices must be transformed into an empowering form of educational leadership if schools are to fulfill their moral purpose.... Thus crucial pragmatism as theory and method seeks to unite critique, community, democratic processes, and change (p.318).

School reformers must "figure out" that schools must encompass caring components, which were previously handled exclusively in the home. The rationale for this approach comes from those persons who are able to exercise a "choice." Critical pragmatism provides a model, allowing caring schools to exist without a return to a Puritan influence. Failing to recognize the change in society toward valuing a school with a caring ethic, would foster the potential of returning schools to a class bound distinction based on being able to afford tuition of a more caring school.

#### **Lack of response to societal change – community**

Dewey urged the school to address the community's needs and to relate the learning to current community conditions. Students' industry can best be utilized when applied to real community problems. S. Maxcy (1994) recognized



MANCUSO: JOHN DEWEY'S MODEL FOR "FIGURING IT OUT": UTILIZING A DEWEYAN  
METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH FOR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY REFORM

social and cultural changes taking place at the end of the twentieth century, which collectively can create a pattern of almost insurmountable problems. "Drugs, AIDS, delinquency and crime, parental disinterest, dropouts, interracial, cultural and gender conflicts" (p.1) contribute to these changes.

While Dewey did not address rural schooling, for illustration purposes, rural conditions help to make a point. Agrarian struggles: lack of rain, too much rain, insects, disease, late-frost, early-frost, mechanical problems, bank foreclosures can present an equally insurmountable backdrop for education. One can also look to earlier urban conditions: child labor, poverty, poor housing, lack of sanitary conditions, language barriers, and joblessness. Each of these conditions can appear to mask the bigger view if taken with a narrow focus – the old adage of not being able to see the forest (need for the democratic process) for the trees (individual problems).

Dewey was pragmatic and pragmatism entails getting involved to make things better, meliorism (Mayer, 1962, Maxcy, 1995). It is this involvement, which must take place to continue the democratic process. The industry, initiative, and enthusiasm of youth need to be directed toward addressing the community's social situation in much the same way as Dewey (1899) envisioned in earlier days.

Dewey utilized a schematic drawing (1899) to show how the school "must become to get out of its isolation and secure the organic connection with social life" (p.48). Using one now to illustrate the changes in society and how the school can change in response to the social climate is, therefore, helpful.

The school illustration taken from Dewey's book, *The School and Society*, is set within a modern community complete with modern day problems (Maxcy, 1994). The school has access to advances that have come through the years. The wings expand outward into the community as in Dewey's original design. (See Figure 1.)

Wing One has a connectedness with the

neighborhood community. It is an environmental lab. Within this wing, plans for historic preservation and urban renewal are planned and drawn. Opportunities for participation in the process of historic preservation and urban renewal are also addressed. Basic issues from student roles in anti-littering campaigns, graffiti prevention, and neighborhood appearance are discussed. Square foot gardens and landscaping toward energy efficiency are utilized to present a fluid flow of content from classroom to the connection beyond the school's physical structure. More elaborate civic involvement is also considered with each undertaking unique to the school's own contextual setting and activity nuances peculiar to the individual school.

Wing Two houses the industries lab. This lab builds upon previous agrarian and industrial times; however, it also encompasses the tools unique to the Information Age. Digital and cellular components are explored as they relate to the transmission of information and the information processing necessary for the twenty-first century. Opportunities to become familiar with devices made possible by circuits are provided. Construction of electronic devices takes place not to become efficient but to garner an understanding of the process of being able to access information in the ever expanding Information Age. This concept mirrors Dewey's (1899) industries training in *Schools of Tomorrow*.

Wing Three holds a show case component. Here students gather to recognize each other's accomplishments, share stories, or listen to a speaker. It creates a sense of family and relieves the isolation often felt with the grade levels within the school (Dewey, 1899). PowerPoint presentations taking place in this wing recognize the technological advances in the contemporary urban school as the presentations are used to promote learning through visual displays. Patriotism is also fostered in this arena through patriotic presentations. This wing recognizes and accommodates the school's social function through the creation of community within the

school (Dewey, 1899).

Wing Four contains an extended care lab. Before school care, after school care, home learning sessions, and summer day camp take shape in this wing. This wing was planned around the recognition of the needs of the community for schools to expand their role beyond the regular school hours of operation.

The center of the school is the resource center. It houses virtual components accessed through the internet. It provides information retrievable from places near and far. It accesses information relative to the students' needs and interests. It accommodates video conferencing with other resource personnel providing expertise within the students' inquiries. Some students even access courses through video conferencing. A weather station and an extension into the sky are also a part of the center. These features recognize the role that satellites and space have played in the entering into the Information Age. Opportunities for cloud watching and star charting take place in this area. This wing pushes the students beyond that which is physical and toward that which the student can imagine. For Dewey this was how one defined "imagination" (Dewey, 1916, 235-237; 348-349).

Schools emphasize moral habits of "promptness, regularity, industry, non-interference with the work of others, and faithfulness to tasks imposed" (Hickman and Alexander, 1998, p. 248). These skills are none that help to preserve the school intact. These habits are useful, but take on no meaning if not tied to a bigger social end. Dewey finds these habits lacking in that the child must go beyond these skills to those that would promote "interest in community welfare, an interest that is intellectual and practical ... an interest ... in perceiving whatever makes for social order and progress, and in carrying these principles into execution" (Hickman and Alexander, 1998, p.249). These habits are prevalent in the new school design, but only as they are tied to a bigger social end – transitioning into the larger society.

Now, learning for the sake of community, can take on meaning. The students' habits become meaningful as their work is tied to their

community endeavors. The work promotes democracy in a democratic American community with school as the vested interest for preserving that democracy, not succumbing to rituals of rote work toward benchmarks, which are not a part of the students' current social frame.

### Conclusions

John Dewey provides a model for educational reform for today. His model is one, which puts the democratic principle as a means and an end to school reform. Engaging learners through realistic application within their community is critical in making the learning relevant. This process is one not addressed in current accountability and effectiveness measures which rely on standardized test scores primarily as a measure of a school's success.

Also, schools can respond to societal changes of gaps in socialization by creating caring schools headed by moral, caring leaders. Encompassing care by twenty-first century schools brought on by an information age follows Dewey's model by which "manufacturing" became a part of schools brought on by industrialization of the early twentieth century.

John Dewey's approach to school reform provides a template to assist one in "figuring it out." By engaging in a critical pragmatic model, one has the tools of "critique," "community," "democratic processes" and "change" necessary for such a task (Maxcy, 1995). It allows schools to adhere to a democratic purposing and allows one to respond to social and community changes. Schools must adjust to societal changes. Failing to adjust to change would create more "doubt" and this "doubt" would be spurred on by school choice measures. Current community conditions should not be ignored but utilized in the preparation of students. In recognizing community conditions, schools become institutions of democracy to teach children in order to prepare them to participate in a democratic society.

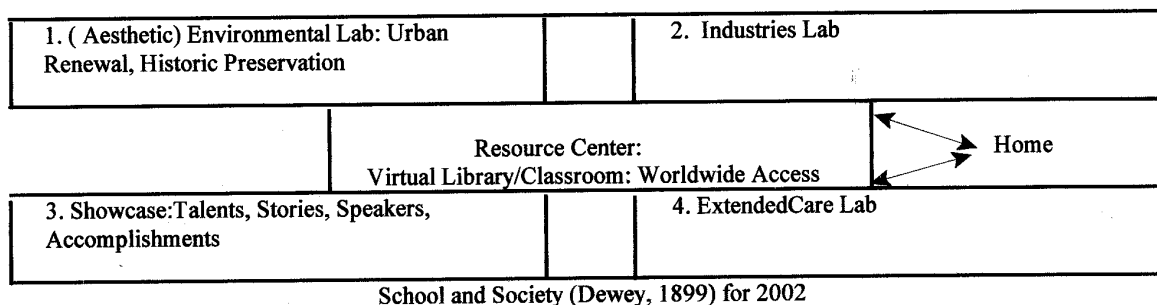
Dewey's schematic model provides a visual representation conveying the interaction between school and community. The schematic diagram is in following Dewey's tradition of pragmatically

**MANCUSO: JOHN DEWEY'S MODEL FOR "FIGURING IT OUT": UTILIZING A DEWEYAN  
METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH FOR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY REFORM**

proposing, that which "ought to be." Collectively, as Phil Jackson encouraged "to figure it out  
Dewey's pragmatic methodology allows one to do ourselves."

AIDS      Delinquency and Crime      Drugs      Cultural and gender conflicts  
Parental disinterest      Dropouts      Interracial problems

Figure 1. This is a replication of Dewey's representation of school and society in his book by that name, *School and Society*, (1899). Dewey's model has been modified to show current conditions and the school's response to the conditions.



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# WHAT JOHN DEWEY'S INSTRUMENTALIST ETHICS TELLS US ABOUT EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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## Introduction

There is a crisis in all areas of leadership in the United States today. From businesses to the church, and on to the schools, leadership ethics, or the lack of them, have become a serious problem. *Business Week* for August 19-26, 2002 reports that the executive search firm Russell Reynolds along with personality testing company Hogan Assessment Systems found of the more than 1,400 managers surveyed at-large U.S. companies, one out of eight execs was "high risk," or more likely to break the rules than the remaining 87%. These leaders "... are folks who believe the rules do not apply to them," reported Dean Stamoulis, of Russell Reynolds. "They're extreme in their lack of concern for others. They rarely possess feelings of guilt" (p. 12).

If schools are more and more thought of as corporations; students as "products"; and educators as "workers"; is it any wonder that school leaders such as principals and teachers are in the news for engaging in unethical practices? Accusations directed at many academic-CEO's range from "cooking the books" in pupil testing to make their schools appear better, to falsifying grants and contracts and stealing money. Behaviors that would have been considered unthinkable in decades past are now common behaviors among school leaders.

Reasons are offered for this decline: Poor pay, the absence of job satisfaction, and "burn out" have served to explain the flight from leadership responsibilities, and may also explain unethical behavior by administrators. Whether the fault is found in the overall culture or merely in certain organizational or institutional conditions is unclear. It does seem that educators are no longer interested in the position of school leader, and if they do assume the role they seem willing to avoid moral-ethical decision-making or willingly pass responsibility for such choices over to others.

Certainly, the pressures attached to the job of

leader are part of the reason for the decline in educational leadership applicants and the rapid turnover of principals and superintendents. However, I wish to argue in these pages that school leadership has become so confounded and moral-ethical decisions so difficult for them that educators are not succeeding as educational leaders. If a lack of success in the ethics realm is a problem, then ethics is either not in them or not being taught and learned very well. If, on the other hand, professional success in school leadership jobs is partially a matter of context or conditions, then those structures and organizations are not functioning. I have advanced this latter notion (Maxcy, 2002) along with a number of other writers (e.g., Starratt, 1994, 1996, Strike, Haller & Soltis, 1998, Beck & Murphy, 1994).

At the same time as the center seems to be falling away in the schools, powerful interests have sought to get state after state to adopt new "leadership standards" to shore up the "effectiveness" of educational administrators. ISLLC (Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium) has led the way in this "standards movement" for school administrators. Somewhat less than half the states have embraced versions of these standards for their school administrators, yet clearly forces are at work to attack the unethical and immoral practices in school governance by specifying "bench marks" of professional practice. Much has been written of late on the progress and point of the "standards movement" in educational leadership (including my own *Ethics and School Leadership* (2002)), so I shall not go into detail here on this rich history, but rather reserve the discussion of "standards" as a philosophic concept for later.

As a solution to the school and cultural chaos in the U.S., an infusion of morals and ethics into leading makes more sense than at any other time. However, there are different views of what morals and ethics are and how they may become part of a

professional practice and an organizational culture. And, while the new ISLLC leadership standards have a place in the reform of educational leadership, it may be a limited one. Finally, I wish to suggest that pragmatism, rather than its rivals, seems to make the most abundant sense for the improvement of school leadership as it faces the tough values choices of the 21st Century.

### **Ethical Deliberation and Conduct**

The philosophic tradition we know as 'pragmatism' was an indigenous philosophy to America: It has no parallels in our history. Perhaps because of its deep-seated origins in the American frontier and agrarian life, pragmatism was interpreted in differed ways. Pragmatism, is at its heart a method. Some, like Sleeper (1986), define it as a means of social reconstruction, or as: "...a philosophy rooted in common sense and dedicated to the transformation of culture, to the resolution of the conflicts that divide us" (8-9). Richard Rorty (1989) tells us it is like literary analysis akin to Derrida's deconstruction. Others feel it is an aesthetic take on experience with the aim of enhancing beauty and creativity (Shusterman, 1992).

No matter which methodological spin is placed on pragmatism, it has had a long and noble place in the history of education, and more particularly values and leadership. Each of the American "founders" of the philosophic movement, Charles S. Peirce, William James, and John Dewey in particular, wrote and spoke about leadership and ethics, addressed their essays and speeches on morals and character to teachers and administrators, and sought to encourage pupils, teachers and administrators to be more ethical. While Peirce and James crafted a vision of the place of ethics in a pragmatic world, and wrote about curriculum and teaching techniques, it remained for Dewey to fashion an entire moral philosophy of democracy, and test it experimentally through curriculum and instructional methods within his beloved University of Chicago Elementary School as well as other progressive sites around the world. Unfortunately, Dewey only wrote two short essays

specifically addressing educational administration, despite the fact that he had been a department chair at Chicago for a number of years and left that university as a result of a wrangle with its president (Dewey, 1935; 1937).

### **Dewey's Instrumentalism and Conduct**

Dewey distinguished "pragmatism" from his own philosophy of "instrumentalism." He wrote in *Essays in Experimental Logic* (1908), "... the term 'pragmatic' means only the rule of referring all thinking, all reflective considerations, to consequences for final meaning and test" (330). He defined his "instrumentalism" in the following way: "It means that knowing is literally something which we do; that analysis is ultimately physical and active; that meanings in their logical quality are standpoints, attitudes, and methods of behaving toward facts, and that active experimentation is essential to verification" (331).

By shifting emphasis from concern for summative testing to an interest in the pre-ordinate ideas operating as tools in inquiry, Dewey was able to enlarge our understanding of pragmatism. His behaviorist version was interested, not entirely in the consequences themselves, which could be moral, political, or religious, etc., but rather in the regulative nature of these in terms of human conduct. In this way, Dewey departed from Peirce and William James by claiming pragmatic thinking is instrumental to practice; not to conclusions about what is true or false. Dewey provides us with a method of ethical inquiry, the results of which are aimed at the improvement of human action transformed into reflected-upon conduct.

### **Steps of Ethical Deliberation**

As Dewey first turned his attention to the study of values as a university student, he attempted to apply his methods of investigation through a series of steps. He proposed these, not as a lock-step template, but rather as a rough approximation to what goes on in everyday decision-making: The first step found the person experiencing conflicting desires and alternative apparent goods are encountered. Next, we ask "What is the right course of action to take? Then, we inquire by observing details of the situation, analyzing

different factors, clarifying the obscure, discounting insistent and vivid traits, and tracing the consequences of various modes of action. Finally we regard the decision as hypothetical and tentative until the expected consequences which led us to adopting our solution are squared with actual consequences (Dewey, 1948). Much has been made of Dewey's "scientific" approach to social problems, but it would be more accurate to say he socialized the methods of science, broadening them and their sources to encompass all reasoned thought in human life. Ideas functioned as instruments for the resolution of doubt (Dewey, 1910).

### **Group Standards, Moral Character and Democracy as a Form of Life**

By the time John Dewey and James H. Tufts published their first version of their textbook *Ethics* (1908), Dewey had already worked out his ethics. Dewey began by arguing that ethical theory was informed by two scholarly domains, psychology and sociology. He believed that the individual person was pulled on one side by his or her interests as an individual, and on the other by the concerns of society. The individual was responsible to those interests, while at the same time responsible to society according to its laws. Each person was to be equipped by education and experience with "specific virtues" or "excellences" (abilities, skills, tools) and "cardinal virtues" (social awareness and orientation, justice, wisdom). As one acted responsibly as an individual, the "genuine interests" (wholeheartedness, impartiality, and energy) were deployed. Acting responsibly vis-a-vis society resulted in the person operating according to the "Good Person" mode (justice, temperance, and courage). Standards were social in nature and were to be understood via the sociological study of ethics. Moral character arose as the virtues became habits.

At the heart of Dewey's schema for arriving at action that was ethical conduct was "reasonableness." He believed that once a social problem of an ethical nature was encountered, deliberation must be engaged in. As the individual

began reflection a judgment was to result, whereby the specific virtues, moral character, and the cardinal virtues were set into motion relative to the question of appropriate conduct. The end-in-view was to judge the problematic situation and engage in ethical conduct such that the dilemma was resolved, leading to favorable ethical consequences. The ethical consequences of the act of choosing were growth and the advancement of the good. That consequence would reflect back upon the individual and his or her character as well as the community. The entire process was in flux with elements being highlighted or attended to relative to the problem situation and the context. Dewey never intended his method of ethical deliberation to be a linear or lock step system for establishing absolute ethical certitude.

What Dewey and Tufts did in their 1932 edition of *Ethics* was turn ethics from a Kantian or Hegelian system into a species of "evolutionary naturalism," informed by Darwinism and run through the mechanism of scientific inquiry (deliberation). Their version of naturalism stressed the cooperative over the combative nature of the human species, the importance of practical judgment, and the necessity for democracy as *the* form of life. Cornel West (1989) tells us that much of this work had already been accomplished by Emerson and Thoreau, and the other American Transcendentalists. However, Dewey and Tufts moved this discourse into the scholarly community of the university and thence into the society at large. While it was increasingly prevalent as a kind of public faith, scores of college students cutting their teeth on Dewey and Tufts *Ethics*, exploded naturalistic ethics into mainstream American life.

### **Standards and Customs**

Dewey and Tufts anthropologized ethics, making it into a scientifically rich study. They looked at a variety of customs and traditions in culture and attempted to read off of these an analysis of moral-ethical decision-making. It is clear that the pair of writers had school conditions in mind when they identified the conditions in culture which led to the development of standards for channeling behavior of participants in a

society: “(1) The education of the younger, immature members of the group and their preparation for full membership [via initiation ceremonies]. (2) The constraint and restraint of refractory members and their adjustment of conflicting interests [via Common Law]. (3) Occasions [birth, marriage, death; planting and harvesting; war, hospitality] which involve some notable danger or crisis and therefore call for the special care to secure the favor of the gods and avert disaster” (1909/1932, 51).

Dewey and Tufts (1908/1932) were quick to point out that what was required in matters of an ethical and moral kind was not only standards, which tended to operate on the primitive level of “customary morality,” but some kind of intelligent and practical judgment. In other words, we have the strong urging of the communal group for compliance of individual members with respect to the standards regulating education, transitional periods in a person’s life, and threats or dangers to one or many of the members of the society, but these are fairly rudimentary. For example, every culture has certain standards which guide the rights of passage from childhood and youth to adulthood. Customs in education are to be found in the school graduation ceremony when pupils wear caps and gowns, attend convocations in which songs are sung, speeches made, and diplomas given out, all in celebration of the transition from student to learned member of society. Ethics emerges in such ceremonies, when, for instance, a student is allowed to march with the class, take part in the rituals, yet is not eligible to graduate (for lack of credits, low grades, etc.). When the eligibility for membership in the ritual or ceremony is blurred, the moral or ethical thing is undermined: People feel uncomfortable because there is not a harmony between the participants and the right of passage. The need for ethics arises when judgment is called for as to how individual claims to rights of passage square with the standard.

The leader who engages in moral-ethical judgments is operating at a level above this customary morality, Dewey believed. Picking a

piece of paper up from the floor of the hallway is not a moral-ethical decision: It is a matter of custom. Saying “yes, sir” to an adult male is likewise no call for deep rational thought, but mere habit. Leadership decisions that are moral-ethical in nature are much more complex than the simple behaviors cited here. A fuller and “rational” status of the individual in a society or culture, comes attached to the capacity to make informed judgments about the rightness or wrongness, goodness or badness of options or choices.

The professional aspect of our work adds a special set of concerns like standards, relative to this general moral-ethical judgmental capacity, an aspect which bears upon the institution or organizational members as well as the individuals involved in the moral-ethical dilemma. It has a flash-back characteristic. “The principle upon which the assignment of praise or blame rationally rests constitutes what is known as a standard” (Dewey & Tufts, 259). The standard is a foundation for any judgment in its “practical sense” (Dewey and Tufts, 259). Thus, a professional standard, like one found in the ISLLC standards for leaders, is short-hand for what is deemed “good,” “right,” or “your duty.” Historically, doing right or good, doing your duty, or achieving your ends garners praise, doing wrong or bad things, shirking your duty, or failing to achieve ends, receives condemnation, and possible punishment. However, Dewey and Tufts (following British moral philosophy) chose to add the important fact that all of these impact the formation and successful development of “moral character.” Beyond this, the test for any moral-ethical decision could be found in part in its impact upon the choosers overall moral self-consciousness.

### **Moral Character**

Moral character develops over time through reflective thinking and the exercise of choice. As good habits of consideration and practical reflection are built, the “virtues” join together to form character of the human being. The leader’s moral-ethical character is how he or she conducts himself or herself relative to choices and their



impacts on others. A leader with experience and training in making moral choices must adopt certain dispositions (virtues) which get reinforced through practice. In this way he can develop moral character, and this habituated character may help him in the dark hours of moral-ethical decision-making that he will encounter in educational leadership.

It is reasonable to assume that a leader who lies, cheats, or steals is ill-suited to the demands of exercising choices about honesty, deception, or theft. There is something to be said for having learned about the virtues of good moral and ethical living, having exercised the virtues in real world situations, as a preparation for moral leadership as a school administrator, teacher, counselor, or school board member.

Hence, what we mean by "moral character" is the sum total of attitudes and dispositions to do good or evil, right or wrong, in making judgments relative to moral-ethical dilemmas in a social space. It is formed by the totality of those judgments and comes to inform future judgments in a holistic manner. We say of administrators and teachers who manifest an admirable moral character that they have "integrity," by which we mean the virtues of honesty, caring, and so on are in cohesion, or are all inter-linked parts of the person's personality. Where enough of the decisions are made within the space with an eye to solid morals and ethics, the school or other organization may be said to be moral-ethical in one of its characterizing features.

### **Democracy as the Best Form of Life**

While Dewey wrote of democracy early in his career, and fused it with his instrumentalist mode of inquiry, he began with the goal of making logical sense of their relations as a professor at Michigan. Later, Dewey's instrumentalism was also tightly joined with democratic values as props for political and social reforms, creating a kind of social and cultural "reconstruction." And quite a bit later in his life Dewey came to stress the artistic nature of his method, linked it to a creative democracy, and viewed social and cultural institutions as requiring a transformation in

quality.

Peirce and Dewey were on the same page with their rejection of certain traditional assumptions about the nature of knowledge, truth, and inquiry. Most importantly, for our purposes, there was a sympathetic challenging by these pragmatists of the singular notion that social science inquiry was able to access the "real world" solely by virtue of a single "scientific method." A uniform method with accompanying assumptions regarding the language of descriptions, and the unbridled penchant for classification, which viewed such statements as equivalent to "truth," was completely rejected by the founders of American pragmatism. There's was a search for meaning and an accompanying mood of social reform.

Dewey's "instrumentalism," rested in the belief that experience was all there was. As Dewey discovered as a young teacher in Oil City, Pennsylvania, experience and nature were something you could "lay back upon." In that instance, his belief in a "naturalism," or given condition of nature allowed him to avoid the metaphysical wrangles going on in academic circles. As a child growing up in Vermont, Dewey witnessed the Westward expansion and the Civil War and learned of the virtue of mobility. Americans, he realized, were oriented toward the future and not the past, owing to their experiencing large-scale events. At the same time as these social upheavals were taking place, individuals were being judged on what they did and not their ancestors or social class (Childs, 1956).

Ethical leadership requires that one understand the assumptions about cultural and social contexts and how they underwrite the standards and practices s/he is charged to uphold along with the results of judgments. The norms or bench marks of successful performance as a leader and as a student operate in the much the same manner. Each standard begs the question of what it means for the person and the project of which s/he is a part is to be evaluated or judged. This is done by paying attention to the "form of life" in each and every evaluation of a performer's performance.

"Form of life" is to a community of judges

what “moral character” is to the individual judger. It is the central consideration by which the sum total of judgments or evaluations are to be justified. For example, it would mean that a moral-ethical decision or evaluation calls for the leader to consider how the action fits in with the life of the school as a template or form. What does the school mean to pupils, parents and community members, what does it seek to achieve, where is it going, and what effects are garnered from school activities like teaching, taking tests, performing as athletes, etc., for members of that form of living (students, teachers, etc.)? The teacher or principal who is held to a standard of performance in guiding the school or teaching math or history is playing a role in a much larger drama, the way of life of a school. Therefore, what is that form of life?

Dewey believed it must be democratic (Dewey, 1916). Democratic living was superior over living under totalitarianism, bureaucracy, or any other form of organized living—because it allowed judgers to inquire freely and fully into problematic situations. Only in democracy could people join together in their deliberations and determinations. Common values could emerge that could be embraced by all (or at least the majority), and come to inspire individuals in their efforts to create and sustain valued enterprises. Morals and ethics would thrive in such a form of living, Dewey believed.

Nevertheless, a “form of life” that was democratic included many levels at which values, and particular morals and ethics, played a role. For example, while the norms of freedom and equality operated across the board in a democracy, they were operationalized by certain procedural sub-level norms such as, for example, “trusting others,” “regarding others’ interests,” “playing fair,” and so on. Ethical and moral values operated at a distance from freedom and equality as well, but tended to serve as means for making judgments in a kind of social contractualist way. Morals and ethics served to bind individuals to each other and to the goals of the society. Finally, having certain attitudes like “hope,” “faith in progress,” and “belief in the future,” also aided the larger norms

of freedom and equality by offering reinforcements for effort to realize and sustain them.

### Conclusions

What is required today is a healthy dose of pragmatic instrumentalism if we are to make our school leadership operate with moral-ethical rectitude. Being pragmatic, in the sense of being an instrumentalist, allows us to reflect upon our individual conduct within organizational life. It is important to begin to separate out obligations to the collective or social from those to our personal interests, desires, and wants, in new and fresh transactional terms. Morality is not seeking the good for ourselves over all others, nor is it sacrificing our welfare for each and every other. It is artistically driven inquiry, transactive in spirit, aimed at informing conduct through practical interventions. It provides a means for critically interrogating the forms of life dominating our social spaces like schools.

It is the expedient form of bureaucratic life and our fumbling with bookish abstract ideals at one extreme versus embracing naively held conceptions of realities on the other. We find organizational leadership increasingly beset by the demands of professional standards in the middle of it all while, mindless acts leading for efficiency and effectiveness saturate the newspapers and our university preparation programs of leadership training.

I have argued for the adoption of a Deweyan instrumentalist ethics by leaders as a solution to the moral-ethical vacuum found in American school organizations today. I have tried to make a case that the critics of instrumentalism failed to penetrate Dewey’s theory, ignored its virtues, and left us this legacy of thoughtless leader-like activity. Dewey’s theory allows for us to employ practical judgment, or the use of ideas as instruments, for the informing of choice moral-ethical choice with a dual benefit: It allows us to reconstruct the very problems out of which discord and disharmony have emerged, and it informs and develops the moral character of our leaders.

Two concerns play a role in such a conception.

## MAXCY: WHAT JOHN DEWEY'S INSTRUMENTALIST ETHICS TELLS US ABOUT EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

First professional standards must be viewed as guiding statements for decisions, and not laws. Second, Dewey tells us to look to the consequences of our decisions to determine their value in re-characterizing the initial problem, settling doubt, and in testing the power of the decision and our methods to control conduct both

current and in the future. The emphasis is not on theoretical morality, but actually behaving in our professional lives in ethical ways.

Pragmatism has been having a renaissance. It is worthwhile for us educators to look at Deweyan instrumentalism to underwrite a new leadership ethics for education.

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- Note: The research reported in this essay was supported in part by a grant from the Louisiana Board of Regents during 2002.

## “I’M GLAD I DID NOT GO TO SCHOOL”: THE VICTORIAN EDUCATION OF BEATRIX POTTER

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Today when one links children’s literature and the name Potter, usually Harry is being discussed. However, another British Potter has held an important place in children’s literature for a century. One hundred years ago, with the publication of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, children began reading Beatrix Potter’s books. The centennial of Potter’s tale has not revived interest in her work. Interest never died.

Interest is, and was, international. Her work has been published in Icelandic, Dutch, Welsh, German, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Afrikaans, Japanese, Lithuanian, Latin, Braille, and the Initial Teaching Alphabet. Potter liked the French editions. She wrote to the New York Public Library’s children’s librarian, Anne Carroll Moore, “I like the French translations, it is like reading some one else’s work.”<sup>1</sup>

Potter thought Americans appreciated her work more than the English did. She wrote, “Americans are not afraid of being laughed at for being sentimental.<sup>2</sup> It is a great pleasure to receive such kind *understanding* letters from you and others in America. You take me seriously. Never does anyone outside your perfidiously complementary nation write me to tell me that I write good prose.”<sup>3</sup>

She also thought the United States produced more good quality children’s literature than did England. She said English children’s authors wrote, “twaddling dull stories or hideous slangy stuff.”<sup>4</sup> English shopkeepers like something comic and showy. There is nothing like the *Horn Book* to direct the choice of children’s reading in this country.”<sup>5</sup>

Rachael Field’s *Hitty, Her First Hundred Years* was a favorite<sup>6</sup> as was Dr. Suess’ *And to Think that I Saw It on Mulberry Street* which she called “the cleverest book I have met with for many years.”<sup>7</sup> Writers take more pains with juvenile

literature in America. They seem to think anything is good enough for children and for the circulating library here.”<sup>8</sup>

In 1980, the Beatrix Potter Society was formed. In August 2002, the Society met at St. Martin’s College, Ambleside, Cumbria, England; the meeting was preceded by a tour of sites where Potter drew her inspiration for her artwork and tales. The Society is not a Peter Rabbit fan club, although its members are Peter Rabbit fans. Members are interested in many facets of Potter’s life—her scientific illustrations, her contributions to archaeology, geology, and mycology, her expertise in British agriculture, especially sheep farming, her knowledge of antiques, and her role in saving the English Lake District from development. Potter’s life also provides insight into the position of women in Victorian and early twentieth century England. This paper’s focus is on Potter’s education and its role in her life and work.

Helen Beatrix Potter was born 28 July 1866, at Number 2, Bolton Gardens, West Brompton, London, a place she called “my unloved birthplace” when discussing its destruction in a German air raid in 1940. “I am rather pleased to hear it is no more,” she wrote.<sup>9</sup> As a child and young woman, she preferred family holiday sites and relatives’ homes in Scotland, Wales, and England’s Lake District. When in middle age she established a home independent of her parents, she chose the Lake District. However, it was mostly in London where she was educated by nurses and governesses, supplemented with outings to cultural sites with her father, contact with his learned friends, and her own remarkably successful efforts at self-education.

Both her parents’ families were wealthy as a result of inheriting Lancashire cotton fortunes. Grandfather Edmund Potter amassed a fortune

through calico printing and was an M.P. for Carlisle. The owner of the world's largest calico printworks, Edmund provided a school and a reading room for his workers. He was President of the Manchester School of Art which trained textile designers, and his scientific improvements in printing earned him a Fellowship in the Royal Society. Maternal grandfather John Leech was a wealthy cotton merchant.

Home was the third floor nursery inhabited by Beatrix, nurses or governesses, and, beginning just before her sixth birthday, her brother Bertram. Although it would not be a "nursery" when she grew older, nurses and governesses were replaced by maids, and Bertram went to boarding school, these rooms would be her home for forty-seven years. As was common in the upper classes at the time, only rarely did her parents, or anyone other than nurses, governesses, or servants enter the children's quarters.

Nurse MacKenzie taught her to walk, talk, and read. Before she could read, McKenzie read aloud to her books such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.<sup>10</sup> As an adult, she described MacKenzie as "a strict Calvinist" and "a believer in witches and fairies." Beatrix memorized *Lady of the Lake* when she was seven and cried because she was sure the heroine, as a Roman Catholic, went to hell. "The creed of the terrible John Calvin ... rubbed off, but the fairies remained," she said. As an adult she believed children should be read fairy tales but be spared the theology of Calvin.<sup>11</sup>

At age 18 she wrote in her journal, "All outward forms of religion are almost useless, and are the cause of endless strife. What possible difference does it make to anyone today whether the doctrine of the resurrection is correct? Believe there is a great power silently working all things for good, behave yourself, and never mind the rest."<sup>12</sup> She called herself a Unitarian "because of her father and grandmother" but "had no respect for [Unitarians] as a Dissenting body." She saw them as "timid, illogical" compromisers. "We are not Christians in the commonly accepted use of the term," she wrote, "but neither are the Jews, but they are neither ashamed or shamed."<sup>13</sup>

School was not considered for Beatrix. She said, "Thank goodness my education was neglected, I never went to school I am glad I did not go to school; it would have rubbed off some of the originality (if I had not died of shyness or been killed with over pressure.) I fancy I could have been taught anything if I had been caught young; but it was in the days when parents kept governesses and only boys went to school in most families."<sup>14</sup>

She doubted the wisdom of free education for all. She wrote to a friend, "Free education has not done much for this country. Clever children could always get educated and shallow education without character is proving to be a snare."<sup>15</sup>

She had no playmates other than Bertram and rarely associated with other children. Her last governess, Anne Carter, only three years older than Beatrix, was the nearest to a friend she had during childhood and adolescence. She was allowed some association with a cousin, Caroline Hutton (Clark), but her mother discouraged even this friendship. She was twenty-three years old before she took a holiday away from her parents.<sup>16</sup> She was almost thirty when her parents decided brother Bertram could chaperone her occasionally on "short excursions."<sup>17</sup>

From age fourteen until thirty, Beatrix kept a journal written in code. No one knew about the remarkable 200,000-word document until a few weeks before she died when she described it in a letter to cousin Caroline. Another cousin found the journal and asked researcher Leslie Linder to decipher it. It took him nine years to do so.<sup>18</sup>

Beatrix learned to read from books she hated, "a horrid large print primer and a stodgy fat book" on animal care. Once she could read "a bit," she was "let loose" on books such as *Rob Roy* and *Ivanhoe*.<sup>19</sup> She read the children's magazine, *St. Nicholas*, had access to the Potter family library, and was loaned books by her dearly loved Grandmother Potter.

She wrote in 1943, "What I liked as a small child of three or four. Trash, from the literary point of view—goody-goody, silly stories about other little girls' 'doings', [one about a child] given a

basin of cream with a large spoonful of strawberry jam floating in it perhaps it is because my own upbringing was so spartan, I have always remembered that jam."<sup>20</sup>

In the nursery schoolroom, Governess Hammond taught basic subjects with some time spent drawing and painting.<sup>21</sup> At age twelve, Miss Cameron, an art teacher whose views on art Beatrix did not share, was employed to teach her. "I have great reason to be grateful to her, though we are not on particularly good terms I have learnt from her freehand, model drawing, geometry, perspective, and a little water-colour painting. If you and your master are determined to look at nature and art in two different directions you are sure to stick," she wrote.<sup>22</sup> At fourteen, she received a Second Grade Art Certificate from the Council on Education, declaring her proficient in freehand drawing, practical geometry, linear perspective, and model drawing.

When Beatrix was fifteen, Miss Hammond "admitted that her pupil was quickly overtaking her in academic powers," and left the Potters' employ.<sup>23</sup> Beatrix hoped lessons were finished and she could concentrate on her painting, but Mrs. Potter hired Anne Carter and study in subjects such as German, French, and Latin began.<sup>24</sup> Miss Carter, her favorite teacher, she described as "very good tempered and intelligent."<sup>25</sup>

Latin became a favorite study and one she pursued after formal lessons ended; she was particularly fond of Virgil.<sup>26</sup> She found geography and grammar "tiresome" and could not "express the negative feelings" she had towards arithmetic.<sup>27</sup>

In 1883, she went to an art teacher's studio for private lessons. "Am going to Mrs. A's for the first time tomorrow," she wrote, "two hours Monday and Thursday, for twelve lessons. Can have no more because Mrs. A's charge is high.... Of course, I shall paint just as I like when I am not with her."<sup>28</sup>

As a young woman, Beatrix solicited criticism of her work through membership in a "drawing society." Each member prepared a portfolio which was circulated to other members who critiqued

each piece by writing comments on the back signed with the critic's pen name. Beatrix's was "Bunny." Comments on her work were both positive and negative, usually tactfully expressed. One said, "Too elaborate—but otherwise beautifully drawn."<sup>29</sup> When she was thirty, Beatrix and a cousin enrolled in a printing class at the London Polytechnic. Because of the expense, they only attended two classes.<sup>30</sup>

Beatrix's was an artistic family. Her mother sketched and did needlework. Her mother and grandmother's embroidery patterns were beautifully drawn on homemade paper. Bertram sketched and painted alongside Beatrix in the nursery. As an adult, he briefly pursued an art career, but soon became a farmer in Scotland. He died at forty-six, troubled by alcoholism which Beatrix referred to as "it."<sup>31</sup> She compared his work to that of Heinrich Fuseli,<sup>32</sup> an artist today primarily remembered as one of Mary Wollstonecraft's unfaithful lovers.

Beatrix's father, a member of the Photographic Society of London, exhibited in their shows and contributed to their journal. He photographed famous people, from Gladstone to Lilly Langtry, for the artist John Everett Millais' use in painting portraits. Beatrix was encouraged when Millais complemented her artistic ability<sup>33</sup> and taught her techniques for mixing paints.<sup>34</sup>

Beatrix's father collected art, including that of children's book illustrator Randolph Caldecott. From childhood, Beatrix frequently accompanied her father to galleries, museums, and the studios and homes of his literary and artistic friends. The two of them analyzed and critiqued art they viewed. Many pages of Beatrix's journal contain detailed criticism of art seen on these expeditions. She would list as many as sixty works by artists ranging from Michelangelo to the French Impressionists, giving her opinion of each. In the privacy of her journal she wrote, "No one will read this ... the Michelangelo is hideous and badly drawn. I wouldn't give tuppence for it except as a curiosity."<sup>35</sup>

Beatrix visited the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum of Natural History



frequently—in childhood with a maid or governess. She sketched specimens at the Natural History Museum and prepared slides for study with Bertram's microscope once she learned at the Museum how it was done. When her mother permitted Beatrix brief excursions with only Bertram, they visited quarries and she learned to split rocks to find fossils to draw. She borrowed relics from a London archaeological site and made drawings of them.

Lacking friends her age, Beatrix developed friendships with her father's friends. For elderly William Gaskell, who shared her love of animals and art, Beatrix knitted a scarf when she was eight. Another older friend, Rev. Harwicke Rawnsley, discussed geology and art with her.

Beatrix was fascinated with mycology and the work of Pasteur. She studied spores through the microscope and made drawings and watercolors of them. Her parents were not informed of these activities. She hid her dry rot fungi by keeping them under a footpath in the garden.<sup>36</sup> She discussed her work with Charles McIntosh who, in addition to being an Associate of the Perthshire Society of Natural Science and a highly respected expert on fungi, was the postman for the family holiday residence in Scotland. She called him "a perfect dragon of erudition, a shy, startled scarecrow, a great fiddler until a circular saw cut off the fingers of his left hand."<sup>37</sup> She said he was "certainly pleased with her work. His approval gave her "infinitely more pleasure" than praise from others.<sup>38</sup>

Her uncle, Sir Henry Roscoe, was so impressed with this work that he introduced her to the director of Kew Gardens who gave her a pass to observe work being done with fungi. Uncle Henry would escort her there to meet with researchers when her mother would let her go. Sometimes she "escaped" from the house—not letting her mother know she was gone—and met her uncle elsewhere for the trip. She was thirty years old at the time.<sup>39</sup>

She experimented with her own specimens and wrote a paper that was read to the Linnean Society in 1897. Women were not allowed to attend Society meetings so Beatrix was not present at the

reading.<sup>40</sup> Two hundred seventy of her fungi sketches and watercolors are in the collection of the Armit Library in Ambleside, Cumbria, England. She spent six years in intense study of fungi and hoped her work would be published. In 1967, fifty-nine drawings were published in another scholar's book.<sup>41</sup>

Beatrix's "self-education" included critical observation of her own work and that of others. In her journal she wrote, "I don't want [art] lessons, I want practice. A bad or indifferent teacher is worse than none. It cannot be taught, nothing after perspective, anatomy and the mixing of paints with medium."<sup>42</sup> From childhood, she spent hours drawing and comparing her work to that of others and to the items she was sketching. She developed the ability to make almost photographic renderings of what she saw and to rearrange elements and scenes in ways more pleasing than the originals. By the time *Peter Rabbit* was published, she could draw rabbits and hedgehogs and ducks that looked like real animals, not cartoons, yet seemed engaged in human activities.

Many childhood hours were spent, often with Bertram's assistance, observing and drawing animals. The nursery was home to rabbits, hedgehogs, bats, lizards, snakes, beetles, birds. When an animal died—a fox, a bat, a rabbit—Beatrix and Bertram often skinned and boiled it, articulating the skeleton.

By age eight, she wrote and illustrated little books, sewing together drawing paper and making ink from soot and oil. She and Bertram found a small press, cut wood and linoleum blocks for illustrations, and "published" books. As a young woman, Beatrix applied her skill and attention to detail to systematic study of fungi, fossils, and archaeological specimens. Self-education continued throughout her life, even in areas unrelated to her art. She set herself the task of memorizing all of Shakespeare's plays, for example.

In 1890 at the suggestion of Rev. Rawnsley, she sent designs for Christmas card illustrations to a publisher and received a check for 6 pounds. Delighted, she rewarded her chief model, her

rabbit Benjamin Bouncer, with a cupful of hemp seeds and found him to be still “intoxicated” the next morning.<sup>43</sup> Beatrix’s uncle Walter Potter took her to meet the publisher who asked her to illustrate books written by others. She accepted a few such commissions, but hoped to illustrate her own books.

Beatrix corresponded individually with the eight children of her former governess Anne Carter Moore, illustrating her letters with drawings, including stories written specifically for each child, and making them cardboard toys relating to the stories. Throughout her life Beatrix did this for children of friends and relatives. In 1893, she sent a story to five-year-old Noel Moore. Its hero was Peter Rabbit who lived with his mother and siblings Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail near Mr. McGregor’s garden. Seven years later, she asked Noel to loan her the Peter Rabbit story, which, fortunately, he had kept. She submitted it to publishers recommended by Rev. Rawnsley, and when all rejected it, she decided to publish it herself.

In addition to money earned with her art, she had profit from railroad bonds her father had given her as a gift. When the company did not pay a dividend, her father took her to his broker and taught her how to trade in stocks and bonds. She made a tidy profit and thus could finance publication herself.

She had 250 copies of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* printed in December 1901. They sold quickly, and she received letters of praise from purchasers including Conan Doyle who bought one for his children.

Frederick Warne & Company then became interested in publishing the story. Three brothers ran the firm, and one, Norman, negotiated with Beatrix. A contract was signed and eight thousand copies of the first edition were sold before they came off the presses in October 1902. By the end of 1903, fifty thousand copies had been sold. Other books followed with editions in a variety of formats—paperback, hardback, and “de luxe”—which were bound in patterned calico from the Potter calico factory.

Beatrix and Norman’s collaboration became a courtship conducted by letter because her mother disapproved of association of someone of lower social status. Beatrix felt “an atmosphere of silent disapproval” relating to both her work and her association with Norman.<sup>44</sup>

When working on her book, *The Tale of Two Bad Mice*, Beatrix thought a doll house Norman constructed for his nieces would be a good model for the book’s illustrations. She was invited to the family home to sketch it, but her mother would not allow it. In explanation, Beatrix wrote to Norman, “I hardly ever go out, and my mother is so exacting I had not enough spirit to say anything about it.”<sup>45</sup> Later she wrote, “You did not understand what I meant by ‘exacting.’ People who see her only casually do not know how disagreeable she can be.”<sup>46</sup>

Beatrix designed what she called “sideshowes”—Peter Rabbit dolls, a Peter Rabbit board game, Peter Rabbit wallpaper.<sup>47</sup> Such products became, and remain, a large and profitable part of the Warne company’s business. They kept this material’s quality high by using such firms as Wedgwood to produce the items.

Shortly before Beatrix’s thirty-ninth birthday, Norman proposed marriage. She accepted but agreed to her mother’s demand that no one be told, not even Norman’s brothers. Less than a month later, Norman died of leukemia.

Using her earnings and an inheritance from an aunt, Beatrix bought Hill Top Farm at Sawrey in the Lake District, telling her parents it was just an investment, not a move toward independent living. Mrs. Potter “made it clear” that since housemaids occasionally “made difficulties,” Beatrix could not move from Bolton Gardens and should employ a “farm servant” to work the farm.<sup>48</sup> The tenants at Hill Top stayed, and Beatrix had improvements made in the property and livestock. She was allowed to go to Hill Top a few days at a time, totaling about a month a year, usually when the family was on holiday nearby.<sup>49</sup>

Beatrix produced about one new book a year for the next several years. New editions, tea sets, paint books, games, and other “sideshowes”

produced income to buy land and improve her holdings. She became an expert on Herdwick, a native sheep few still raised but which she was determined to save.

In 1909, she bought a large farm adjoining Hill Top. Her purchases were made through the firm, W. Heelis and Sons. William Heelis, a widower, was very helpful to Beatrix in the care of her property. The two discovered they had similar interests and values. In 1912, he proposed marriage.

Beatrix's parents found Heelis, a country solicitor, as unacceptable as Norman Warne. Relatives and friends came to her support. Caroline Hutton Clark, the cousin her mother allowed her to visit occasionally, advised her to marry him over her parents' objections. Norman Warne's sister Millie encouraged the match. Bertram came from Scotland to tell his parents that he had been secretly, and happily, married for eleven years.

Married in London in October 1913, Beatrix did not immediately join William in the Lake District. Her father had cancer, and she stayed to nurse him. When he died seven months later, Beatrix moved Mrs. Potter to live with her and William, but she found their company dull and moved to a house nearby. Beatrix hired a paid companion, four maids, two gardeners, and a chauffeur for her but frequently was summoned to stay with Mrs. Potter.

Beatrix became more involved in farm activities and began to collect antiques, buying old oak cabinets and chests being removed from cottages being remodeled. She worked on projects designed to stop Lake District development, using her personal funds and working with the National Trust. Her production of books slowed, but new editions and "sideshows" should have provided large royalty checks. However, there were puzzling delays in receiving them. Months went by with none received, and letters to Harold Warne, the brother in charge of the firm's finances went unanswered.

In April 1917, Harold Warne was arrested for embezzling funds to support another business and

was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment. Frederick Warne & Company was bankrupt, its most valuable asset the Potter copyrights, Beatrix its biggest creditor.

Harold had overseen the finances of the business; his brother Fruing took care of the rest. Fruing was not responsible for the financial problems, but sold everything, including his watch and the family home. His family moved to a tiny house and their nanny stayed without pay. Beatrix accepted company stock in lieu of part of what was owed her. Gradually the company recovered, with Beatrix becoming an active partner in the business.<sup>50</sup>

Beatrix and William had a strong, happy marriage and enjoyed country life—attending dances, walking in the fields in clogs or Wellington boots and tweed clothing woven from their own sheep's wool. A neighbor once mistook Beatrix for a tramp. They collected antiques, judged livestock shows, and added to their property, planning to leave most of it to the National Trust at their demise. Beatrix won "all sorts of prizes at sheep shows, silver tea pots, and salavars and tankards," and became the first woman president of the Herdwick Sheep Association.<sup>51</sup> The intense study Beatrix had formerly focused on geology and mycology was now given to new interests.

Girl Guides camped in her fields. She loaned them her car, joined in their sing-alongs, and gave her books as prizes for their competitions. She discouraged other English visitors and refused interviews with the British press, but welcomed Americans, even parents and children who were strangers. The U.S. firm of David McKay published some of her books.

Shortly before her mother died in 1932, Beatrix wrote, "My mother is refusing to die ... cannot possibly recover ... we hope it will soon be over, but she has wonderful vitality for any age—let alone 93."<sup>52</sup> At sixty-six, Beatrix now had time for such personal indulgences as boating with William. Her work was by this time appreciated as quality literature. Graham Greene published a flattering essay described as written "in the tone of

a sober scholar discussing Shakespeare.” Beatrix was affronted that her work should be “examined by the Freudian school of criticism.”<sup>53</sup>

At seventy, she began turning over some of her farms to the National Trust to manage.

Hospitalized in 1939, she made a list of things to be done should she not recover, directing most of her art go to public collections so that it could be studied and enjoyed by all. She wrote to friends that William should remarry “providing he did not make a fool of himself by marrying, or not marrying, a servant.”<sup>54</sup> During World War II, Beatrix and William took in relatives fleeing the blitz and increased agricultural production to aid the war effort.

Beatrix had rheumatic fever as a child and began to have heart trouble again in September 1943. In December the following notice appeared.

#### “DEATHS”

On Wednesday, Dec. 22, 1943 at Castle Cottage, Sawrey, near Ambleside, HELEN BEATRIX, dearly loved wife of WILLIAM HEELIS, and only daughter of the late Rupert Potter. Cremation private. No mourning, no flowers, and no letters please.”<sup>55</sup>

Four thousand acres of Lake District property went into the National Trust. Old friends and faithful employees were left legacies. Art she had not already distributed went into public collections. Her greatest legacy, her books, continue to be published. Frederick Warne Company was purchased by Penguin Books, but the imprint kept for her books. Thus the accomplishments of this largely self-educated woman are available today to those who wish to use them for their own self-education.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Beatrix Potter to Anne Carroll Moore, 24 June 1921, in *Beatrix Potter's Americans: Selected Letters*. Edited by Jane Crowell Morse. Boston: The Horn Book, Inc., 1982), 4.
2. Potter to Mrs. J. Templeton Coolidge, 15 September 1927, *Potter's Americans*, 11.
3. Potter to Bertha Mahoney Miller, 18 June 1942, *Potter's Americans*, 184. Potter corresponded regularly with Miller, editor of the *Hornbook*, from 1926 until her death. The journal published some of her stories and she provided autobiographical material to it that she would not supply English publications.
4. Potter to Helen Dean Fish, 16 May 1934, *Potter's Americans*, 47. Fish was editor of children's books for J. B. Lippencott and Company.
5. Potter to Coolidge, 9 December 1929, *Potter's Americans*, 31.
6. Potter to Marian Frazer Harris Perry, 4 October and 17 October 1934, *Potter's Americans*, 59.
7. Potter to Moore, 18 December 1937, *Potter's Americans*, 83-84.
8. Potter to Perry, 4 February 1935, *Potter's Americans*, 66.
9. Potter to Miller, 20 November 1942, *Potter's Americans*, 213.
10. Potter to Perry, 30 March 1939, *Potter's Americans*, 95.
11. Potter to Perry, 4 October 1934, 59, and “Roots of Peter Rabbit,” *Beatrix Potter's Americans*, 207. “Roots” originally appeared in *Horn Book*, May 1929.
12. Beatrix Potter, *The Journal of Beatrix Potter from 1881 to 1897*, transcribed from her code writing by Leslie Linder, with an appreciation by H. L. Cox (London: Frederick Warne & Company, 1966), 104. Entry for 30 September 1884.

13. Ibid., 408. Entry for 23 February 1896.
14. Potter, "Roots," 208-09.
15. Potter to Coolidge, 29 April 1932, *Potter's Americans*, 48.
16. Cox, "Appreciation," *Journal*, xvi.
17. Margaret Lane, *The Magic Years of Beatrix Potter* (London: Frederick Warne, 1978), 75.
18. Linder, *Journal*, xxiii. The code and the techniques used to decipher it are described in an introduction section preceding Linder's translation of Potter's code-written journal.
19. Potter, "Roots," 208.
20. Potter to Mrs. Ramsey Duff, June 1943, *Potter's Americans*, 195-96.
21. Judy Taylor, *Beatrix Potter Artist, Storyteller and Countrywoman* (London: Frederick Warne, 1986),
32. For curriculum studied see also Lane, *Magic Years*, 34.
22. Ibid., 32.
23. Ibid., 39.
24. Ibid., 40. Also, Lane, *Magic Years*, 34.
25. Potter, *Journal*, Entry for 21 November 1883.
26. Ibid., 46, entry for 19 July 1883.
27. Ibid., 148. Entry for 10 July 1885.
28. Ibid., 54. Entry for 21 November 1883.
29. Beatrix Potter, *The Art of Beatrix Potter*, with an appreciation by Anne Carroll Moore and notes by Enid and Leslie Linder, rev. ed. (Hammondsworth, England: Frederick Warne, 1972), 96-97.
30. Potter, *Journal*, 401. Entry for 19 November 1896.
31. Ibid., 93. Entry for 25 June 1884.
32. Ibid., Entry for 25 July 1896.
33. Lane, *Magic Years*, 33.
34. Taylor, *Artist, Storyteller*, 33.
35. Potter, *Journal*, 54. Entry for 15 November 1884.
36. Lane, *Magic Years*, 44.
37. Potter, *Journal*, 298-99. Entry for 29 October 1892.
38. Lane, *Magic Years*, 42.
39. Ibid., 44-45.
40. Taylor, *Artist, Storyteller*, 66-67. The paper was entitled, "On the Generation of the Spores of Agaricinea. "

41. Potter, *Art of Beatrix Potter*, 132.
42. Potter, *Journal*, 107. Entry for 27 October 1885.
43. Ibid., 204-05. Entry for May 1890, no day of month given.
44. Lane, *Magic Years*, 115.
45. Ibid., 124.
46. Taylor, *Artist, Storyteller*, 95.
47. Ibid., 150.
48. Lane, *Magic Years*, 140-41.
49. Ibid., and Taylor, *Artist and Storyteller*, 118.
50. Taylor, *Artist, Storyteller*, 138-42.
51. Lane, *Magic Years*, 163.
52. Ibid., 176.
53. Ibid., 199. Greene divided her work into periods described as “great comedies” and “new tragedies” saying she must have “passed through an ordeal which changed the character of her genius.” The essay is found in Graham Greene, *Collected Essays* (New York: Viking Press, 1969), 232-40.
54. Taylor, *Artist, Storyteller*, 190.
55. Ibid., 203.

## EDUCATION, DESTINY, FREEDOM AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LIFE

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One of the central challenges we face today at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it seems to me, is an age old one of learning the lessons of the “past,” and applying those lessons to the improvement of the present for the building of the future. Along with globalization, or what some refer to as runaway capitalism, have come high levels of alienation which have persisted in spite of the best efforts of the experts to ameliorate the problem. Marx would not be happy. Nor would Dewey or King, Malcolm, Hannah Arendt, Emerson, DuBois or Freire. These individuals, each in their own way tried to provide insights and guidance that would help to move the world in a different direction. Today it seems that we are further away from making their goals and aspirations become realities than ever before. For example, Marx warned us that capital would separate humans from themselves. Dewey said that you could not have an education worth the name without the practice of democracy in the educational process—particularly in the classroom. King, in 1963, gave us a choice between Chaos or Community? Malcolm gave us a different choice --- the ballot or the bullet? Hannah Arendt warned us about the totalitarianism lurking within each of us waiting to imprison the spirit of freedom. Ralph Waldo Emerson urged us with every ounce of his being to recognize that the spirit of God reins supreme and said that to the extent that we embrace that spirit, it is to that extent that humans become free. DuBois prophetically warned that ‘the problem’ of the 20<sup>th</sup> century would be the problem of the color line. Paulo Freire said that the education of the oppressed must reflect the practice of freedom. Were these individuals alive today one wonders if they would say that the emancipation or birth of the human race is in danger of being aborted? In this paper I am posing the question, “Is there a connection between education, destiny, freedom and life?” Following Foucault’s archaeology of knowledge, I want to know whether discursive formations in society subjugate knowledge and set

up power relationships that prevent in-depth discourse and action on some the most pressing problems of the day (Foucault, 1977)? In other words, are the silences between our words so loud that we cannot hear each other?

### **Education vs. Miseducation**

The concept of education implies its opposite—miseducation. We in today’s society talk a lot about education but we say very little about miseducation. This leaves us with some difficult realities to face if we are ever going to get to the root of what is wrong with education in the modern/post-modern world. The executives at Enron and Arthur Andersen were not uneducated men. Kenneth Lay, Enron’s former CEO has a Ph.D. in Economics. Michael Kooper, formally of Enron, was educated at Duke University and the London School of Economics. Andrew S. Fastow, also a former Enron executive, has an MBA from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. These men along with David B. Duncan, the former auditor at Arthur Andersen who was primarily responsible for shredding the Enron account documents, were all highly educated men. I think that we can also safely assume that the executives at Inclone Systems, Inc., Adelphia Communications Corporation, and WorldCom Inc. were just as highly educated. So how do we account for their behavior?

If we contrast the individuals in corporate America with the individuals that took part in the genocide in Rwanda in the early 1990s, some may say that this is quite a stretch since most of the individuals that took part in the genocide in Rwanda were unlettered and uneducated men. However, we must not forget that approximately seventy-two years ago, a society that was once considered among the most sophisticated and civilized in the world was responsible for the extermination six million Jews. It is important to remember that many of the Nazis in the Third Reich were highly educated men. Albert Speer was an architect. Joseph Goebbels won a Catholic

scholarship and eventually received a Ph.D. from Heilderberg University. Alfred Rosenberg was an engineer and architect. Hans Frank was a lawyer. Walter Schellenberg was educated at the University of Bonn and became a lawyer and physician. Hannah Arendt looked on with horror as the society she so highly valued was destroyed from within.

At first glance one might say that it is easy to understand the actions of the individuals who took part in the Rwandan genocide, but difficult to understand the actions of the Nazis. However, psychologists tell us that everyone possesses both good and bad character traits although most of us would like to believe that the negative traits are in some way ameliorated by education—particularly education in the form of moral values. Whether this is true or not, it seems clear, nevertheless, that no society that calls itself civilized can be held together unless the individuals in that society act in morally responsible ways toward each other. This obviously would also hold true for the global society that we live in today.

Reinhold Niebuhr sees the creation of a moral society as problematic, and raises the question of whether the individual in society can ever learn to act in a morally responsible way against the greater and very selfish proclivities of the group. He says that, "For all the centuries of experience, men have not yet learned how to live together without compounding their vices and covering each other "with mud and with blood (Niebuhr, 1932)." Dewey, on the other hand, is less pessimistic than Niebuhr. Developing a case for the power of education, he says:

The deeper and more intimate educative formation of disposition comes, without conscious intent, as the young gradually partake of the activities of the various groups to which they may belong. As a society becomes more complex, however, it is found necessary to provide a special social environment which shall especially look after the capacities of the immature (Dewey, 1966 (1916).

One of the capacities of the immature that Dewey believed in so highly was moral growth

that could be nurtured and developed by the appropriate educational environment. Western society had taken a wrong turn from Dewey's point of view by privileging rationalism or an intellectual form of knowledge over and above other forms of knowledge such as the practical. Cornel West, describing Dewey's position on this says:

Dewey's account of this subject-object relation primarily mediated by epistemic mechanisms is more historical and concrete than that of Martin Heidegger and more materialist than that of Jacques Derrida. On the one hand, modern philosophers modeled their epistemological problematic upon an immaterial and supernatural soul or spirit (be it a transcendent God or immanent within humans) that knows and thereby exercises power over a material and natural world. . . . On the other hand, this problematic results in large part from the elevating of an intellectual form of knowledge, that of the eternal, universal and invariable, and the devaluing of another, practical kind of knowledge, that of the temporal, particular, and variable (West, 1989).

Ani traces this Western obsession with intellectual or rational knowledge back to Plato and, to some extent, to his most famous student Aristotle. She says:

The dialogue the *Republic* is Plato's ideological justification of the State he wishes to bring into being. What we witness in the dialogue can be viewed epistemologically as the creation of the object. In previous and disparate world-views, we see a knowing subject intimately involved in the surrounding universe. The acquisition of knowledge involving immersion in this universe until, through sympathetic participation, meaning is revealed, expressed, and understood via complex and multidimensional symbols. But in the "new" epistemology we exchange symbols for "objects." The creation of the object requires a transformation of the universe, no longer experienced but rather, "objectified." This transformation is achieved through a changed



relationship of the knower to the known. In the *Republic*, Plato performs this feat: a psycho-intellectual maneuver by which the subject is able to separate her/himself from the known. This separation is at once the key that opens the way to “knowledge” as conceived by the European and the key that locks the door to the possibilities of the apprehension of a spiritual universe (Ani, 1997).

This inevitably leads to what she describes as the development of the isolated thinking self --- a self that becomes fiercely isolated from its environment and the intuitive knowledge of that [environment]. The primary activity of this self then becomes an intellectual activity which is no longer connected to intuition or the intuiting of knowledge. Knowledge, in general, becomes objectified and intellectual knowledge of the “material” world becomes privileged over knowledge of the spiritual and emotional worlds of the individual. Once this alienation becomes imbedded in the culture, the individual simply becomes a product of this culture-of-alienation. Eventually, alienated existence becomes normalized throughout the whole of society.

Paulo Freire like Dewey is also concerned with miseducation. Unlike Dewey, however, who sees democracy as contingent on social and individual practice through the educational process, Freire sees democracy as contingent upon the practice of freedom through dialogical education. Also, unlike Dewey who does not particularly focus on the education of the oppressed, Freire sees the freedom of the oppressed as being intimately connected with the freedom of society as a whole. While Dewey focuses on what must happen in the schools through the pedagogical process, Freire argues for education to be transported beyond formal schooling to wherever dialogical space can be appropriated.

Krishnamurti, however, would argue that neither of these educators addresses the core of the educational dilemma that faces society today. He privileges knowledge of the self above knowledge of society. Alienation, he argues, comes when the dichotomy between the self and society becomes

magnified and success becomes the motivating factor driving individual achievement. Whether material or spiritual, the pursuit of reward, the search for inward or outward security, the desire for comfort, all smother discontent and breed fear. Fear blocks intelligent understanding of life (Krishnamurti, 1981 (1953)). Agreeing with Freire that the current educational system promotes a culture of silence, he believes that the lack of a deep understanding of self prevents any spirit of discontent or revolt. The form of revolt that he is referring to is a profound psychological revolt of the intelligence. He says that there are many who revolt against established orthodoxies only to fall into new orthodoxies, further illusions and concealed self-indulgences. Intelligent revolt, he believes, comes with self-knowledge through the awareness of one’s own thought and feeling. He then goes on to say that:

It is only when we face experience as it comes and do not avoid disturbance that we keep intelligence highly awakened; and intelligence highly awakened is intuition, which is the true guide of life. . . If we are being educated merely to achieve distinction, to get a better job, to be more efficient, to have wider dominion over others, then our lives will be shallow and empty (Krishnamurti, 1981 (1953)).

Krishnamurti, believes that the purpose of education should be to produce integrated human beings. Individuals who know themselves and understand their connection to their surrounding environment. The integrated individual is the individual who is free from fear and this freedom from fear allows real intelligence and love to flourish. It seems ironic that the more books we produce, the more information we have access to, the more society appears to degenerate. Krishnamurti would say that this is only symptomatic of a much deeper alienation from who we are as human beings. James Baldwin put it another way. He said that we are the most unlettered society in the world today— unlettered in the language of the heart (Baldwin, 1973).<sup>1</sup> Eric Fromm is even more blunt about this condition than Baldwin.

Modern capitalism needs men who co-operate smoothly and in large numbers; who want to consume more and more; and whose tastes are standardized and can be easily influenced and anticipated. It needs men [and women] who feel free and independent, not subject to any authority or principle or conscience—yet willing to be commanded, to do what is expected of them, to fit into the social machine without friction . . . Modern man is alienated from himself, from his fellow men, and from nature. He has been transformed into a commodity, experiences his life forces as an investment which must bring him the maximum profit obtainable under existing market conditions (Fromm, 1974 (1956).

Eric Fromm wrote those words almost fifty years ago— long before Enron.

### **Education and Destiny**

Miseducation seems to be linked or connected in some mysterious way to another concept that has over historical time served as a prism through which the human condition can be understood— namely, the concept of destiny. For example, Carter G. Woodson connects miseducation and alienation in the African American community to a deliberate subjugation of knowledge about African heritage (Woodson, 1933). This has created a condition that Ralph Ellison describes very eloquently in his 1952 novel *Invisible Man* and that James Baldwin finds necessary to implant in the very title of his 1964 book *Nobody Knows My Name*. It is Woodson, however, who connects this condition directly to miseducation. Written in 1933, contemporary students who read *The Miseducation of the Negro* say that what Woodson wrote in 1933 still applies today. He said:

The “educated Negroes” have the attitude of contempt toward their own people because in their own as well as in their mixed schools Negroes are taught to admire the Hebrew, the Greek, the Latin and the Teuton and to despise the African (Woodson, 1990 (1933)).

He might have also said that this same scenario applies to a large majority of everyone else in American society as well. Johnny Washington in

his book *A Journey into the Philosophy of Alain Locke* raises the issue of destiny in connection with the human condition even more directly than Woodson. Defining “destiny” as the enduring ideals toward which a People strives in successive generations, Washington argues that such ideals are largely informed by the historic struggles that a People or a civilization has undergone, struggles that stand as boundary elements within which a People tends to beat out their path of freedom. He says that this path is nothing less than the same path of the World Spirit described by Hegel. Hegel, Washington argues, claimed that it was the World Spirit, manifesting itself in and through certain historic heroes, (for example, Caesar and Napoleon), that determined the destiny of the human race. The hero and/or spiritual leader, who is the embodiment of the World Spirit, has as his goal the enlargement of the realm of culture and spirit so that a People may enjoy a greater degree of freedom. The relation between culture and freedom for Hegel hinged on his view of the creation of the state, made possible by the hero, whose destiny then became the destiny of the world (Washington, 1994).

Focusing on an analysis of the philosophies of Alain Locke, Booker T. Washington, Martin Luther King and W. E. B. DuBois, Washington argues that while Locke and DuBois had similar views on the destiny of African Americans that at times involved integration along with the strategic use of voluntary segregation, King did not share their views. It was King, from Washington’s point of view, who most embodied the World Spirit imagined by Hegel and aligned the destiny of Blacks with the destiny of the world. This is evident, says Washington, in part because the civil rights movement of the 1960s exerted such a worldwide influence, that it resulted in King emerging as a symbol of freedom for all oppressed people around the world. It was at that point, according to Washington, that the destiny of Blacks and the destiny of the world overlapped. While Caesar, Napoleon and individuals like Hitler tried to transform the world through the use of military force, King attempted to do the same

thing through the use of love and nonviolence (Washington, 1994).

Using Washington's definition of destiny, it seems apparent that most people believe in some form of collective or individual destiny. Individual destiny for most people seems to be connected to collective destiny just as surely as the truth of the reverse. For example, America was founded on the belief of Manifest Destiny. The modern state of Israel was founded of the belief of destiny connected to a return to the homeland. The Cheyenne people believe that according to their destiny, they will one day no longer be needed on the earth and will return the morning star. Nat Turner believed that it was his destiny to free Blacks from slavery. How can we doubt that it was Mozart's destiny to create beautiful music and Einstein's destiny to be an inventive mathematical genius? Frederick Douglas had the destiny of African Americans in mind when he said in 1883 that:

There is but one destiny, it seems to me, left for us, and that is to make ourselves and be made by others a part of the American people in every sense of that word. Assimilation, not isolation, is our true policy and natural destiny. Unification for us is life. Separation is death. We cannot afford to set ourselves a separate political party or adopt for ourselves a political creed apart from the rest of our fellow citizens (Douglas, 1883).

The question that I am raising here is, to what extent does destiny, as defined by Washington, play a role in our individual and collective lives? To what extent should we consider it in the educational process? Like it or not, the concept of Manifest Destiny has had a major influence on historical American thought and actions. Could it be that the messages of King, Jesus and Gandhi reflect a more positive side of the concept of a Manifest Destiny for human kind?

The Yoruba people of West Africa have a collection of ethical teachings called the Odu Ifa. No one knows exactly how old these teachings are because they were passed down orally in pre colonial Africa for hundreds if not thousands of

years. These ethical teachings say that it is the human's duty (read destiny) to do good in the world to combat the ever-present forces of evil. Describing the ethical framework of these teachings, Karenga says that:

. . . Odu Ifa finds an ethics rooted in the four fundamental pillars of the larger African ethical tradition. These fundamental principles are respect for and commitment to: 1) the dignity and rights of the human person; 2) the well-being and flourishing of family and community; 3) the integrity and value of the environment; and 4) the reciprocal solidarity and common interests of humanity.

He then goes on to say that:

The conceptual context for the evolution of Ifa ethics is a spirituality which conceives of the world as essentially good but constantly needing to be renewed, repaired and enriched with good. Secondly, humans are designed by the Creator as those chosen constantly to bring good into the world and not let any good be lost. This chosenness, along with its companion concept of being . . . offer a ground for the ethical principle of human dignity or the inherent and inviolable worthiness of each and every human. The divine designation of humans as chosen ones, `en`iy`an, carries with it, not only a special status of beings with an inherent and inviolable worthiness. It also . . . suggests that the fundamental mission and meaning of human life is to constantly bring good into the world.

Finally, he says:

In order to achieve this on-going task . . . humans are told that they need several essential attributes and virtues. These include: wisdom, character, the love of doing good, especially for the needy, and constant *commitment* and *struggle* to bring good into the world and not let any good be lost. Likewise we are told throughout the texts that we must be good parents, sons and daughters, friends and fellow human beings and that we should respect our elders and ancestors, with the understanding that our *togetherness in harmony* insures and

enhances our ability to bring, give and receive good in the world (Karenga, 1999).

Here is what one of the actual Odu teachings brought to humans by `Iros`u Wor`i says:

Let us do things with joy.

Those who want to go, let them go.

Those who want to stay, let them stay.

Surely, humans have been chosen to bring

Good into the world.

The All-Knowing One, priest of Orunmila,

Interpreted the teachings of Ifa

For Orunmila.

He said that Orunmila should sacrifice.

Orunmila heard and complied.

One day all kinds of people, good people and

Those who do not allow good in other

People's lives gathered together.

They then went to Orunmila.

They said: "Coming back and forth to earth

tires us, Orunmila.

Therefore, please allow us to rest in heaven. "

Orunmila said: "You cannot avoid going back and forth to earth,

Until you bring about the good condition that Olodumare has ordained for every

human being.

After then, you may rest in heaven.

They asked "What is the good condition?"

Orunmila said: "The good condition is a good world:

A world in which there is full knowledge of all things;

Happiness everywhere;

Life without anxiety or fear of enemies;

Without clashes with snakes or other dangerous animals;

Without fear of death, disease, litigation losses, wizards, witches or Eshu;

Without fear of injury from water or fire; and

Without fear of poverty or misery.

Because of your wisdom, your compelling desire for good character and your internal strength,

The things needed to bring about the good condition in the world then are:

Wisdom that is fully adequate to govern the world;

Sacrifice; character; the love of doing good for all people, especially those who are in need, And those who seek assistance from us;

And the eagerness and struggle to increase good in the world,

And not let any good at all be lost.

People will continue to go to heaven;

And they will go back and forth to earth after their transfiguration,

Until everyone has achieved the good condition.

Thus, when the children of Oduduwa gather together,

Those chosen to bring good into the world are called human beings or the chosen ones (Karenga, 1999).

Historically, destiny has played a major role in the lives of human beings. Marx's historical materialism, for example, seems to be just as much a part of human destiny as King's concept of love. According to Ifa tradition, the educational process was once intimately connected with destiny. In the Odu just quoted, we see the enduring ideal of good held up before the Yoruba people as a part of their educational process. Yet while we say that we value life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as key ideals that we cherish in American society, too often it is the pedagogical process that we use that sabotages what we say we want to accomplish. Real democracy is still not practiced for the most part in the educational process.

### **Education and Freedom**

John Dewey saw freedom as a key issue in the educational process (Dewey, 1974 (1938)). He saw it as both a means and the end ultimately to achieve in society. However, his limited definition of freedom primarily defined it in terms of creating the appropriate learning environment for children. He was highly critical of the way schools are organized and especially thought that the ridged structure of the classroom prohibited the free movement of the student, which in turn prohibited

or circumscribed the intellectual development of the child. Freedom was far from an abstract concept for Dewey inasmuch as he felt that the educator should think very carefully about how she set up the curriculum, the school and the classroom environment.

Dewey, however, did not seem to be concerned with the existential situation of the child and did not appear to consider the issue of oppression apart from the question of democracy and inequality in society. The life situation as well as the inner life of the Black child who paints himself without legs or arms indicating feelings of alienation and powerlessness in the world did not seem to be a primary concern of Dewey's pedagogy. Similarly Dewey does not seem to be concerned with the inner life of the poor White child whose only source of self-worth seems to be his whiteness; the Native American child who is torn between two societies—one Red and one white; the Brown child who blindly embraces a Spanish colonial heritage; and the Asian child who rejects the values of his parents. The child who comes to school after having been immersed in the violence of the society around him does not leave that violence at the school's door once he enters the school room as Dewey seems to believe.

In his book *The Insecurity of Freedom*, Abraham Joshua Heschel, in describing the education of the Jewish child, connects education, destiny, freedom and the meaning of life to the cultural background of the Jewish child. He feels that this should be done by connecting the student to his heritage and to his inner source of divinity. The challenge then of the 'insecurity of freedom' is addressed directly through the educational process by providing the student with a knowledge and understanding of who she is and what her connection with life is. He says, "Our goal must be to enable the pupil to participate and share in the spiritual experience of Jewish living; to explain to him what it means to live as a likeness of God (Heschel, 1972). Further, he says that,

What we need more than anything else is not *textbooks* but *textpeople*. It is the personality of the teacher which is the text that the pupils

read; the text that they will never forget. . . . He is the intermediary between the past and the present as well. Yet he is also the creator of the future of our people. . . . A man should always regard himself as though the world were half guilty and half meritorious. One (good) deed may turn the scale of the whole world on the side of guilt or on the side of merit. Every person, Heschel believes, participates at all times in the act of either destroying or redeeming the world. The Messiah is in us. That is why every child is of such immense importance (Heschel, 1972).

Paulo Freire in *Education for Critical Consciousness* argues that freedom cannot exist in the absence of militant democracy. This is a democracy that suppresses privilege and does not fear the people. Freire is very concerned with how education creates a culture of silence and perpetuates the gap between the powerful and the powerless. People are treated as objects and not subjects who are capable of transforming their world. Jacques Chonchol tells us that Freire's concept of knowing and knowledge involve action upon the world. He says that Freire correctly tells us that:

Knowing, whatever its level, is not the act by which a subject[,] transformed into an object[,] docilely and passively accepts the contents others give or impose on him or her.

Knowledge, on the contrary necessitates the curious presence of subjects confronted with the world. It requires their transforming action on reality. It demands a constant searching. It implies invention and reinvention. . . . In the learning process the only person who really learns is s/he who appropriates what is learned, who apprehends and thereby reinvents that learning; . . . who is able to apply the appropriate learning to concrete existential situations. On the other hand, the person who is filled by another with "contents" whose meaning s/he is not aware of, which contradict his or her way of being in the world, cannot learn because s/he is not challenged (Freire, 1973).

Howard Gardner in *The Disciplined Mind* describes a school that would probably make Dewey and Freire happy. Nestled in Reggio Emilia, Italy (a town of about 130,000), this city has gained worldwide attention for its outstanding schools. What distinguishes the Reggio schools? Gardner says that the Reggio schools stand out by virtue of the type and quality of the activities that the children carry out on a regular basis; the deeply caring and respectful ways in which teachers interact with the youngsters and with one another; the availability of education free of charge throughout the municipality. He then goes on to say that:

In each of the classes in a school, groups of children spend several months exploring a theme of interest. These themes are ones that attract young children, usually because they offer rich sensory stimulation and raise intriguing puzzles. Among the many dozens of motifs that have been investigated over the years, . . . are sunlight, rainbows, raindrops, shadows, the city, a city for ants, the town lions that preside over the central piazza of Reggio, poppy fields, an amusement park for birds built by the youngsters, and the operation of the fax machine. The children approach these objects, themes, and environments from many angles; they ponder questions and phenomena that arise in the course of their explorations; and they end up creating artful objects that capture their interests and their learning: drawings, paintings, cartoons, charts, photographic series, toy models, replicas—indeed, representatives of an ever-expanding, unpredictable series of genres.

Reggio reminds me of a similar school much closer to home—Play Mountain Place. Located in Los Angeles and founded by Phyllis Fleishman in 1949, Play Mountain prides itself on providing a humanistic education that focuses first on character development and then on academics. Conflict resolution workshops are a part of the daily curriculum and children are encouraged in a nonjudgmental way to express their feelings. The health of the student's inner life is of paramount

importance at Play Mountain and teachers are trained to give a great deal of attention to each student's emotional and intellectual life. Over the years, Play Mountain has become a model for teaching character development and for promoting nonviolence. The Directors and teachers at Play Mountain regularly consult with educators in Japan and other parts of the world and Play Mountain now has an international reputation for promoting humanistic education (see <http://www.Playmountain.org/>).<sup>2</sup>

Hilliard suggests that we should draw on the wisdom of the ancient African Kemetic sage Ptahhotep to address the problem of violence and freedom through the pedagogical process. Ptahhotep's concern was how to produce individuals who were both wise and knowledgeable. He calls Ptahhotep's pedagogy probably the first anti-violence curriculum in the world. Quoting from Ptahhotep's book directly (a book which was written more than two thousand years ago), Hilliard says that Ptahhotep's teachings provide many subtle and yet profound insights. "The teacher can teach in such a way that should prevent conflicts between individuals and the society as a whole. The prevention strategy for individuals was rather straightforward. He counseled silence rather than useless confrontation—no matter what the power position of the opponent. He also taught that those in positions of power and responsibility can create conditions that provoke violence. He taught that *the root cause of violence is greed, "the compound of all evils"* (p. 26). That greed sets violence in motion at the individual and collective level (Hilliard, 1997).

In Ptahhotep's teachings we see the theme of *sba* (or *seba*), says Hilliard, which is the quest "to know," "to study," and "to become wise." He feels that arrogance is an impediment to wise perception. The lowly maid at the grindstone, the woman in poverty, the man on the street, may be richer in good speech (*mdw nfr*) than one who possesses much information or knowledge. Ptahhotep calls for self-control in the face of provocation. He says that a wise man will raise a

child that is pleasing to God. On motivation, he praises intrinsic motivation: "Do not disturb a great man or distract his attention when he is occupied, trying to understand his task. . . . Love for the work they do brings men closer to God (p. 29). Surely, a good teacher will try to engage a learner/listener in work that is compelling to the learner/listener. This eliminates the need for coercive "discipline[says Ptahhotep] (Hilliard, 1997)."

### **An Archaeology of Knowledge**

Foucault (1977) calls for an insurrection of knowledge. He views his task as releasing subjugated knowledges and local memories that will then serve to undermine regimes of thought which have used power and control to set up hierarchies of knowledge. He says:

We are concerned with . . . the insurrection of knowledges that are opposed primarily not to the contents, methods or concepts of a science, but to the effects of the centralising powers which are linked to the institution and functioning of an organized scientific discourse within a society such as ours . . . it is really against the effects of the power of a discourse that is considered to be scientific that the genealogy must wage its struggle (Foucault, 1977).

What Foucault is concerned with and what I have attempted to do in this paper is to begin an archaeological view of the use of erudite and subjugated knowledges in connection with key categories in our society such as education, destiny, freedom and life. These various perceptions or knowledges or categories seem to fall on a continuum from the more-or-less "scientific" knowledge all the way "down" to knowledge represented by local memories. The reification of scientific knowledge, however, in today's society seems to be clearly connected to rationalism and the infallibility of the scientific method. The unprecedented domination of this reification seems to be a benchmark of Western

society. I want to know how this reification has affected discourse around the categories of education, destiny, freedom, life and the use of nonscientific knowledge and other forms of knowledge that are considered low down on the hierarchy. How did this reification effect Dewey's philosophy, Marx, Hegel, Freire, King, DuBois, Arendt? How did it affect their views of Native or indigenous knowledges and their utility for providing solutions to the problems of the day?

I have used subjugated knowledges from African peoples in this paper as a sort of metaphor for resurrecting insurrectionary truths about gender, race ethnicity, animal rights, environmental concerns, ability concerns, feminist/womanists issues and all "lost" knowledges. This bottom up truth, represents a view that Leroi Jones (Imamu Amiri Baraka) has said may very well preclude an understanding of what it must be like to stand at the bottom of the hill and look up. To the extent that power influences discursive discourse about educational reality, destiny, freedom and the significance of life, the question of solutions to our current dilemmas will always be circumscribed by power-defined discourse. How do we move to a place where we become both hearers and listeners to the silences beyond and between the dominating discourse? Can we become speakers of good speech and divine speech? How do we move past the objectification of knowledge to emotional, intuitive and local memories as truth and knowledge? How do we move past the teaching of knowledge to the teaching of wisdom? Are the answers to these questions centered around courage and will and the absence of fear? Can we love ourselves enough to embrace these truths? In seems to me that it will only be to the extent that we are able to successfully address these questions that we will begin to move beyond "error-correction-error" solutions and begin to grasp, as a total society, the real significance and meaning of life.

### **ENDNOTES**

1. Baldwin said this in an address at the University of California at Los Angeles in 1973.

2. My daughter has had the unique experience of attending both the University of Chicago Lab School founded by John Dewey and Play Mountain founded by Phyllis Fleishman. Her experience at Play Mountain was by far the better experience, however, neither experience provided her with a grounding in African and African American culture.

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# AMERICAN AND JAPANESE COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS

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## Introduction

American educators joining the educational tour in Japan are astonished to learn how much and how late Japanese high school students need to study at home every night. Japanese company employees in the United States are, on the other hand, reluctant to send their children to American high school because they do not believe that American education and school life enable them to pass the college entrance examination after returning home. American high school students are extremely busy in engaged in numerous activities after school ranging from extracurricular activities and social gathering to part-time jobs. Japanese high school students, on the contrary, spend time solely on preparation for the college entrance examination every single night and on the weekend. Some attend *juku* (cram school) or *yobiko* (college preparatory school particularly for students who have already finished high school). They often come home around 10:00 p.m. from *juku* or *yobiko*.

The description above illustrates the distinctive disparity between American and Japanese college entrance examinations from the viewpoint of their competitiveness. The conclusion is that the former is mild while the latter is fiercely competitive. Three factors contribute the difference of degree of competitiveness in college entrance examination. Those factors are history, geography, and society. American democracy, a huge land with an overabundance of natural resources and a society which evaluates individuals from many different standpoints, produces mild competitiveness in college entrance examination. Japanese Confucianism, a small land with extremely limited natural resources and in which academic credentials are important to the society, turns the college examination into an unbelievably competitive selection process. This paper closely scrutinizes three factors that determine the impact of competitiveness in college entrance examinations in each country from historical,

geographical, and social perspectives.

## Historical Background

The key word is *democracy* in the American education and *Confucianism* in the Japanese counterpart. The former makes the college admission easier while the latter makes it harder.

## United States

Historically and traditionally, more high school students are welcomed to enter universities without facing rigid competition under the name of *democracy* after Thomas Jefferson unlike the Japanese correlative. The United States and the term *democracy* are inseparable. The recognition of equality is another basic principle of *democracy*. When it comes to college selection or admission, *democracy* or *equality* are valued as goals of including individuals in the student body. The American Declaration of Independence of 1776, drafted primarily by Thomas Jefferson, states that all men are created equal, in the sense that they have inalienable rights, such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The equality that men receive at birth is thus not only an outright gift or grant, but also an opportunity and a challenge. All are equal in the democratic view.<sup>1</sup>

Before Thomas Jefferson, who founded the University of Virginia, the first state university in the nation, European educational philosophy had prevailed in the United States. Males from the upper social classes or the aristocracy dominated secondary and higher education and had the greatest opportunity to occupy leadership positions. Owing to circumstances of birth, gender, and class, the majority of people were denied the opportunity to become leaders. Nevertheless, Jefferson began to deal with the issues of excellence and equity in education in a limited way conditioned by the social and economic realities of the time.<sup>2</sup> *A History of the Western Educational Experience* also supports this point of view: Jefferson's educational proposal in the *Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge* shows that he regarded education to provide a

common core of knowledge to the mass of population. His philosophy of education was that a democratic society should provide educational opportunities for both the common person and the gifted leader.<sup>3</sup> Thus, Thomas Jefferson opened the door to more people, especially common counterparts, at higher institutions. His educational philosophy heavily influenced modern *open* admission as opposed to *traditional* privilege of the wealthy. This ideal developed into the common school concept in the Early National Period.

By the way, what is difference between *open* admissions and *traditional* or *selective* ones? The secondary school-leaving certificate or equivalent is, on the one hand, often only a minimum requirement for admission to higher education in that it alone does not assure entry, particularly at the university level. Institutions with *selective* admissions policies may require that applicants demonstrate above average academic achievements. Such institutions are often extolled in the literature for their selectivity and the quality of their undergraduate education. When the secondary school-leaving certificate, on the other hand, does assure entry, the policy is known as *open* admissions. Institutions with *open* requirements admit persons, regardless of age: first generation and nontraditional students/25 years and older,<sup>4</sup> who have satisfied secondary-school graduation requirements.<sup>5</sup> This *open* admission without entrance examination boosts college enrollment *sans* rigorous competition.

The number of colleges also supports this *democracy*. Japan, for example, has about 450 colleges and universities and European countries have even fewer. The United States, on the other hand, has more than 3,000 post secondary institutions. Ordinary people attend college with very little struggle to be admitted in the United States. Attending college has more prestige in other countries, especially in Europe and Japan. Many European countries separate secondary students into college preparation and practical curriculum schools.

In sum, from the historical perspective, the term *democracy* or *equity* has prevailed in

American higher education institutions. In this circumstance, *democracy* or *equity* means that one, in the first place, has an almost unlimited chance to go to college. The higher education institutions, in the second place, willingly assist the applicants to enter. Consequently, the competition toward colleges is less or weaker than the Japanese parallel is.

### Japan

Japan is a strong ranking-oriented country just like China. The society clearly reflects the ranking system in its colleges and universities. Historically, this college ranking system stems from Confucianism which has as one of its principles competition. To protect their pride and earn their family's reputation, the applicants covet entry into top-ranked universities. Entrance into these universities is extremely competitive. For instance, the applicant-to-opening ratio of Waseda and Keio, the two best private universities, rises to eight to one while the ratio reaches to somewhere between 20 and 40 to one at a prestigious medical school. Therefore, thanks to this aspect of Confucian philosophy, the system of Japanese college entrance examination requires the competition beyond a foreigner's imagination.

White backs up the theory above as follows:

The testing that marks the transition from middle to high school to college is both a legacy from an ancient feudal society committed to education and a product of modern egalitarianism. The Chinese examination system, from which the Japanese system is derived, acted as a selector of elite talent for the imperial to all, but the cohorts of permitted aspirants were assured of a meritocratic appraisal of their efforts.<sup>6</sup>

In summary, there is explicitly a deep connection between the necessity of a hierarchy of men, based on merit, which was an important reform at the time Confucius advocated it<sup>7</sup> and the current Japanese process of university rankings and the infamous educational competition<sup>8</sup> which madly involves the entire national testing program. The lack of options leads many Japanese students to seek higher education abroad.

### **Geographical Background**

The abundance of natural resources and availability of land has, I believe, a strong connection with the competition of college entrance examination. Great sufficiency and a huge land area allow the Americans to settle for more a more egalitarian style while the scarcity and limited land compel the Japanese to be hungrier and to want the more hierarchical. This backdrop definitely reflects on the entrance examinations: the former is not as competitive as the latter is.

#### **United States**

The United States is about 25 times as large as Japan is. It has a little over 220 million people (twice more than Japan) with 4.5 people per square miles. Abundant land areas are available while copious agricultural products are generated as well as prodigious amount of natural resources is stored. This richness spoils Americans' mentality. For example, thrift stores are popular. As soon as Americans are tired of the things that they previously purchased, they either throw them away or donate them to the thrift stores. They keep buying new things in a prodigious fashion. This superfluity contributes to the American's perennial satisfaction and makes them less competitive. Because the sense of urgency is scarce due to abundance, they do not need to compete with each other so fiercely. They are able to obtain whatever they want wherever and whenever they want it. This lack of general competition unambiguously affects the mental competition to enter colleges. With a minimum of effort, anyone who wants can enter higher education in some form. In conclusion, the superabundance in this country creates the system of less competitive entrance examination that does not have to consider the scarcity of student positions to gain entrance.

#### **Japan**

Japan is a small island, almost same size as California. She has a little more than 120 million people who inhabit only 30% of the land, one of the highest population densities in the world with 844 per square miles (187 times more than U.S.A.). She is renowned for scarcity. She is

dependant on other countries because of this dearth. Forests account for two-thirds of Japan's land area, but per capita production from woodlands is only 1% that of Canada, 6% that of the former Soviet Union, and 17% that of the United States. Japan depends on imports for most of its timber.

Now, this scarcity is an important key for Japan's overall success. It contributes high competition that inevitably leads to the system of severe competitive college entrance examination. White looks at the issue this way.

Japan's natural resources were scarce and her "island mentality"-a sense of both vulnerability and uniqueness-produced a unified and concerted drive to catch up with the modern world. To bring Japan into a competitive or at least dignified place in the industrializing world, the country needed its best and brightest, a trained and talented elite.<sup>9</sup>

The point is that the sense of paucity has made Japanese non volitionally competitive. Japan's scarcity requires its people to have industriousness under difficult situations in order to survive or compete with other countries. This dearth generated the system of competitive college entrance examination that selects the elite who can fire the industrial success. Thus, scarcity, industriousness, combative competition, and college entrance are all related to this national character.

### **III Social Background**

The American society evaluates people from overall performances while the Japanese correlative assesses people from their education only, in other words, from their alma mater. This disparity gives the American students multiple opportunities, academic study, sports, arts, music, and the rest while it grants the Japanese equals nothing but study. Furthermore, American society allows individuals without college degree to be prosperous while Japanese equivalence does not. The Japanese system automatically turns out to be much more competitive than the American parallel.

#### **United States**

Michael Jordan, one of the greatest players in NBA history, earned \$30 million during the 1996-97 season (the speculation said that he would resign the contract with Chicago Bulls with somewhere between \$36 and \$40 million for the following season). Los Angeles Lakers succeeded to lure Shaquille O'Neal, regarded the center of the 90s, a player somewhere between Wilt Chamberlain and Kareem Abdul Jabbar, from Orlando Magic as of 1997 with \$123 million for seven years that was the highest total in four major professional sports (baseball, football, basketball and ice hockey) history. Bill Gates, president of Microsoft Computer, has kept his reigning position as the richest individual in the world during the last three consecutive years according to the *Forbes* magazine which estimates \$33 billion as his fortune as of 1997. Michael Jackson and Madonna, who generated some of the most popular music albums in history, "Thriller" and "Like a Virgin," respectively, have attracted millions of people in the world as well as millions of dollars. Julia Roberts, whose *Pretty Woman* and *Erin Brochovich* were her signatures, on the other hand, demands about \$20 million per movie.

What common points are shared by those individuals mentioned above, besides making a prodigious amount of money and earning enormous fame? The answer is that they do not have college degree as of today. This, on one hand, tells us that anyone is entitled to be a millionaire, even billionaire, or socially significant (if they have a special talent) without college degree or even without going to college at all. This is part of the American dream. He or she will be successful overnight from nothing or nobody. This atmosphere provides American students with the impression that they can thrive in the real world without higher education. The successful stories of those without a college education make many students' opinion of going to college, especially a prestigious one, sluggish and competition to enter college dull.

The American students, furthermore, do not need to be academically successful in order to go to college. Jodie Foster graduated from Yale

University while Brook Shields received a degree from Princeton University. This does not necessarily mean that both actresses were intelligent enough to go to respected and prestigious schools, but tells that they had special talent that many people do not possess, acting. Almost every athlete is able to go to college because of their special talent, their athletic ability. Therefore, this is another story that tells that only studying assiduously at school is not the sole way to make the students be successful, in other words, there are other ways to be auspicious. To be good at sports, music or art is as important as academic success. Not to do well at school academically, means nothing. Such students do not have to be depressed because they can excel in other areas, which may bring them success and happiness. Below is Rohlen's American perspective concerning college selection.

A significantly different reality shapes the existence of most American high school students. University entrance exams are crucial concern to some American youths, to be sure, particularly those from the upper-middle class, those attending academically strong high schools (mostly private and East Coast), and those with parents who are keen on reading or maintaining educational status. Nevertheless, this group is far from the majority. Most students who go on to higher education in the United States are not preoccupied with entrance exams. They can find a place in a junior college or college simply by completing high school. Only for our best colleges and universities is there significant competition, and the manner of the competition greatly reduces the likelihood of success through cramming Japanese-style. A personal love of reading or a natural ability in science and math or an artistic talent or leadership is all important individual factors in our admission approach.<sup>10</sup>

American society strongly emphasizes special talent and leadership besides academic competence. One interpretation is that the overall performance of an individual is significant while another is that academic success is not always

necessary (as long as other special talents are possessed by him or her). Therefore, in this sense, the American college entrance examination does not have to be as academically competitive as the Japanese counterpart is.

### Japan

In Japan, college is everything, and academic success is the ultimate goal. The heat of the competition for the college scorches the nation beginning every January and lasting through March while the intensity to enter an eminent college or university has lasted since junior high or even elementary school, or even kindergarten. It is understood that the college selection heavily influences the applicants' entire life including job and marriage. Japanese society and higher-education are inseparable. Japanese society is so-called *gakureki shakai* ("credential society") that refers to the great emphasis the Japanese place on a person's educational background. In Japan, people generally consider not only the level of education completed but also the rank and prestige of the particular universities attended. These determine an individual's social and occupational status.

Furthermore, *gakubatsu* is academic sectarianism or a faction composed of graduates of the same college or university.<sup>11</sup> The more prominent the companies or banks are, the more influential the *gakubatsu* is. It is easier for the graduates of the same school to get promotion within the organization. A person's educational career provides a convenient determinant of status. To work at highly respected and hierarchical companies, corporations, banks, and so forth, means to earn towering reputation or prestige. Finally, it means obtaining the best life in this *credentialed society*. In order to get excellent employment, the applicants must enter distinguished universities. They must study and strive to enter such institutions. Because of this, the competition to gain entrance to the most notable schools has intensified remarkably.<sup>12</sup>

The foundation of life for people in Japanese society has a strong relation to the university from which they graduate. Academic success and

eventual efficacious entry into prestigious professions and institutions determine their success in life. The applicants must study ardently to achieve their goals: (a) to enter acclaimed school, and (b) to secure an honored place of employment. To accomplish such goals is limitlessly hard to manage, therefore, the college entrance examination generates the fearful intensity to enter college as the first great hurdle to future success.

### Conclusion

The nature of American college entrance examination is mildly competitive while that of the Japanese equivalent is fiercely competitive. Historically, the spirit of American democracy helps more students go to college while the Confucianism shapes the fierce competitiveness in Japan. Geographically, the condition of living in a vast country with unlimited natural resources makes American feel satisfied and eventually less competitive and this reflects on the entrance examinations. The condition of living in a small island with limited natural resources, on the other hand, makes Japanese people driven and competitive and this reflects the entrance examinations. Socially, American society that evaluates the individual from many different viewpoints from academics to personal qualities helps it remain less competitive while the Japanese evaluative process, which extremely emphasizes students' academic performance, molds an intense competitive regimen of testing. In this way, the cultural and social factors profoundly shape education in general and entrance examination in particular in respective countries. The backgrounds concerned in this paper behind the college entrance examination heavily effect the degree of competitiveness in each country.

Finally, numerous American college freshmen who lack basic academic skills enter college. Open admission causes the obvious problem of including students who might not have the necessary preparation for college or university academic work. This might result in the desired great influx of students but the consequences are the possible lowering of degree standards and the diminishment

of the value of the college degree.<sup>13</sup> Japanese high school students, on the other hand, suffer mental breakdowns or even choose suicide for failure or fear of failure of the entrance examination called *examination hell*.<sup>14</sup> It may be the time to reevaluate the college entrance examination in each country.

### ENDNOTES

1. *Collier's Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Democracy."
2. Gerald Gutek, "Thomas Jefferson: Advocate of Republican Education," chap. 9 in *Cultural Foundations of Education: A Biographical Introduction*, (New York: Macmillan, 1991) 164-165.
3. Gerald Gutek, "Republicanism, Revolution, and Education," chap. 10 in *A History of the Western Educational Experience*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland, 1995), 181.
4. *Encyclopedia of Educational Research*, 6th ed., s.v. "Higher Education."
5. *The Encyclopedia of Higher Education*, s.v. "United States: 2.1 Admissions Policies and Selection."
6. Mary White, "Secondary Schools," chap. 8 in *The Japanese Educational Challenge: A Commitment to Children* (New York: Free, 1987), 140-141.
7. Martin Schoenhals, "The Ideology of Meritocracy in Historical China," in *The Paradox of Power in a People's Republic of China Middle School* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1993), 39.
8. *Concise Dictionary of Modern Japanese History*, v.s. "Education."
9. White, "Secondary," 141.
10. Thomas P. Rohlen, "University Entrance Exams: A National Obsession," chap. 3 in *Japan's High Schools* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 107.
11. *Dictionary of Japanese Culture*, s.v. "Gakubatsu."
12. *Japan: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, v.s. "Gakureki Shakai."
13. *The International Encyclopedia of Higher Education*, s.v. "Admissions: An International Perspective/ Open Admissions."
14. *Everything Japanese*, s.v. "Education Hell & Entrance Examination."

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**THE DESTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE BY ACCOUNTABILITY:  
WOULD A RE-EMPHASIS ON ARISTOTLE'S INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES BE USEFUL?**

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By virtually all accounts, the educative aspect of American public education is in danger today. As anyone who studies the history of American education in any depth will recognize, attacks such as those we are witnessing today, however, are anything but new. In our contemporary environment, however, these attacks seem to have become increasingly bitter, hostile, and, even, angry. Behind this apparent anger, lies a powerful sloganeering campaign that has achieved considerable success primarily as a result of its consistency with the media-driven American culture in which we live. Contemporary Americans like nothing more than simplistic answers to complex problems or get rich quick schemes that, many believe, will instantly produce a utopian world, a world in which all of our problems somehow have been “fixed” once and for all.

Nowhere is this desire more apparent than in the contemporary rhetoric that fuels school reform. For example, almost all popular rhetoric about education--from both sides of the political spectrum--includes such slogans as “leave no child behind,” “raise the bar,” “fix failing schools,” and “hold schools accountable.” Very rarely, however, do any of the people who use these shibboleths ever stop to define specifically what they mean when they attempt to convince someone of the necessity for the implementation of their most recent pedagogical panacea. When I hear these slogans, I am inclined, almost immediately, to ask questions that might lead to further understanding. For example, with regard to the slogan “leave no child behind,” I am eager to ask “Where exactly are we going?” I agree completely that we should, indeed must, take all American children with us, but, before departing, I would like to have a good idea of where we are heading as we travel on our journey. Indeed, many of the salesmen, and saleswomen, who use the aforementioned slogans, often remind me of people who peddle products during the latest commercial on the Home Shopping Network or, even, of the most recent advertising campaign launched by Callaway golf that seeks to convince golfers that they must purchase that company’s hottest new titanium shafted, 54-inch, oversized, well-marketed driver.

Lost in these often passion-filled discussions about education, however, are some very important questions about just what education means and how the institution of schooling influences children in American society. More specifically, however, politicians and other pundits who peddle programs that claim to “hold

schools accountable” or “fix failing schools” seem to have ignored questions about the nature of knowledge and its absolutely central role in the education of youth. Before addressing the question of knowledge, however, I first want to look closely at a term that has immense power today and how that term relates to the institution of schooling. That term is accountability.

Schools *influence* students. They do not produce them. I graduated from The University of Texas at Austin, but I, most certainly, was not *produced* by UT-Austin. To state that schools—whether they be elementary, middle, or secondary schools—*produce* students is to imply that no other factors within American culture influence children. In other words, for someone to say that “I am a product of, for example, Austin High School” is to assume that, somehow, Austin High School was completely responsible for everything which that student accomplished later in life—whether these accomplishments be noteworthy, uneventful, or, even, unlawful. Such talk of schools *producing* students is utterly shallow, superficial, and just plain wrong. To take the position that schools do not produce students, however, is not to say that schools do not serve as a powerful *influence* in children’s lives. Of course schools represent powerful institutions in the lives of students. Teachers and principals and custodians, however, must be seen as contributors, or powerful influencers, in the complex world in which young children are cultivated. This distinction between influence and control is one that matters.

If, however, we buy into the wrongheaded notion that schools produce students, then much of the sloganeering that follows from this assumption begins to make a bit more sense. For example, let us look closely at the notion that the contemporary “standards and accountability” movement was designed to “fix failing schools.” Such language stirs up images of scientific managers strolling around factories carrying clipboards and stopwatches in order to “tool up” or to fix the system that, presumably, continues to turn out defective products. But, wait a minute! Are schools institutions that we hope someday to fix much like we would fix the clock on the mantle by installing a new battery? Is education this simple? To address these questions, we might do well to examine another word, in addition to accountability, that is contained within the all-important contemporary phrase “fix failing schools.” That word is schools.

Do schools really educate students? Or, do teachers, administrators, office workers, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, parent volunteers, substitute teachers, and many other individuals at the school, all together, somehow contribute to the overall environment in which children become educated at school? To put my point another way, the bricks and mortar of the school building do absolutely nothing to educate children. It is the *people* within these institutions—including the students—who work together to create the education that occurs within the buildings that we call schools. Thus, to claim that *schools*—meaning bricks and mortar—produce students is as equally problematic as is to assume that schools represent the only influence in the lives of students. To speak anymore of “schools” educating students, rather than people, simply will not do. Confusing, inarticulate language leads to confused thinking. Next, I would like to consider the final term that makes up the all-too-popular phrase “fix failing schools.” That word is failing.

First of all, we might go far in understanding the meaning of “failing” if we ask one seemingly simple question: Failing to do what? If one is to claim that schools are failing, then, reasonably, an answer to the question, “Failing to do what?” it seems to me, represents a legitimate request. To answer this question, however, would require one to address the issue of the purpose, or purposes, of schooling. This essay does not purport to address this complex question about the purpose of schooling in the detail that it deserves. Rather, I want to point out that much confusion will continue to surround phrases such as “fix failing schools” if those who use the phrase refuse to address this larger issue of the purpose, or purposes, of schooling.

Any short investigation into the question of purpose, however, will reveal that Americans place numerous, and often contradictory, responsibilities on schools. A short list might include such tasks as training students for specific occupations, liberally educating students to prepare them for a life of citizenship (or social service), providing students an environment in which they can follow their own interests and needs, and, finally, reconstructing the social order by attacking such perennial American problems as race, class, and gender discrimination. Without further elaboration, one must assume that the phrase “fix failing schools” means that the people who use this phrase assume that schools are failing to address adequately all of these responsibilities, however ambitious and contradictory these purposes may be. Rather than address this specific issue of

purpose, however, I would like to consider further some of the language to which I have referred previously.

A final phrase, one that is perhaps even more popular than “fixing failing schools” leads us directly into the primary question that I would like to raise in this essay: To what extent do the current popular reforms in education address the nature of knowledge as well as the nature of education itself? I believe that many of the problems I am attempting to identify in this paper relate closely to this problem with the narrow understanding of the nature of knowledge. Almost everyone who engages the popular world of public education uses the phrase “hold schools accountable” in one way another. Much like “fixing failing schools,” however, what does “hold schools accountable” mean? The short answer to this question, it seems to me, is that nobody seems to know, or, indeed, nobody seems to want to know. First of all, in order to use this phrase, one first must make the problematic assumption that schools—meaning the bricks and mortar—can be “held accountable” for something. For the sake of argument, however, we must accept this assumption—the assumption that schools can be accountable for something—in order to investigate more closely the meaning of the much-overused word “accountability.”

In today’s difficult environment for education, the word accountability seems to mean many different things to many different people. The use of this term, to be sure, nicely corresponds with the tradition of the unbelievably high expectations that Americans have placed on education, and educators, for decades. Perhaps accountability means that “schools” are responsible for solving every problem that arises in American society, as well as for creating the utopian world that we Americans seem to think is our natural born right. Nevertheless, the question that the contemporary emphasis on accountability raises is the question, “Who is *accountable* for student learning?” Or, perhaps more specifically, the question could be asked another way: Who is *responsible* for student learning? Or, put one more way, “Who is to *blame* if students have not learned the specified material (or whatever someone wants them to learn) at the end of the school year or after the “completion” of a curriculum?” When one confuses schools with factories—as the aforementioned notion that schools “produce” students, or products, assumes, this wrongheaded analogy allows a person to arrive at quite simplistic, straightforward, and seemingly logical answers to these questions.

For example, if, on an assembly line, one worker fails to screw a bolt onto the bed of a pickup truck, then



**NULL: THE DESTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE BY ACCOUNTABILITY: WOULD  
A RE-EMPHASIS ON ARISTOTLE'S INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES BE USEFUL?**

that person, quite reasonably, can, indeed should, be held responsible for having neglected his duty to screw his assigned piece of steel onto the bed of the truck. Does this analogy hold, however, when a person teaches 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students, 8<sup>th</sup> grade American history, or sophomore English literature as opposed to attaching bolts to automobiles? Who is responsible for reading a novel that a teacher assigns in sophomore English class? Do students have any responsibility whatsoever in the learning process? Or, must they merely “show up” and, magically, they become educated citizens simply by occupying a seat for twelve short years? Also, what if some students skip school and choose not to show up at all? Should teachers be “held accountable” for students when they choose not to attend their classes? Importantly, if a person accepts the current educational reform rhetoric uncritically, teachers are entirely responsible for every action taken by all of their students at any time.

Efforts to foist this type of specious logic on teachers and principals are, at the very least, puzzling and, at the very worst, illogical. A few examples of this flawed logic as it could be applied to similar yet slightly different situations outside of schools, reveals the types of problems that revolve around this troublesome analogy between schools and factories. Provided the amount of accountability rhetoric and standards-based reform that is so prevalent in contemporary political discourse, accountability driven policymakers should, indeed must, address the following questions before their proposals can be considered plausible: First, should teachers of defensive driving courses be blamed for all of the speeding tickets that their former students receive as a result of driving too fast or after causing a collision? Second, if a husband and wife enroll in, say, a marriage course at their local church, should the pastor who teaches these classes be blamed if the couple's marriage never improves? Or, do the husband and wife have a joint responsibility to improve their own marriage? For a final example, consider another question: If a judge sentences a convicted, habitual thief to six months of counseling rather than sentence him to jail time, should the counselor who works with this convicted thief for six months be prosecuted if the convicted thief strikes again? Or, should the thief be held accountable for his own actions? I believe the factory analogy, which has bolstered accountability rhetoric for at least twenty years, crumbles after only minimal investigation into the specious logic upon which the analogy is based. This critique, however, does

not mean that teachers are not responsible for teaching. Of course they are. Students, however, also are responsible for being students!

So what accounts for the popularity of the accountability rhetoric that energizes popular debates about school reform? One possible answer might be that, at the present time, school districts, nation-wide, have few allies. Business-minded reformers attack schools for not “producing” enough “skilled workers” who, upon graduation, can enter the work force and help businessmen to make money. Moreover, for any mistake that a graduate makes (for example a lack of knowledge, an inability to perform a particular task, or a failure to exhibit ethical behavior), business-minded elites immediately look toward the “school plant” that “produced” this incapable worker.

On the other end of the political and ideological spectrum, however, other, typically anti-business minded thinkers, seek to avoid any language that might place blame or responsibility on students from minority groups, students these thinkers consider to be victims of historical crimes or misrepresentations. In other words, these reformers, who often teach in some of America's major universities, want to “hold schools accountable” for “producing” societal inequalities. To hold the wrong students “accountable” for completing their own assignments, however, would be to “blame the victim.” Thus, many of these liberal reformers are all too eager to join our country's business-minded elites in their joint effort to attack that which they see “produced” by America's public schools, even when these two groups disagree on many other matters.

In the midst of all of this seductive sophistry, political posturing, and cutthroat competition, I must admit that I am more than a bit skeptical of our ability to offer good education and worthwhile knowledge to the next generation of young Americans. But I believe there is hope. For me, that hope lies in the work of philosophers such as Aristotle, John Amos Comenius, and, even, in the works of contemporary communitarians such as Alasdair MacIntyre and Michael Sandel.<sup>1</sup> From these individuals, especially Aristotle, we receive a view of knowledge that is considerably more educative and robust than that which is contained in contemporary school reform. I believe that a deeper understanding of knowledge is critical if one is to critique sufficiently the shallow rhetoric that surrounds contemporary school reform. Too few teachers, however, have the background knowledge that allows them to view knowledge in different forms. Too

few teachers know philosophy. Too few teachers know the history of American education, not to mention the history of education in other countries and in Europe. Too few teachers, in general, have been taught to think about education from a broad, interdisciplinary perspective that understands pedagogy as deeply connected to the academic disciplines. To address this problem, at least one specific text can assist teachers to critique the current situation. I believe that text is Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Specifically, Aristotle's explication of virtue should be commonplace knowledge to all American teachers. Regrettably, knowledge of this text is rare indeed among contemporary preservice and practicing teachers.

For those of you who may not have studied the text recently, perhaps a reminder of the central themes of Aristotle's *Ethics* is useful. Aristotle begins the text with the famous line that "Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim."<sup>2</sup> In making this claim, Aristotle, of course, was engaging in his teleological, purposive thinking. That is, he was arguing that we perform all actions for the good of one ultimate end, the end of human happiness. He defines happiness as "activities of the soul in accordance with complete virtue," only then to divide the soul into two parts: the rational and the irrational. As we attempt to achieve the state of happiness, we engage in our daily activities and, in so doing, achieve a harmonious state of our souls, one in which the rational and the irrational portions are in agreement, or in harmony, with one another.

Another significant distinction that Aristotle draws in the *Ethics* is between character virtues and intellectual virtues. Character virtues, such as generosity and courage and friendliness, can only be learned through habituation. Character virtues cannot be taught. We only learn to be courageous, for example, by completing courageous acts. We only learn to be friendly by completing friendly acts. Aristotle's intellectual virtues, on the other hand, are those virtues that we can teach. These chief intellectual virtues, of which there are five, reasonably can be labeled science, art, practical wisdom, intuitive reason, and philosophic wisdom. A brief consideration of these five intellectual virtues, which I believe all teachers should know, reminds current and prospective teachers of the complexities of the nature of knowledge, as well as of the shallowness of the rhetoric that undergirds contemporary advocacies of "standards and accountability."

Aristotle defined science as "demonstrative

knowledge of the necessary and eternal." Knowledge of science also could be described as knowledge of the facts of a particular subject-matter. For example, a piece of scientific knowledge from American history would be the fact that the Civil War began in 1861. Similarly, a fact from chemistry would be the piece of information that a molecule of water consists of two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen. An educated person, to Aristotle, must possess the intellectual virtue of science that allows that person to understand scientific knowledge.

Aristotle's second intellectual virtue, art, was translated by W. D. Ross as the "knowledge of how to make things."<sup>3</sup> Unlike science, the end product of Aristotle's intellectual virtue of art consists of a product. For example, one who engages in the art of pottery-making must, at some point, produce a piece of pottery. This production, in this sense, is not mental but, rather, physical. Other examples of products produced by art would be music, poetry, books, and, perhaps, teaching. With regard to this final example, teaching, the "product" that one produces is an educated student. The term "production" of students, however, is not entirely accurate in this regard. The notion of "cultivation" would, I believe, categorize more fully what Aristotle had in mind for the art of teaching.

A third intellectual virtue, however, relates most closely to the act of teaching. The complex concept of practical wisdom has been defined in various ways. For example, philosopher Richard Sorabji defined this virtue when he wrote that "practical wisdom involves the ability to deliberate. The man of practical wisdom deliberates with a view not merely to particular goals but to the good life in general, with a view to the best, and with a view to happiness. At the same time he is concerned not only with universals, such as the good life in general, but also with particular actions."<sup>4</sup> As this quotation implies, a person who engages in practical wisdom (also known as *phronesis*) works toward the making of a decision about how one ought to proceed at a particular time and within a particular context. At the same time, however, practical wisdom retains the end of human happiness toward which all who possess practical wisdom must, and should, strive. To extend the teacher example, a teacher who possesses the intellectual virtue of practical wisdom has the ability to perceive all of the particulars of a particular time and context and then decide how best to proceed toward the true end of human happiness within that context. In the words of Randall R. Curren, in his recent book entitled *Aristotle on the Necessity of Public Education*, "practical wisdom

**NULL: THE DESTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE BY ACCOUNTABILITY: WOULD  
A RE-EMPHASIS ON ARISTOTLE'S INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES BE USEFUL?**

is for Aristotle largely a matter of grasping the particulars of situations in their fullness and proper significance.”<sup>5</sup>

This direction was exactly the path down which Joseph Schwab sought to take the field of curriculum in 1969 when he wrote his now famous article entitled “The Practical: A Language for Curriculum.”<sup>6</sup> The echo of Aristotle’s practical wisdom was clearly evident when Schwab wrote, “the subject matter of the practical . . . is always something taken as concrete and particular and treated as indefinitely susceptible to circumstance, and therefore highly liable to unexpected change; this student, in that school, on the South Side of Columbus, with Principal Jones during the present mayoralty of Ed Tweed and in view of the probability of his reelection.”<sup>7</sup> With this quotation, and in his numerous other works, Schwab was drawing attention to the need for curriculum workers, as well as teachers, to possess practical wisdom, or the ability to make wise judgments at particular times and within particular contexts. At the same time, however, Schwab’s, as well as Aristotle’s, recognition of individual cases, or casuistry, did not degenerate into a relativism that rejected the end-in-view of human happiness.

Aristotle’s final two chief intellectual virtues consist of intuitive reason and philosophic wisdom. Intuitive reason seeks to understand the underlying principles from which science proceeds. In other words, a person who possesses the intellectual virtue of intuitive reason is one who seeks to understand not only scientific knowledge, but, more importantly, one who can step back and understand the process behind the discovery of scientific knowledge. Philosophic wisdom, finally, is the union of intuitive reason, or the understanding of the process from which science proceeds, and the scientific knowledge that process discovers. A philosophically wise person, in other words, is one who can bring together demonstrative knowledge of the eternal with the scientific process that produced that scientific knowledge.<sup>8</sup>

My purpose in describing these five intellectual virtues, as briefly and insufficiently as I have, is merely to point out the inherent complexity of the nature

knowledge. Moreover, I wish to make the point that those who prepare teachers need to be exposed to these kinds of ideas in order that the students they teach, future educators, can be informed consumers of the types of popular educational rhetoric that I described at the beginning of this paper. Without the critical intellect that the study of Aristotle and other philosophers provides, I am concerned that teachers will continue to be persuaded by a seductive sophistry that ultimately hinders, rather than enhances, their quest to be good teachers.

The only hope I see for the re-development of teacher preparation programs that introduce students to the complexity of knowledge is through the renewal of foundations-type courses for graduate students and, especially, for undergraduate pre-service teachers. Without such renewal, I fear that the educative aspect of American public schooling will remain in danger. At the same time, however, I can think of no better task for people who study foundations of education than the task of reconstructing what it means to be an educated person in the next century. Surely an educated person is more than someone who can pass a test.

A good starting point for this renewal might be the study of Aristotle and other philosophers, as well as considerable reflection on the meaning of an old French aphorism that I think future teachers should know. I believe the phrase has particular relevance for contemporary public schooling. In French, it reads as follows: *L’éducation c’est ce qui reste quand on a tout oublié*. “Education is what is left behind when we have forgotten everything we ever learned.”<sup>9</sup> Or, for another translation, “Education is what’s left when you’ve forgotten everything you ever learned.” I wonder if, in fifty years, the era of reform currently known as “standards and accountability” will be an era we will wish to forget. If so, the question that future historians of education will need to consider is the question as to who should be held responsible for the current understanding of education that surrounds us and, more specifically, for the destruction of knowledge by “accountability” and other continuously undefined, meaningless slogans.

**ENDNOTES**

1. See, for example, Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1981); see, also, Alasdair MacIntyre and Joseph Dunne, “Alasdair MacIntyre on Education: In Dialogue with Joseph Dunne,” *The Journal of Philosophy of Education* 36 (2002): 1-19; see, also, Michael J. Sandel, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

**JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY AND HISTORY OF EDUCATION, VOLUME 53, 2003**

2. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, W. D. Ross trans., (New York: The Modern Library, 1992), p. 327.
3. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, W. D. Ross trans., (New York: The Modern Library, 1992), p. 323.
4. Richard Sorabji, "Aristotle on the Role of Intellect in Virtue," in Amelie Oksenberg Rorty, Ed., *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 205-206.
5. Randall R. Curren, *Aristotle on the Necessity for Public Education* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), p. 65.
6. Joseph Schwab, "The Practical: A Language for Curriculum," *School Review* 78 (November 1969): pp. 1-24.
7. Joseph Schwab, "The Practical: A Language for Curriculum," *School Review* 78 (November 1969): p. 3.
8. Richard McKeon, Ed. *Introduction to Aristotle*, (New York: The Modern Library, 1947).
9. William A. Reid, "'The Educational Situation as Concerns Secondary Education': Thoughts on the Thoughts of John Dewey," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 17 (Winter 2002): 140.

## ONE UNIVERSITY'S ACTIONS IN MEETING STATE MANDATED REFORM IN LEADERSHIP PREPARATION

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### Introduction

In a previous report, (Siegrist, 2001), the 2001 revised Georgia Board of Regents Principles for the Preparation of Educators in the Schools was discussed. In the spring of 2002, the Regents sent rubrics to all departments of educational leadership throughout the state which mandated program and delivery changes as well as extensive collaboration with schools, business, and other colleges on each campus, etc. The implementation of these rubrics is to be followed up by a team of outside consultants in the 2002-2003 academic year. The revised principles also require a "Guarantee" that candidates (students) would perform well in the field. Such performance includes school improvement and bringing diverse students to high levels of learning. The intent of this paper is to present a short overview of how the Department of Educational Leadership at VSU is meeting these requirements. The rubrics and their subheadings are listed under three major headings (1) Inputs, (2) Performances – Institutional and Candidate, and (3) Results.

### Overview of the 1998 USG principles

The mission of the Department of Educational Leadership supports and complements the mission of the College of Education of Valdosta State University and the Georgia Board of Regents (BOR). In 1998 the leadership and research faculty adopted the premise that every graduate of advanced programs in educational leadership should be wholly capable of fostering educational environments in which teachers can bring diverse students to high levels of learning. This statement is the kernel around which the department's programmatic outcomes, curricular offerings, and assessment have been built for the past four years. Standards released or adopted by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC,) the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC,) NCATE, and its specialty organization, the Educational Constituent Council, (ELCC,) the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA,) have been examined by departmental faculty and integrated, adopted or rejected based on their relationship to BOR Principle Four and the ISLLC standards. The resulting programmatic standards reflect the following academic, professional, or accrediting organizations.

### BOR 1998 Principle Four and Departmental Philosophy

The encompassing nature of the original board of regents principles called for departmental philosophy to be grounded in constructivism: the belief that knowledge and expertise are co-created by reflective individuals working in and with their environments and that, while core values are constant, the environments in which they must be implemented differ greatly. We believe that the best use of faculty expertise is to work with candidates and school personnel to outline the frameworks, strategies, and opportunities for practice with which candidates can apply the knowledge, dispositions, and skills applicable to their environments. Finally, as a department we have an obligation to hold and transmit certain core values to our leadership candidates. These core values are reflected throughout the programmatic standards.

These dispositions or core values have remained constant and at the heart of the VSU Educational Leadership program standards even as the standards have been refined over the past four years and is a credit to the endurance of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, and the departmental faculty members that revised their programmatic elements as BOR, NCATE, NPBEA, and ELCC added outcomes, elements, and performances. Each of the 12 candidate performances indicated in the revised Board of Regents 2001 document IIIB Performance: Leader Candidates (1-12) is listed in the departmental programmatic standards.

The department, school partners, and advisory committee have worked throughout the winter and spring of 2002 to assure that the BOR performances demonstrate the outcomes linked to syllabi, field experiences, and assessment. Columns 1 and 2 of the *Programmatic Standards* indicate the professional or academic organization promoting or sanctioning the outcomes. These standards are applicable to all leadership degrees and to all leadership certification programs, Masters through Ed.D.

Review of performance IIB (2) (Using data on student learning...) of the 2001 Board of Regents requirements by the faculty and the advisory committee prompted the department to integrate research, action research, and field-based inquiry outcomes throughout the seven programmatic standards and their elements. They are indicated by asterisks. Review of the newly adopted Educational Leadership Constituency Council

(ELCC, 2002), under the umbrella of the National Council on the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2002) and the National Policy Board of Educational Administration (NPBEA, 2002) has prompted the department to add Standard 7, the Internship to the Programmatic Standards.

The following discussion is the response to the Board of Regents Rubrics.

### **I. Inputs**

A. Responsibility for leader preparation programs are vested in a collaborative of education, arts and sciences, business, other academic units (as appropriate), and school partners (2001).

### **Collaboration**

Advanced programs in Educational Leadership are interdisciplinary in nature with coursework in Research, Psychology, and Educational Technology incorporated into the Masters and Specialist programs. Specific field electives can also be taken during the Specialist and Specialist Option degrees. Sociology, Public Administration, Psychology, and Philosophy are an integral part of the department's Doctoral degree. The Doctoral program is interdisciplinary and inter-institutional as well, with the inclusion of Albany State and Columbus State Universities' doctoral teaching and research faculty. The head of the Department of Educational Leadership serves as a member of the Teacher Education Council, a diverse group whose mission is to bring together a broad representation of faculty and administrators from Education, Arts and Sciences, and Fine Arts as well as public school teachers and administrators. Two of the Council's goals are to examine preparation programs in the context of the Board of Regents Principles and to review graduate programs to ensure they adequately prepare candidates to serve and lead in the public schools. The department also has representation on the College of Education's Executive Committee and Doctoral Coordinating Committee, and Valdosta State University's Graduate and Academic Committees. The department has an active Advisory Committee which includes faculty members from outside the department and college, graduates of the leadership program, RESA directors, public school practitioners, and persons from the business community and social services. At least one committee members is a member of recent graduate of the department's doctoral program, and they have shared the results of doctoral improvement focus groups held at the end of each set of doctoral comprehensive examinations.

### **School Partners**

The Department of Educational Leadership subscribes to key concepts developed by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education for Professional Development Schools (2002). Among others, these concepts include:

A recognition of the importance of building partnerships based on shared interest, trust, and mutual commitment

The integration of professional and student learning through inquiry to identify and meet students' learning needs and to determine a candidate's professional development agenda.

Using the needs of P-12 students to provide the focus or center for candidate learning and professional development

Placing candidate learning in the context of practice; Learning by *doing*.

Shared responsibility for candidate preparation and student learning

The Department of Educational Leadership's relationship with its school and district partners is determined in part by the geographic and demographic nature of the region. Schools are widely dispersed and rural, and the population is diverse. A tiered system of partner schools allows participation by all schools within the region with varying degrees of involvement at each tier. The goal is threefold; (1) serve candidates through placement with school partners, (2) to serve the needs all schools in the region and (3) to move schools from third through the first tier as commitment grows and resources allow. This model corresponds loosely to the Beginning, Developing, and At Standard guidelines developed by NCATE's Standards for Professional Development Schools (2002).

**Third tier** - Schools and districts seek occasional assistance for school improvement, development of leadership skills, or other areas leading to increased student achievement. These schools attend conferences and workshops sponsored by the department i.e., School Board training, by the College of Education, or by other educational organizations. They may have representation on the Leadership Advisory Board, and their beginning leaders are encouraged to participate in the department's electronic listservs. Leadership and School Improvement classes may be offered at their locations, and leadership faculty will provide services upon request. Self selected candidates from these districts combine site and campus-based classes in pursuit of Leadership degrees and certification.

**Second tier** - Schools and districts actively collaborate with the department to develop and address leadership

## SIEGRIST: ONE UNIVERSITY'S ACTIONS IN MEETING STATE MANDATED REFORM IN LEADERSHIP PREPARATION

strategies and skills that focus on candidate training, professional development, or school improvement. They work with departmental faculty to provide professional development assistance to teachers and candidates. These school partners may be involved in on-site leadership and school improvement graduate programs offered by the college or department. They may participate in mentoring activities for new administrators.

**First tier** - Schools are more comprehensive partners, actively addressing the concepts of partner schools listed above. These schools work with faculty and candidates to integrate candidate and student learning through inquiry and provide institutional resources. They may serve as laboratory sites for learning in the context of practice and leader preparation. They blend resources and participate in shared professional development. They work collaboratively with principal partners to impact student achievement, and seek to simultaneously improve schools and school leaders.

On occasion all three tiers of forty-one counties will be invited to participate in activities, speakers and seminars on campus. This will allow a “joining” of resources normally not available to them.

Representatives of school partners will be added to the Advisory/Planning Committee. These school partner representatives will work with the department, college, and advisory committee to address the unique challenges of beginning, developing, and at standard school partners as defined in NCATE's Standards for Professional Schools. Specific areas to be discussed will include the integration of professional and student learning through inquiry, the placement of P-12 students at the center of candidates' focus, learning in the context of practice, how to span the boundaries between institutional and school site instruction, the blending of institutional and school resources, the expansion of the learning community beyond the traditional organization, and how to best leverage change. This collaboration between institution and school partners is also addressed in the sections 1C and IIA (4).

All third tier schools in the service region are served by the department through graduate programs offered by the department on and off campus. In many cases candidates from third tier schools will join with second tier schools for instruction and service. Nine first tier counties and districts, those termed “developing” under the professional development model are those schools that the college has actively worked with. Plans are underway to develop partner schools with two more

counties, and discussions are presently being held with several others.

The relationship between the South Georgia Leadership Academy and the Leadership Department was instrumental in developing a commitment among faculty to develop and deliver strategies that reflect a commitment to promote school improvement for school partners. The initiatives developed by the academy and department, in large part, spurred the development of the school partners as outlined in this document. The academy has provided graduate degree programs in Leadership for School Improvement, summer institutes, offered mentoring and coaching support for new school leaders, and conducted professional development activities for leaders at the district, school and classroom levels that are based on local needs. Academy and departmental personnel have also trained and facilitated leadership teams to plan and implement comprehensive school reform programs.

As the “graying of administrators continues the department collaborates with school partners committed to recruiting, selecting and preparing a pool of future leaders who will make a difference in the performance of schools and student achievement. The text following the performances indicates typical adopted 1998/2001 BOR Principles, ISLLC, and ELCC standards found in the departmental programmatic standards to indicate multiple coverage of the awareness, knowledge, understanding, dispositions, skills and capabilities candidates must employ to lead 21<sup>st</sup> century schools. Candidates who successfully complete these programs are able to:

Apply a deep understanding of the teaching and learning process to organizing curriculum, instruction and assessment around standards-based objectives, providing guidance to teachers, and implementing a performance management process, (BOR IIB 1 and 2) (ISLLC Standard 3.1, 3.4, 3.7. Create a high-achievement oriented culture within an educational organization, (BOR IIB 5) (ISLLC Standard 2.1.

Use research findings and data in assessing needs, developing a school improvement plan, designing a school curriculum, evaluating a school program, assessing student achievement, and monitoring school improvement, (BOR IIB 2), (ISLLC Standard 1.1, 1.4 2.3).

Provide professional development necessary to accomplish the goals of the school improvement plan (ISLLC Standard 2.7, 2.10).

Help schools develop a culture that treats diversity as a strength and equity as a non-negotiable principle of curriculum design and teaching, (ISLLC Standard 2.0, 2.9, 2,12).

Establish a safe and orderly environment that supports increased engaged learning time for students, (BOR IIB 10) and (ISLLC 3.4).

Lead a school or system in accordance with school law and professional ethics, (ISLLC 3.7and 5.3) and use state-of-the-art technology practices effectively and efficiently to perform the management functions of leading an organization (BOR IIB 11 and 12).

Have an active practitioner-based advisory committee in place to provide ongoing feedback as to the success of graduates in meeting the outcomes of the guarantee and to suggest strategies for continuous improvement (2001).

#### **Advisory Committees**

In the spring of 2002 the committees were consolidated to incorporate a broader range of practitioners, graduate students, business persons, and faculty members from the College of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences. The Georgia State Department of Education and Regional Educational Service Agencies are also represented. Practitioners make up a strong majority of the committee. At its April, 2002 meeting, the advisory committee was given the same twelve Board of Regents performances as revised in 2001, (See also IIA (1) and asked to rank each as "Very Important," "Important," "Somewhat Important," or "Not Important." All committee members attending ranked each of the twelve BOR performances as either "Very Important" or "Important." None ranked them "Somewhat" or "Not" important. As a group the committee also identified candidate knowledge (awareness), skills (capabilities), and dispositions (understanding) and placed particular emphasis on five leadership characteristics that it views as critical to successful school leadership, and asked the faculty to check them for fit with the programmatic standards. They are:

Effective communication skills - Leaders communicate effectively with stakeholders. "People" skills, authentic communication skills are essential for educational leaders.

Planning and evaluation of student/school improvement program- The ability to develop and evaluate program is critical for educational leaders.

Creation of a positive learning environment - This includes a safe and orderly environment, curriculum alignment, and high expectations for all students.

The educational leader needs to nurture a culture that supports learning and growth for everyone.

Develop necessary technical/managerial skills including knowledge of ethics and law, action research techniques, implementation strategies, program evaluation, fiscal management, problem-solving, conflict management, the change process, decision making, and effective personnel management.

Integration of theoretical and practitioner knowledge - Educational leaders should be able to integrate theoretical models and experiential knowledge.

An initial review indicates that each skill integrates well into the departmental programmatic standards. The advisory committee has also assisted in identifying strengths and weaknesses in the leadership and research curriculum. As a result the department developed stronger linkage between student outcomes, activities, assessment, and program development. A sample of the Master's assessment is shown as appendix B. Similar assessments are used at the Specialist and Doctorate programs.

#### **Program Assessment Policy**

This policy outlines the plan to assess the Department of Educational Leadership's graduate programs at the Master's, Specialist, and Doctoral Degree levels. The policy complements the department's programmatic standards and contains procedures designed to assess the department's progress in its mission. Candidates are defined as current or potential public or private school administrators, current or potential state education professionals, and current or potential administrative professionals at post-secondary institutions. Performance outcomes are derived from the BOR Principle Four and departmental mission statement that, graduates should be wholly capable of fostering educational environments in which teachers can bring students to high levels of learning. Specific standards and elements are found in the department's programmatic standards on pp. 5-7. Procedures include:

A semester review of students' ratings and narrative comments of all leadership and research departmental courses.

A structured interview with Candidates during their last semester of enrollment in the Department prior to graduation.

A questionnaire mailed to graduates two years after completion of program course work.

Electronic surveys to superintendents and principals in the VSU service region.

Observations by internship/practicum supervisors in



## SIEGRIST: ONE UNIVERSITY'S ACTIONS IN MEETING STATE MANDATED REFORM IN LEADERSHIP PREPARATION

both school and academic settings .

An annual review of student results on the PRAXIS test used for state certification.

Ongoing review of course syllabi and instructional delivery systems.

Periodic reviews of departmental programs by professional associations.

Scheduling of graduate and candidate focus groups.

Surveys of job placements and employer satisfaction

Field experiences—at least 150 contact hours—well integrated into courses (2001).

### Field Experiences

Specific field experiences combining leadership academy and departmental initiatives have made it possible for school partners and candidates to engage in:

Collaborative planning and implementation by university and district staff.

Selection of participants through a district-designed process.

Multi-district cohorts comprised of small teams of aspiring leaders from the same school.

Site-based delivery enhanced by web-based components (under development).

Content and learning activities directly connected to local school needs, students and communities.

Use of authentic school data and research as a lever and tool for initiating, implementing and evaluating school change.

Teamwork and collegial learning as a way of solving problems and learning about leadership and school improvement.

Frequent advisement and communication with participants by the teaching faculty.

Self-analysis and self-determined professional development plans.

The primary purpose of field experiences for Educational Leadership candidates is to link the theoretical framework of school administration to practice as indicated in concepts 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 of the professional development schools model discussed in section IA. Leadership candidates engage in a variety of field experiences throughout their program. During the Internship and Practicum experience candidates are required to serve in a school and/or district office setting under the supervision of a institutional administrator and a faculty supervisor. The internship or practicum is placed at the end of the candidate's graduate program and is taken over two consecutive semesters. Interns are required to complete 250 hours of service at the M.Ed. level, 240 hours at the

Specialist level, and 365 hours at the Specialist Option level. Internship experiences are extended throughout the Doctoral program for a total 70 hours not including dissertation hours.

Field experiences are designed to collaboratively develop the candidate's awareness, understanding, and capabilities (NPBEA/NCATE, January, 2002) by engaging in problem analysis, data collection, and problem solving with others at the placement site. Areas addressed during the field experiences are drawn from the department's programmatic standards as adopted from the ISLLC Principles, NCATE standards, and the Board of Regents 12 candidate performances (2001), and include such specific elements as budgeting, school/community relations, facilities, interpretation and application of data for school improvement and student learning, curriculum development, program assessment, culture building, and teacher supervision and evaluation. Placements are designed to encourage the candidate to experiment with new ideas, approaches, and strategies in a low-risk and supportive environment. The internship also allows the departmental faculty to assess in a clinical environment the effectiveness of previous instruction during the student's coursework.

Candidate performances during the clinical experience are linked to the department's programmatic standards and to specific course work, and is assessed in conjunction with course syllabi delivered throughout the candidates program. Several such outcomes are shown below and are taken from the course, LEAD 7100, School Leadership. Numbers in parentheses following outcomes refer to the department's programmatic standards. Activities placed in the student portfolio are assessed collaboratively by the course instructor, school site supervisor, and internship director and are noted with an asterisk.

A number of course activities and assignments are made that directly relate to the candidates experiences in the field. The following is a partial list of typical field experience activities for programmatic standards 1 through 6:

#### Standard 1:

Lead school improvement team.

Assist a team in reviewing a school's goals and/or mission.

#### Standard 2:

Act as a team leader on a committee/project; chair a committee.

Develop a conference or staff development program.

Work with staff to accomplish an objective in the

school improvement or restructuring plan.

**Standard 3:**

Arrange and supervise new student orientation program, graduation, or assembly.

Supervise lunchroom, student extracurricular activities, school bus, or other activities beyond assigned responsibilities.

Assist in identifying needed resources to accomplish goals.

**Standard 4:**

Observe IEP planning conference(s) or student assistance team meetings.

Assist in reviewing, revising or developing procedures for school volunteers.

Assist with writing a grant proposal.

**Standard 5:**

Handle attendance and student discipline as assigned.

Participate with staff committee to resolve an identified problem.

Review/discuss with site administrator district policies on affirmative action, recruitment, selection, dismissals of staff.

**Standard 6:**

Attend a School Advisory Council and/or Board or School Board meeting(s). If appropriate, make a presentation explain an aspect of the instructional program with which familiar.

Document number and type of grievances filed during a period of time.

Attend budget hearing or committee meetings.

Interns are also required to complete an Internship Experiences Notebook that includes in part:

A daily log of leadership activities and observations keyed to the VSU Department of Educational Leadership Program Standards and Outcomes.

A completed VSU Dept. of Educational Leadership Program Standards and Outcomes Internship Checklist.

Typed weekly reflective journal of activities, observations, and learning using Kolb's Structure of Experiential Learning.

In addition, Candidates must complete a Leadership Portfolio which includes:

An up-dated professional resume/vitae.

A list of educational leadership course work, quarter/semester completed, and professor for the course.

A leadership narrative addressing; leadership philosophy, teaching and learning philosophy, description of leadership practices, analysis of

leadership techniques and strategies, assessment of effectiveness, awards and recognition, professional improvement activities, future leadership goals and directions.

Performance (institutions and individual leadership candidates):

A. Institutions will:

Guarantee that graduates meet all expectations listed under performance and results, and provide additional training for any graduate identified by a school system as not meeting expectations.

Increase the number of high quality applicants from majority and minority groups (2001).

**Performance Guarantee**

In an attempt to familiarize local schools with the guarantee and anticipating the inclusion of the revised 2001 BOR candidate performances and results in the department's programmatic standards the Department of Educational Leadership sent the following surveys to all school superintendents and Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESA) directors in the service region. The surveys were also placed on the departmental website for electronic completion. Data gathered and computed by departmental research faculty indicated 100% of the surveys completed ranked all 12 performances as "Very Important" or "Important," indicating a strong feeling by area superintendents and principals that these performances are essential in the preparation of leadership candidates. An additional question asked if districts or schools were interested in serving as new school partners. Eleven respondents indicated "Yes" to that question. As a result both the Board of Regents 12 performances and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee have been incorporated into the departmental programmatic standards and curriculum. These standards and the guarantee are being conveyed through correspondence to the recipients of the original survey and electronically on the department's web site. It will be conveyed to future school partners during their needs assessment planning conducted prior to program initiation.

**Applicants**

The department has charged the Retentions and Admissions Committee and the Advisory Committee with assisting in this task, and has requested area superintendents and principals to nominate minority candidates for admission to leadership degree program (Returns on file). Discussions are being held with Valdosta City Schools, a school district with a large minority contingent regarding a career track program for teachers aspiring to be school administrators. One of the

## **SIEGRIST: ONE UNIVERSITY'S ACTIONS IN MEETING STATE MANDATED REFORM IN LEADERSHIP PREPARATION**

seven functions of the Admissions and Retention Committee as indicated above is to supplement quantitative data with qualitative data to encourage, monitor, and support minority candidates and to determine the likelihood of a successful advanced academic program in educational leadership. Additionally the department has recruited minority doctoral candidates during Doctoral information sessions at Columbus and Albany State Universities. In May, 2002, the department of Educational leadership graduated the first African-American Doctoral student in the history of the VSU doctoral program. The Graduate school also offers assistance in preparing for admission tests and provides test materials such as compact discs with examples and practice. The department allows minority candidates to sit in on or audit selected classes. This practice establishes a "comfort zone" for those who might be hesitant to enroll.

In cooperation with the schools, institutions mentor graduates on all dimensions of the guarantee (who are within their first two years of completing their leadership training) during their first two years of practice as newly certified educational leaders in Georgia. (2001).

### **Mentoring Graduates**

Through efforts of both the department and the leadership academy, newly practicing administrators are mentored individually and in small groups. Professional development activities are held at both school-site and university locations. In 2001 and 2002 members of the academy have mentored 1<sup>st</sup> year school administrators in several counties in monitoring school performance and increasing student achievement. Other counties will have graduates in the summer of 2001 that may be eligible for mentoring, and another county will have graduates in 2003 that may qualify for mentoring. Faculty members also work with principals on gathering and assessing data on school performance, an activity that will continue in a slightly different vein with county in the fall of 2002. Much individual mentoring takes place by faculty members. The BOR regents requires the following mentoring processes for graduates.

Institutions focus partner schools (or approved alternative) on: (2001)

- Increasing P-12 student learning and achievement.
- Mentoring beginning leaders.
- Seeking nominations of potential leaders for admission into preparation programs.
- Providing field-placements for leader candidates to demonstrate outcomes of guarantee.

Collaborating in the preparation and development of leaders.

Encouraging practitioner research by providing appropriate training in research on school improvement.

Increasing the amount of school-based research on improvement of schools and on leader preparation and development programs (2001).

### **Increasing P-12 learning**

This activity has been carried out by the South Georgia Leadership Academy throughout its inception. The focus on Lanier, Pierce, Irwin, and Cook County schools was that of school improvement through faculty teams. Through faculty and candidate involvement in P-12 schools, the school faculty, the candidates, and the university faculty have the ability to engage in school study for the support of continuous school improvement and increased student achievement. The concepts 2, 3, 5, 8, and 9 as listed in IA – School Partners, place students at the center of at the heart of school improvement efforts.

### **Seeking Nominations of potential leaders for admission into preparation programs**

All county schools in the VSU service region have been contacted regarding graduate leadership work for promising leader candidates. Self selected candidates are requested to include recommendations from their supervisors. Superintendents and principals have nominated potential leaders as a prelude to the school partner work at Pierce, Irwin, Lowndes, Cook, Bacon, Lanier, and Echols counties. It will be an important part of the needs assessment at Clinch, Coffee, Colquitt, and Ware, and Tift counties. In addition, superintendents have also been contacted and requested to nominate existing principals and assistant principals for the Doctoral program. The department's advisory committee has provided candidate nominations as well.

### **Providing field placements for candidates to demonstrate outcomes of guarantee**

Educational Leadership candidates have traditionally been difficult to place in the field due to their full-time work status. With the advent of school partners, we have been able to arrange field placement in the district in which they are employed. (See also IC – Field Experiences). The advantages are manifold. First students are working in an environment identical or similar to what they will find when they graduate. Second, it allows for "boundary spanning," and the "blending of resources" discussed in IA – School Partners. as well as addressing concepts 4, 5, and 8 of

the Professional Development Schools model. A spin-off of such field experiences with school partners is that the generation of new knowledge leads to a leveraging of changes in policies and practices, an important component of NPBEA/ELCC's Standards for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership. The school partner concept brings the superintendent and building principals into the equation, making the placement of candidates with seasoned administrators more viable. This is planned for Bacon County, Tift County, and possibly Valdosta City Schools.

#### **Encouraging practitioner research and Increasing school-based research**

Concept 1 of the Professional Development Schools model is, "Integration of professional and student learning through inquiry" (IA-Partner Schools). School based inquiry focuses the leadership and research faculty, the candidate at the school site, and the school/district itself on a setting of research for school improvement. The functions of candidate preparation, student learning, faculty development, and inquiry are integrated with inquiry being the focus in identifying and addressing the diverse learning needs of students by school faculty and candidates. The process identifies student needs, while enhancing candidate learning, and determining, in large part) their professional development agenda. At the M.Ed. level three to six credit hours of the Internship are devoted to action research or school based inquiry activities. The Specialist degree requires six to nine credit hours in Internship, Practicum, and Thesis for the Specialist or Specialist Option degree. Nine hours are required at the Doctorate, not counting dissertation credit. In all three degree programs inquiry activities must lead to school improvement documented by candidate portfolios, practica, theses, dissertations, or school performance data.

#### **Candidate Performances**

The department's Program Development Committee has reviewed, and the department has approved the inclusion of the 12 Board of Regents candidate performances, the recommendations of the survey indicated in section IIA (1), and the recommendations of the departmental advisory committee into the existing departmental leadership standards based on the ISLLC and NCATE/ELCC standards. These programmatic standards and accompanying elements are a work-in-progress and are regularly modified through assessment of student progress, research from learned societies, recommendations of accrediting agencies, and requirements of the Board of Regents. The outcomes,

activities, and assessment in all leadership syllabi used in the department are linked or are being linked directly to these standards and one or more of the standard's elements. Standard seven, "Inquiry," has been integrated throughout the six standards and was replaced with the "Internship." The department believes that this change reflects the spirit of the revised Board of Regents Principles and of the NCATE Educational Leadership Constituent Council.

#### **Results**

Graduates from educational leadership programs who move immediately into educational leadership positions improve schools by increasing student learning and achievement within two years of practice as educational leaders (2001).

#### **Graduates**

The department keeps a data base of candidates and graduates, their graduation date, as well as data on the schools to which they have been assigned. As indicated, individual faculty are assigned to follow beginning administrators and to assist them in monitoring and assessing the progress of their student achievement through school report cards, visits with new principals, standardized test data, student completion rates, drop out rates, absentee rates, interviews with superintendents, state board of education data, and other factors which evidence student growth, especially in third and second tier schools. Follow Up Surveys, School Report Cards, Principal/Teacher surveys and Department of Education data will also be used. The department has also developed electronic listservs on which new principals and assistant principals can discuss issues among their peers and with departmental faculty.

Through partner schools (or approved alternative) P-12 students from diverse groups are learning and achieving at high levels (2001).

#### **Student Achievement**

The department will use a collaborative team approach in which the principal, superintendent or his/her designee, selected faculty members, and university personnel study both quantitative data. i.e., test scores, content mastery, drop out rates, truancy, retention, etc.) and qualitative data such as interviews with appropriate personnel, school culture, school awards, service learning activities. These methods are in keeping with concepts listed in IA – School Partners, in which the partnership supports multiple learners (P-12 students, candidates, university faculty, and other stakeholders. The work and practice of these individuals is an inquiry based orientation combining student

**SIEGRIST: ONE UNIVERSITY'S ACTIONS IN MEETING STATE MANDATED REFORM  
IN LEADERSHIP PREPARATION**

learning, accountability, and faculty development and will inform decisions about which approaches to teaching and learning work best. Because we believe that children and adults learn best in the context of practice, administrators, teachers, and students should be able to demonstrate what they know and are able to do. Integrating this demonstrated knowledge and practice

should allow schools to leverage significant formative change in their approach to and improvement of teaching practice. The department has also developed electronic listservs on which new principals and assistant principals can discuss issues among their peers and with departmental faculty.

## LEAD 7100

<b>Course Outcomes Candidates will:</b>	<b>Course Activities Candidates will:</b>	<b>Assessments Instructor will:</b>
Advocate, nurture, and sustain a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth. (2)	Assess the school's instructional program and professional development opportunities to determine their linkage to the culture (core values) of the school	Critique the assessment in cooperation with the internship director
Collaborate with families and community members, respond to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilize community resources. (4)	Develop a Public Information Plan, or school handbook for volunteers and place in portfolio	Assess the plan in cooperation with school supervisor and internship director.
Understand, respond to, and influence the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context. (6)	Create a comprehensive list of individuals at the community and state level who make up the formal and informal power structure effecting the school(s). Correspond with one or more of these individuals regarding an education issue. This list should be updated and placed in the student's internship portfolio.	Review the list and correspondence in cooperation with school supervisor and internship director.

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## DOES “LEAVE NO CHILD BEHIND” MEAN LEAVING GENDER BEHIND?

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### Challenging Gender-Blind Proposals for Educational Change

Recent federal legislation to reform schools called “Leave No Child Behind” is gender-blind, that is blind to sex and socialization according to sex, it does not address gender and socialization.<sup>1</sup> In our society where traits are genderized and socialization according to sex is commonplace, education that ignores gender in the name of equality is self-defeating. School reform could become conscious and take into account gender by reflecting consideration of gender-blind, gender-biased and gender-sensitive education, concepts articulated by Jane Roland Martin.<sup>2</sup> In a later publication *The Schoolhome Rethinking Schools for Today’s Families*, Martin explained her understanding that educators cannot ignore gender.

When I first came to the conclusion that in education gender makes a difference, colleagues were quick to say: For the sake of women, forget what you have learned! It has taken centuries to prove that women are as capable of governing the state as men. Do not trifle with history! Believing that the only alternative to a gender-blind form of education is one in which girls and boys are routed onto separate tracks leading to different destinations, they cautioned me against publicizing the workings of gender in education. But to accept their reasoning is to fall prey to a false dilemma. The Schoolhome does not face an either-or choice: gender blindness or outright gender bias. It can choose to be gender-sensitive – to adopt a policy that takes gender into account when and where it makes a difference and not otherwise.<sup>3</sup>

In order to address educating our children to read, write and compute successfully, school reform must become gender-sensitive so that girls can learn to be more assertive, to speak out in the classroom, and so that teachers will become conscious of their responses to girls and boys in the classroom recognizing girls as often as boys. Teachers must become sensitive to gender socialization so that boys and girls can learn to appreciate a broader range of behaviors in themselves as they choose to take school seriously.

While there have been some gains under this standards-based reform as measured by standardized tests, even employees of the Educational Testing Service, the organization that prepares standardized instruments for assessment, have argued that policymakers and educators must pay attention to the

larger societal context and environment in which the change is to occur.<sup>4</sup> Policy makers must consciously address gender in education reform if U.S. schools are to make gains in the schoolroom toward young people’s developing empathy, equality, and nonviolence and the necessary related goal of educating both reason and emotion.

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The Act is the most sweeping reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) since ESEA was enacted in 1965. It redefines the federal role of PK-12 education and is proposed to help close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers. It is based on four basic principles; stronger accountability for results through testing, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work.<sup>5</sup>

Our society has historically genderized and socialized girls and boys according to sex. Martin has articulated, by examining educational thought from a historical point of view, that girls and women have historically been educated for the reproductive aspects of life including domestic duties and the feeling or emotional side of living and boys have been educated for the productive aspects of living and the thinking, the reasoning side of life.<sup>6</sup> In accord with this tradition of educational thought, boys are educated to leave the home, to make a living, impacting agriculture, government, law, finance, and the economy. If we are to educate boys and girls for living we must include reproductive and productive lessons. We must teach both sexes to read, to compute, and to relate to one another, to have friendships and family relationships, to eat healthy foods, all skills necessary for living along with an ability to make a living wage. But this needs to be accomplished in a gender-sensitive environment so that we address both the reproductive and the productive aspects of life and living.

By examining the history of educational thought, Martin found that some Western Thinkers demonstrated that these reproductive aspects were ideally central to girls’ and women’s education; on the other hand all recommended productive education for boys and some recommended productive education for girls and women too. No one recommended reproductive education for boys.<sup>7</sup> In this paper, I will discuss three concepts,

gender-blind, gender-biased and gender-sensitive education as they relate to teaching boys and girls and give examples from research and journalistic writing that illustrate the need for gender-sensitivity as it relates to schooling.

### Gender Biased Education

Gender-blind policies cannot challenge gender-biased proposals; it is impossible to challenge that which one refuses to acknowledge. If one is gender blind one is not going to notice increasing gender blindness but instead think it is a good thing. Becoming gender sensitive will cause one to want to explore the education for both girls and boys for both productive and reproductive ways of life. When school reform is gender-blind, pop psychology and educational journalism may foster miseducative gender-bias. For example, Christina Hoff Sommers has popularized denial of girls' issues. She approaches the discussion as a zero sum game; if girls win, boys lose, and declares that it is a myth that girls are in more of a crisis than boys. She attacks the American Association of University Women's (AAUW) publication *How Schools Shortchange Girls*, criticizing it for leaving boys out of the conversation even though the publication addresses inadequacies in boys' education as well as girls'.<sup>8</sup>

Educator, family therapist and author Michael Gurian studies behavior of boys and girls and holds the gender-biased point of view that behavior is shaped in large part by biology. He accurately points out that boys often lag behind girls in reading abilities but promotes a development of manliness and masculinity that may not be as "natural" as he claims. Gurian supports the idea that nature or brain development and hormones are responsible for much of boys' and girls' behaviors. He attributes girls' brains with a more dense corpus callosum, the bundle of nerves that connect the brain's right and left hemispheres, he attributes this physiological structure to girls' ability to use both sides of their brain, which reading requires. He declares that this is the reason why girls are better at reading, languages and writing. He believes that the male brain is set up to be intensely spatial, a causal factor for boys' math and engineering abilities.

Gurian also teaches that testosterone is the cause of aggression in boys. His research is gender-biased or predisposed to ignore human relations whose power dynamics and values are determined by sex as a consequence of social customs. He relies on physiological factors to explain gender differences between boys and girls.<sup>9</sup> Another educator and researcher, Michael Kimmel, theorizes that boys'

aggression is linked more to privilege, a consequence of social customs or social structure than to the physiology of hormones. Kimmel quotes Stanford neurobiologist Robert Sapolsky who explains that if you take a group of five male monkeys

... arranged in dominance hierarchy from 1-5, then you can pretty much predict how everyone will behave toward everyone else. The top monkey's testosterone level will be higher than the ones below him, and levels will decrease down the line. Number 3, for example, will pick fights with numbers 4 and 5, but will avoid and run away from #1 and #2. If you give #3 a massive infusion of testosterone, he will likely become more aggressive – but only towards #4 and #5, with whom he has now become an absolute violent terror. He will still avoid #1 and #2, demonstrating that the "testosterone isn't causing aggression; it's exaggerating the aggression that's already there."<sup>10</sup>

Gender-biased, misogynist thinking and behavior are damaging for girls and limiting for boys. Bepko and Krestan describe how the sexes respond to shame in different ways. Anyone who grows up in a dysfunctional environment develops a "shame bound" identity; they grow up in a culture that ignores developmental needs and repeatedly shames those needs with the result that the individual feels bad about who they are. Even though both boys and girls are shamed in a dysfunctional family, a classroom or by their peers, the underlying lesson that is learned by each sex is radically different. Women are shamed for not knowing their place. If they acquire more aggressive, "masculine" characteristics, they are shamed for being unfeminine.<sup>11</sup> For example, a transsexual middle-school girl is mortified when her peers ask, "Are you a boy or a girl?" She wears big, baggy, unisex clothes, keeps her hair cut short, topped off with a baseball cap.

Educational researcher Mary Pipher and assistant clinical professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School, William Pollack, as well as school psychologists Dan Kindlon and Michael Thompson<sup>12</sup> write that boys and men are shamed in a gender-biased manner for acting like women. They are called "sissies" or "girls" and the message is clear. It's uncomfortable to be shamed at all, but the most awful way to shame a man is to accuse him of being like a woman, that is, emotional, full of feeling, soft, vulnerable. A basketball coach I know warned the slowest runner in the wind sprint practice "If you continue to be last you'll have to wear a tutu tomorrow." This shaming was totally demoralizing and obviously didn't change the boy's ability to run



## SHINN: DOES “LEAVE NO CHILD BEHIND” MEAN LEAVING GENDER BEHIND?

faster wind sprints or help to shape a healthy identity or moral character traits. Pipher, Pollack, Kindlon and Thompson<sup>13</sup> each recognize this stereotyping in their counseling practices; girls are pathologically taught to think “What must I do to please others?” They are taught to “seem” while boys are taught to “work” both are expected to distance themselves from parents just when they most need their support.<sup>14</sup>

Girls are exposed to depression, eating disorders, addictions and suicide attempts; they exist in a look-obsessed, media-saturated, girl-poisoning culture. They are also dealing with escalating levels of sexism and violence, from undervalued intelligence to sexual harassment.<sup>15</sup> Two in ten students (18%) are afraid some or most of the time that someone will harass or bother them at school.<sup>16</sup> Kindlon and Thompson<sup>17</sup> describe boys they see in their school counseling practice as hurting, sad, afraid, angry, and silent. They describe destructive emotional training, the teasing our boys receive teaching them to believe that “cool” equals *macho* strength and stoicism. The cruel teasing occurs in families, in communities and at school, at church, at homophobic Boy Scouts meetings, in the halls at school as well as in the gym at sports events. American adolescents’ emotional miseducation is a cultural problem that school personnel must be aware of and sensitive to.<sup>18</sup> If schools begin to address our children in a gender-sensitive manner without stereotypes we would educate students for gender relations based on equality, nonviolence and empathy.<sup>19</sup>

In a gender-sensitive manner, reading specialist, Raphaela Best observed a group of children at Pine Hill elementary school over a period of time from Kindergarten through the fourth grade with a follow-up during sixth grade. She researched the peer-group environment and its relationship to learning to read. As a participant-observer she documented how boys establish, as early as 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, proof of machismo by fighting or showing a willingness to fight when challenged. She called the process she observed the Second Curriculum, the curriculum of gender-role socialization which taught the children the traditional role behavior for their sex. It taught girls to be helpful and nurturing. It taught boys to distance themselves from girls, to look down on them and to accept as their due the help that girls offered. The second curriculum did an effective job of teaching each sex how to perform according to conventional gender norms and how to live with members of its own sex. How to live with the other sex was far more difficult. This was taught in what Best called the Third Curriculum: Self taught Sex

Education.<sup>20</sup>

The reform’s gender-blindness leaves certain gender-biases intact that will render the reform’s goals impossible to achieve. The reformers recognize that less than one-third of our fourth graders read proficiently. They acknowledge that reading performance has not improved in more than fifteen years and that less than 20 percent of our nation’s 12<sup>th</sup> graders score proficiently in math.<sup>21</sup> They recognize problems that Best addresses in her research but the legislation does not acknowledge the importance of recognizing gender or how adults respond to boys and girls and how boys and girls respond to each other as the children are developing their understanding of how the world works, and how they individually and collectively fit in the classroom and in the world.

### Gender-Sensitive School Reform

Gender-sensitive educational research and journalism suggest that both gender-blind and gender-biased schooling are miseducative. Our families and children need to be challenged rather than threatened by this less than straightforward, postmodern world. Educators need to expect, push and support boys to extend themselves across the whole range of human activities and learning, including those in which girls engage and, vice versa girls need to extend themselves to a broader range of activities. The alternative may be that many boys and girls continue to draw boundaries in ways that are constricting of their own development as well as restricting, hurtful and dangerous for other boys and girls.

Martin in the *Schoolhome*<sup>22</sup> describes a gender sensitive approach to educating children for the virtue courage. An essentialist approach would suggest that girls are often reticent risk-takers and boys are sometimes reckless risk-takers. A gender-sensitive approach would recognize both ends of the courage continuum and encourage the boys to move toward the center for wiser risk-taking and girls to move from fearfulness to taking calculated risks. A girl who is reckless in her risk taking would be encouraged to make more calculated, careful decisions regarding taking risks. The teaching environment would help to shape wise, courageous behavior for both girls and boys.

A research study that was nuanced enough to discriminate between courageous behavior and reticence was a landmark study by Carol Gilligan, Annie Rogers and Lyn Mikel Brown at the Harvard Project, “The Psychology of Women and the Development of Girls. Gilligan, Rogers and Mikel Brown established that girls, as they become adolescents “lose some of the self-

confidence, courage and resistance to harmful norms of feminine behavior as well as a detailed and complex knowledge of the human social world.... Up until the age of eleven or twelve ... girls are quite clear and candid about what they think and feel and know.”<sup>23</sup> After age twelve the white, upper-class girls of Laurel School lose some of their self-confidence and courage as they try to fit into the feminine roles they see modeled for them. They are learning to “seem” as Pipher describes the dysfunctional cultural teaching they are learning their “feminine roles” as I describe below in Deborah Tolman’s study.

Based on her counseling practice, Pipher in her book *Reviving Ophelia* describes how poisoning our culture is for girls. And Deborah Tolman of the Wellesley Center for Women has asked how is femininity understood in middle-class white culture, in other socioeconomic classes, races, ethnicities, between genders and in rural vs. urban locations? Tolman introduces a new model of female adolescent sexual health based on feminist principles. She investigates the extent to which adolescent girls’ “beliefs about femininity” are associated with specific elements of their sexual health. Her variables were sexual self-concept, sexual agency, and attitudes toward romance conventions, femininity ideology and demographic background. She surveyed 148 eighth -grade adolescent girls and then drew an illustrative case study from a sub-sample of forty-six girls who were interviewed in depth about gender and relationships. She found a statistically significant association between the girls’ espousal of more conventional beliefs about femininity and diminished positive sexual health. In other words, the more “feminine” the girls’ attitudes the less healthy she was in her sexual ideas and behaviors. Tolman used the following definition of health established by the United States Commission on Sexuality. Sexual relationships and expression of sexuality in behavior must be “consensual, nonexploitative, honest, pleasurable and protected against unintended pregnancies and STDs, if any type of intercourse occurs.”<sup>24</sup> Tolman was able to incorporate the issues of gender, race, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation in this study in order to get a more nuanced picture of the girls’ beliefs about femininity and attitudes.<sup>25</sup> Her conclusions have implications for school reform and for teachers and sexuality education classrooms today. Advisors could reinforce less thinking about how girls look, walk and talk and more about how girls think, reason, make a point or debate a position. Given Tolman’s definition, the guidance would contribute to healthier sexuality for

girls.

Reading teacher, Best also identified during her research what she called the “Third Curriculum: Self taught Sex Education.” She observed the students first grade through fourth grade and then returned to interview them as sixth graders. She realized that it was difficult to teach boys and girls to be friends when their “Self Taught Sex Education” curriculum seemed to be teaching the girls to be helpful and nurturant and the boys to distance themselves from girls, to look down on them and to accept as their due the help that girls offered. But through consciousness raising feedback by Best the students at sixth grade actually had developed friendships between boys and girls as well as same sex friendships. This was a difficult area for Best, she was gratified to find that two years after she had worked with the children she found actual friendships between the sexes.

One more aspect of gender sensitive behavior has come to my attention through my research. School reform must take into consideration how teachers interact with students in the classroom. Researcher and journalist, Peggy Orenstein<sup>26</sup> along with educational philosopher researchers Myra and David Sadker<sup>27</sup> established that teachers, regardless of sex, interact more with boys, give boys more attention both positive and negative, and that this pattern intensifies at the secondary and college levels. Girls get less teacher attention and wait longer for it. School reform should not remain blind to this phenomenon because it cannot effectively address the other problems and gaps such as reading proficiency, math and science, skills it aims to fix, when policy makers and teachers are blind to gender.

### Conclusion

School reform must be gender sensitive so that girls can learn to be less reticent risk takers, so that girls will study math and science so they have a broader range of behaviors to choose from. Boys could expand their emotional repertoire moving away from reckless risk taking to wiser choices. Both boys and girls would be exposed to reproductive and productive lessons, domestic and business world lessons. Improvements recommended from the research cited here that would address issues in a gender-sensitive manner when gender makes a difference as Martin described it. They follow:

Teachers, counselors and administrators must not use shame as a deterrent for unacceptable behavior; instead find girls and boys character and academic or physical strengths and build on these strengths. Value domestic skills for boys as well as girls.

## SHINN: DOES “LEAVE NO CHILD BEHIND” MEAN LEAVING GENDER BEHIND?

Reinforce critical thinking skills for both boys and girls. While appearance and cleanliness are important, obsessive concern for one's looks is unhealthy even if the media reinforces the obsession. Guide students, especially boys, to develop interests in a wider variety of subjects and activities. Urge cruel teasing as a means of communication to be replaced by kinder approaches to developing relationships. Put policies in place to address and eliminate sexual harassment by either girls or boys. Expand thinking regarding appropriate roles and activities for both sexes helping both boys and girls

to extend themselves across the whole range of human activities and learning. Consider teaching reading to a boy-only group or math to girl-only groups eliminating the sexual competition and nuances that occur in boy/girl groups. Teach thinking skills, reasoning skills, debating skills to both boys and girls. Guide boys and girls toward friendships with one another not just relationships based on sex. Urge teachers to monitor their responses or have an observer actually tabulate their responses to each sex in the classroom.

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# THE METAPHYSICAL ASSUMPTIONS OF PRAGMATISM: DEWEY'S PHILOSOPHIC REVOLUTION

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Metaphysics has been for pragmatism the source, it would seem, of an inferiority complex. As if the pragmatic view of metaphysics is in some way not as adequate as the idealist view or the realist view. This feeling of inferiority has resulted in pragmatic philosophers going to great lengths to justify the pragmatic metaphysical view. William James chapter in *Pragmatism*, "Some Metaphysical Problems Pragmatically Considered," sought to address the problem of metaphysics. Sydney Hook's *Metaphysics of Pragmatism* investigates the relationship of pragmatic philosophy with the metaphysics. Many books on pragmatism include, if not chapters, extended sections on the metaphysical question. The biographers and editors of John Dewey's works make mention of his views of metaphysics.

T. Z. Lavine said that "*metaphysics* is the branch of philosophy which asks these questions about reality; What is appearance and what is real? What kind of reality does the universe have—is it mind or matter or is it some kind of spiritual being? What kind of reality do (human beings have)?"<sup>1</sup> Philosophers have had different views on these questions. Plato found the answers to these questions in Idealism and there have been many philosophers since who have agreed with him. Aristotle found the answers to these questions in Realism and many philosophers since have agreed with him. The empiricists virtually denied the existence of anything outside of what can be perceived. Positivism made a place for the development of science.

The opposition between "transcendental philosophy" and "empirical philosophy," between the "Platonists" and the "Positivists" essentially centered on metaphysical questions. Richard Rorty says, "To be on the transcendental side was to think that natural science was not the last word--that there was more Truth to be found. To be on the empirical side was to think that natural science ... was all the truth there was. To side with Hegel or Green was to think that some normative sentences about rationality and goodness corresponded to something real, but invisible to natural science. To side with Comte or Mach was to think that such sentences either reduced to spatio-temporal events or were not subjects for serious reflection."<sup>2</sup>

Pragmatism as a largely American philosophy has always suffered from its break from the more formal European philosophic traditions. It rejected the rationalistic abstraction and absolutist dogmatism of

European philosophy and relied upon the scientific method and observable behaviors and consequences. It is, said William James, "the attitude of looking away from first things, principles, 'categories,' supposed necessities; and of looking toward last things, fruits, consequences, facts."<sup>3</sup> James continues,

The pragmatic method, is primarily a method of settling metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable. Is the world one or many?—fated or free?—material or spiritual?—here are the notions either of which may or may not hold good of the world; and disputes over such notions are unending. The pragmatic method in such cases is to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences. What difference would it practically make to any one if this notion rather than that notion were true? If no practical difference can be traced, then the alternatives mean practically the same thing, and all dispute is idle.<sup>4</sup>

James identified the problematic of absolutist philosophy and empiricist materialistic philosophy as a need, on the one hand, to have the ability to discover new knowledge, to develop empirically derived information while, on the other hand, to maintain social values and constraints on human behavior.<sup>5</sup> James, of course, believed that pragmatism could solve the problem, remaining "religious like the rationalisms, but at the same time, like the empiricisms, it can preserve the richest intimacy with facts."<sup>6</sup> James posits two philosophical temperaments, one rationalistic, devoted to a more intellectual understanding of the world, the other empirical, seeking knowledge through the physical world as it exists.

A pragmatist, said James, "turns away from abstraction and insufficiency, from verbal solution, from bad *a priori* reasons, from fixed principles, from closed systems and pretended absolutes and origins. He turns towards concreteness and adequacy, towards facts, towards action and towards power.... It means the open air and possibilities of nature, as against dogma, artificiality, and the pretense of finality in truth."<sup>7</sup> Truth, for the pragmatist, is always tentative, held only as long as new information does not necessitate its change.

"So pragmatists," says Rorty, "see the Platonic tradition as having outlived its usefulness. This does not mean that they have a new, non-Platonic set of answers to Platonic questions to offer, but rather they do not think we should ask those questions anymore." There is

not necessarily a denial of the existence of Truth or Goodness, no competing notion of the nature of reality or knowledge, no relativistic or subjectivist theory. "They would simply," as he says, "prefer to change the subject," to get on to more productive pursuits.<sup>8</sup>

For James, "Pragmatism, therefore, becomes first a method second a genetic theory of what is meant by truth."<sup>9</sup> Truth says James, "becomes a class-name for all sorts of definite working-values in experience."<sup>10</sup> He continues, "*The true is the name of whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief, and good, too, for definite, assignable reasons.*"<sup>11</sup> (His italics) And, "... pragmatist talk about truths in the plural, about their utility and satisfactoriness, about the success with which they 'work', etc.,"<sup>12</sup> disquiets the rationalist, who is only comfortable with Truth in the form of abstraction. According to Rorty, "Pragmatism cuts across this transcendental empirical distinction by questioning the common presuppositions that there is an invidious distinction drawn between kinds of truths."<sup>13</sup>

It is precisely this idea of truth that Dewey uses as a focus for his discussion of the relationship of metaphysics to his philosophy. Dewey's interest in metaphysics developed with one of his earliest mentors, H. A. P. Torrey and continued throughout his life. His first published work, "The Metaphysical Assumptions of Materialism," analyzed the ontological and causal suppositions of materialist philosophy. But Dewey eventually developed a different understanding of metaphysics as the "cognizance of the generic traits of existence.... with incompleteness and precariousness ... a trait that must be given footing on the same rank as the finished and fixed."<sup>14</sup> In light of such incompleteness and precariousness, truth, for Dewey, had to have its source in human experience. He said,

Experience has been systematically disparaged in contrast with something taken to be more fundamental and superior. Life as it is actually lived has been treated as a preparation for something outside of it and after it. It has been thought lawless, without meaning and value, except as it was taken to testify to a reality beyond itself. The creeds that have prevailed have been founded upon the supposed necessity of escape from the confusion and uncertainties of experience. Life has been thought to be evil and hopeless unless it could be shown to bear within itself the assured promise of a higher reality. Philosophies of escape have also been philosophies of compensation for the ills and sufferings of the experienced world.<sup>15</sup>

Experience was devalued as a means of improving

the human condition, of obtaining truth. Philosophy, through metaphysics and the dialectical practice of knowledge, made ultimate truth something unattainable, something outside of a person's ability to comprehend. "When," said Dewey, "the practice of knowledge ceased to be dialectical and became experimental, knowing became preoccupied with changes and the test of knowledge became the ability to bring about certain changes."<sup>16</sup> Only with the development of modern science has acceptance of the importance of experience come into existence. This new form of experience has science as a tool for understanding. Modern science has given man the ability to create "techniques and technologies," to "arrange and utilize all sorts of conditions and energies, physical and human."<sup>17</sup>

Dewey said of the scientific method,

The method we term "scientific" forms for the modern man (and man is not modern just because he lives in 1930) the sole dependable means of disclosing the realities of existence. It is the sole authentic mode of revelation. This possession of a new method, to the use of which no limits can be put, signifies a new idea of the nature and possibilities of experience. It imports a new morale of confidence, control, and security.<sup>18</sup>

Science, for Dewey was tied to experience. "In the natural sciences," he said, "there is a union of experience and nature ... the inquirer must use empirical methods if his findings are to be treated as genuinely scientific.... (E)xperience is *of* as well as *in* nature. It is not experience which is experienced but nature ... Things interacting in certain ways *are* experience; they are what is experienced."<sup>19</sup>

Widespread use of the scientific method has meant the introduction into the society the generally accepted fact of constant change. While "moral, religious, and articulate philosophic creeds are based upon the idea of fixity," science and technology have produced a society of constant change. Such change has been feared and "looked upon as the source of decay and degeneration."<sup>20</sup>

Dewey contrasted the scientific, empirical method toward truth and knowledge with non-empirical methods in terms of their utilization of reflective thinking. He found a difference,

between what is experienced as a result of a minimum of incidental reflection and what is experienced in consequence of continued and regulated reflective inquiry. For derived and refined products are experienced only because of the intervention of systematic thinking. The objects of

both science and philosophy obviously belong chiefly to the secondary and refined system. But at this point we come to a marked divergence between science and philosophy. For the natural sciences not only draw their material from primary experience, but they refer it back for test.<sup>21</sup>

"Philosophy," said Dewey, "cannot 'solve' the problem of the relation of the ideal and the real. That is the standing problem of life. But it can at least lighten the burden of humanity in dealing with the problem by emancipating mankind from the errors which philosophy has itself fostered--the existence of conditions which are real apart from their movement into something new and different, and the existence of ideals, spirit and reason independent of the possibilities of the material and physical."<sup>22</sup>

In their attachment to fixed and immutable ideas, early science, religion, and philosophy relied upon absolute concepts of reality based on reason and absolute concepts of morality based upon codified in laws. The belief was that "Wherever there is change, there is instability, and instability is proof of something the matter, of absence, deficiency, incompleteness.... Complete and true Reality must be changeless."<sup>23</sup>

In contrast with all such beliefs, the outstanding fact in all branches of natural science is that to exist is to be in process, in change. Nevertheless, although the idea of movement and change has made itself at home in the physical sciences, it has had comparatively little influence on the popular mind as the latter looks at religion, morals, economics, and politics. In these fields it is still supposed that our choice is between confusion, anarchy, and something fixed and immutable.<sup>24</sup>

He continues,

A philosophy of experience will accept at its full value the fact that social and moral existences are, like physical existences, in a state of continuous if obscure change.... The search "for a single purport and a single end either frame an idea of them according to their private desires and tradition, or else, not finding any such single unity, give up in despair and conclude that there is no genuine meaning and value in any of life's episodes."<sup>25</sup>

"Change in short," says Dewey, "is no longer looked upon as a fall from grace, as a lapse from reality or a sign of imperfection of Being.... (T)he experimental method tries to break down apparent fixities and to induce changes."<sup>26</sup> Even in philosophy, said Dewey, "... there are, from Heracleitus to Bergson, philosophies, metaphysics, of change."<sup>27</sup>

When the practice of knowledge ceased to be dialectical and became experimental, knowing became preoccupied with changes and the test of knowledge became the ability to bring about certain changes. Knowing, for the experimental sciences, means a certain kind of intelligently conducted doing; it ceases to be contemplative and becomes in a true sense practical. Now this implies that philosophy, unless it is to undergo a complete break with the authorized spirit of science, must also alter its nature. It must assume a practical nature. It must become operative and experimental. And we have pointed out what an enormous change this transformation of philosophy entails in the two conceptions which have played the greatest role in historic philosophizing--the conceptions of the "real" and the "ideal" respectively. The former ceases to be something ready-made and final, it becomes that which has to be accepted as the material of change, as the obstructions and the means of certain specific desired changes. The ideal and rational also ceased to be separate and ready-made, a world incapable of being used as a lever to transform the actual empirical world, a mere asylum from empirical deficiencies. "They represent," said Dewey, "intelligently thought-out possibilities of the existent world which may be used as methods for making over and improving it.... The change ... signifies that the prime function of philosophy is that of rationalizing the *possibilities* of experience, especially collective human experience."<sup>28</sup>

Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* noted that reality is exceedingly complicated and can never be completely described by an organized scientific model. He proposed that science tends to produce a model of reality that appears to fit the data available and is useful for predicting the results of new experiments. Since no model is completely true, the accumulation of data begins to require modification of the model to correct it for new discoveries. The model becomes more and more complicated, with special exceptions and intuitively implausible extensions. Eventually, the model can no longer serve a useful purpose. At that point, original thinkers will emerge with an entirely different model, creating a revolution in science.<sup>29</sup> It is just such a revolution that Dewey proposed for philosophy.

Richard Rorty believes that Dewey, "For better or worse ... *wanted* to write a metaphysical system. Throughout his life, he wavered between a therapeutic stance toward philosophy and another, quite different stance--one in which philosophy was to become "scientific" and "empirical" and to do something

serious, systematic, important, and constructive.”<sup>30</sup> That “Dewey set out to show the harm which traditional philosophical dualisms were doing to our culture, and he thought that to do this job he needed a metaphysics—a description of the generic traits of existences that would solve (or dissolve) the traditional problems of philosophy, as well as open up new avenues for cultural development.”<sup>31</sup>

Dewey accepts the role of philosophy a way of obtaining truth. But laments that “... the non-empirical method of philosophizing ... fails to use refined, secondary products as a path pointing and leading back to something in primary experience.”<sup>32</sup> This results, for Dewey, in a two-fold failure. “First, there is no verification, no effort to test and check.... (S)econdly, ... things of ordinary experience do not get enlargement and enrichment of meaning as they do when apprehended through the medium of scientific principles and reasonings.”<sup>33</sup> These failures, caused by seeking metaphysical truths, needlessly isolate philosophical inquiry. They create a reality “superior to that of the material or any other mode of experience.”<sup>34</sup>

Dewey says that,

This ... reacts, in the third place back upon the philosophic subject-matter itself. Not being tested, ... this subject matter becomes arbitrary, aloof—what is called “abstract” when that word is used in a bad sense to designate something which exclusively occupies a realm of its own without contact with the things of ordinary experience.... The objects of reflection in philosophy, being reached by methods that seem to those who employ them rationally mandatory are taken to be “real” in and of themselves—and supremely real .... the problems to which non-empirical method gives rise in philosophy are blocks to inquiry, blind alleys; they are puzzles rather than problems, solved only by calling the original material of primary experience, “phenomenal,” mere appearance, mere impressions, or by some other disparaging name.

Dewey found it necessary to

Develop a method of rational investigation and proof which would place the essential elements of traditional belief upon an unshakable basis; develop a method of thought and knowledge which while purifying tradition should preserve its moral and social values unimpaired; nay, by purifying them, add to their power and authority. To put in a word, that which had rested upon custom was to be restored, resting no longer upon the habits of the past, but upon the very metaphysics of Being and the

Universe.”<sup>35</sup>

Dewey thought that we do not have to decide between a single unity, an all-embracing meaning. Each situation has its own meaning and purpose, offering its own challenges to thought and action, and presenting its own opportunities for the application of human intelligence, for learning. But he recognized that social conditions play a large role in our value system. He said, “Current beliefs in morals, religion and politics ... reflect the social conditions which present themselves. Only analysis shows that the *ways* in which we believe and expect have a tremendous affect upon *what* we believe and expect.”<sup>36</sup>

Dewey here not only anticipates critical theory but also expands on Peirce’s “Fixation of Belief” in which Peirce identifies four ways of fixing our beliefs: tenacity, authority, *a priori* or rational, and science. In suggesting that the ways in which we believe are connected to the objects of our belief, Dewey is emphasizing the influence of, what he called, “social factors, tradition and the influence of educators.” “Thus we discover,” continues Dewey, “that we believe many things not because of the things are so, but because we have become habituated through the weight of authority, by imitation, prestige, instruction, the unconscious effect of language, etc. We learn, in short, that qualities which we attribute to objects ought to be imputed to our own ways of experiencing them, and that these in turn are due to the force of intercourse and custom.”<sup>37</sup> For Dewey, the social factors, religion, politics, and morals, are inseparable from the intellectual pursuit of knowledge. He said “that the chief danger to religion lies in the fact that it has become so respectable. It has become largely a sanction of what socially exists---a kind of gloss upon institutions and conventions.”<sup>38</sup>

Dewey recognized that the world in which he lived was a much more hospitable place than it had ever been. He believed that the human need to create, to achieve, and to know had created a society unique in its ability to provide for its members. He believed that the basis for this wealth and well being was science. He said,

Through science we have secured a degree of power of prediction and of control; through tools, machinery and an accompanying technique we have made the world more comfortable to our needs, a more secure abode. We have heaped up riches and means of comfort between ourselves and the risks of the world. We have professional amusements as an agency of escape and forgetfulness.<sup>39</sup>

Dewey knew, however, that just because the social and economic situations might have changed the modern



## SNELGROVE: THE METAPHYSICAL ASSUMPTIONS OF PRAGMATISM: DEWEY'S PHILOSOPHIC REVOLUTION

societies still face monumental problems. "But when all is said and done," he continued, "the fundamentally hazardous character of the world is not seriously modified, much less eliminated."<sup>40</sup> He said, "We have substituted sophistication for superstition." but lamented that the "sophistication is as irrational ... as the superstition it replaces."<sup>41</sup>

Dewey recognized that the change from the traditional views to the modern represented a dilemma in the basis of moral and ethical behavior but saw no value in seeking a resolution. He said,

Breaks and incompatibilities occur in collective culture as well as in individual life. Modern science, modern industry and politics, have presented us with an immense amount of material foreign to, often incostistent with, the most prized intellectual and moral heritage of the western world. This is the cause of our modern intellectual perplexities and confusions.... I have not striven ... for a reconciliation of the new and the old. I think such endeavors are likely to give rise to casualties of good faith and candor.<sup>42</sup>

In fact, Dewey felt that the natural process of modern social development would accomplish a change in the belief system of the society. His concept of empirical naturalism was to make possible the reconstruction of the value system. He said,

I believe that the method of empirical naturalism provides ... the only way ... one can freely accept the standpoint and conclusions of modern science: the way by which we can be genuinely naturalistic and yet maintain cherished values, provided they are critically clarified and reinforced. The naturalistic method, when it is consistently followed, destroys many things once cherished; but it destroys them by revealing their inconsistency with the nature of things.... But its main purport is not destructive; empirical naturalism is rather a winnowing fan. Only chaff goes, though perhaps the chaff had once been treasured. An empirical method which remains true

to nature does not "save"; it is not an insurance device nor a mechanical antiseptic. But it inspires the mind with courage and vitality to create new ideals and values in the face of the perplexities of a new world.<sup>43</sup>

Pierre Laplace, in the early nineteenth century wrote a monumental and definitive book describing how to compute the future positions of planets and comets based on observations from earth. Upon reading the book, Napoleon commented to Laplace that he found no mention of God in the treatise to which Laplace replied that he had no need for that hypothesis.<sup>44</sup> "Dewey's work," says Rorty, "... is great not because it provides and accurate representation of the generic traits of nature or experience or culture or anything else. Its greatness lies in the sheer provocativeness of its suggestions about how to slough off our intellectual past, and about how to treat that past as material for playful experimentation rather than imposing tasks and responsibilities on us."<sup>45</sup> Is metaphysics an unnecessary hypothesis for pragmatism?

Dewey first assumption, I believe, was that metaphysics would continue to exist. Granted that Dewey enlarged the definition of metaphysics to include the incomplete and tentative nature of pragmatic knowledge, he still found a place for metaphysical consideration in his philosophy. Secondly, Dewey assumed that metaphysics could be continuously reconstructed—it would evolve as a natural consequence of the application of the scientific method in philosophy. Thirdly, that philosophy would proceed systematically to analyze the consequences issuing from the revolution wrought primarily by science and, on the basis of that analysis, develop a metaphysics with a broader, more generalized understanding of the nature of the world and the nature of man. Finally, a pragmatic metaphysics provides for us the opportunity to develop a system of belief-attitudes, a philosophy, framed on the basis of the resources now at our command. So, the question remains, was Dewey a hedgehog or a fox?

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28. John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, pp. 121-122.
29. David Salzberg, *The Lady Tasting Tea: How Statistics Revolutionized Science in the Twentieth Century*, New York: Freeman and Co., 2001, p. 293.
30. Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, p. 73.
31. Ibid., p. 85.
32. John Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 8.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., p. 19
35. John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 17.
36. John Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 15.
37. Ibid.
38. John Dewey, "What I Believe," p. 28.
39. John Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 40.
40. Ibid., p. 40-41.
42. Ibid., p. xiv.
43. Ibid., pp. xiv.-xv.
44. David Salzberg, *The Lady Tasting Tea*, p. vii.
45. Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, p. 87.



ELSIE RIPLEY CLAPP AND JOHN DEWEY (1907-1912)

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This paper explores the intellectual relationship between a teacher and a student, John Dewey and Elsie Ripley Clapp. Clapp is best known for her work *Community Schools in Action*, published in 1939 and *The Use of Resources in Education* published in 1952 as a monograph for the John Dewey Society. She also edited the *Journal Progressive Education* from 1937-1939 and during those years redefined the nature of the journal. Elsie was considered to be an expert in rural/community education in the Progressive Education Association and she was also the organization's first woman vice-president. Unfortunately, educational historians, even Lawrence Cremin, note Elsie's work only in the context of Dewey's contribution to it rather than her interpretation of pragmatism and its application. Philosopher Charlene Siegfried, in her work *Pragmatism and Feminism* considers Elsie among the lost women pragmatists who developed their own version of feminism. In years past Elsie was in a sense lost. However due to the location of primary source material, her autobiographical notes and some personal correspondence coupled with archival materials at Southern Illinois University Elsie is no longer lost.<sup>1</sup>

Elsie grew up in the elite world of Brooklyn Heights, New York, her father a prosperous stock broker and her mother the ideal Victorian woman. As a child she was largely educated in the home through interactions with her family and the libraries of her father and grandfathers. She later attended the Packer Collegiate Institute, a prep school for girls and then Vassar College. Due to illness she did not matriculate from Vassar, but took a teaching job at the Brooklyn Heights Seminary. After a few years teaching she transferred her credits to Barnard College and began graduate work at Columbia University. She eventually received a bachelor's degree from Barnard in English and a masters in philosophy from Columbia. During her studies in philosophy Elsie was mentored by F.J.E. Woodbridge, Wendell Bush, Arthur Lovejoy and John Dewey. She spent 1907-1912 on the Columbia campus and by all means matured intellectually. Many of her educational ideas are nurtured during these five years which she will later put into practice, largely defining her concept of the community school.

There is no doubt Elsie Clapp felt John Dewey to be the most important intellectual influence on her life.

From 1907 to 1912 she took numerous courses with him, audited others and assisted him with many others.<sup>2</sup> Elsie took extensive notes on many of Dewey's lectures, responded to his course outlines and course summaries, and conversed with him on philosophical and pedagogical issues. Elsie's professional papers include some of Dewey's own notes on lectures, reports of lectures and accompanying letters to Elsie. Unfortunately in her professional papers, there is much more commentary from Dewey than from Elsie, but that is expected since she was responding to him and did not duplicate her responses. She kept many of the materials Dewey sent her for comment. At this point we can only examine what ideas she may have been exposed to and follow her career to ascertain her eventual interpretation of these ideas. However, it is also important to examine Dewey's own thought during this period. What was he thinking, publishing and what ideas did he expose his students to in class, which included Elsie?<sup>3</sup> Within the five year time span from 1907-1912, Elsie is exposed to Dewey's central ideas about desire, thought, reflection, knowledge, and judgement. All these relate to his concepts of community, democracy and education; important concepts for her later work. We must keep in mind here that Dewey did not consider himself an educator, but a philosopher. It is women like Elsie Clapp, Lucy Sprague Mitchell, Ella Flagg Young, Marietta Johnson, and Flora Cooke who put the ideas in practice including implementing their own ideas in varied contexts.<sup>4</sup>

Elsie Clapp was first exposed to Dewey's thought during her sophomore year at Vassar where she had become familiar with his *Pedagogic Creed* and other works such as *School and Society* (1899), a compiled series of lectures given to the parents of the Dewey Lab School in Chicago.<sup>5</sup> As you may recall, in *School and Society*, Dewey had challenged the Lockean notion that the mind was a blank slate and simply needed to be filled with information. Building on a more modern view of mind and certainly influenced by William James' *Principles of Psychology* (1891), and his view of an active and discrete mind, Dewey suggested that the child was much like a little philosopher, attempting to make sense of its world through interaction/transaction in the environment, what he termed experience.<sup>6</sup> Dewey believed the child had a natural capacity to activity,

desiring and seeking to know and understand its world. The child gained this understanding through four tools: communication, construction, inquiry and expression. The problem of the traditional school was that it typically ignored the prior experience of the child and tried to use subject matter to shape and mold a person's experience rather than basing subject matter upon experience. This traditional process made education remote and bookish, teacher and text-centered, but most crucially it undermined the "native impulses" of communication, construction, inquiry, and expression.<sup>7</sup> Dewey believed these native impulses were fundamental traits of the participatory democrat and for Dewey needed to be nurtured in the school setting. These traits will be addressed and documented by Elsie Clapp through her work at the Rosemary Junior School, the Ballard Memorial School and the Arthurdale School, the most important experiments of her educational career.

Dewey understood the difficulty of moving education into a more progressive direction. "I do not think it is possible," he wrote to Elsie in 1911, "to overstate the degree in which traditional education is dead; the trouble is that we educators having been ourselves educated in it are too dead to bury it and start afresh. Student activities indicate the necessity that mind can be employed only upon the activities of life."<sup>8</sup> Dewey was suggesting to Elsie that teachers needed better professional training, but they also needed to understand what modern psychologists were saying about how we come to know, really how we come to learn. In a democratic society this new view of learning took on special meaning and purpose.

During the five years Elsie associated with Dewey he was beginning to draft and articulate a vision of the role of education in a democratic society and she played an active part in shaping that vision. Unfortunately, Dewey rarely gave credit to the women who influenced his thinking, but in the Preface to *Democracy and Education* he gives credit to "Miss Elsie Ripley Clapp for many criticism and suggestions."<sup>9</sup> One begins to see Elsie's own thought on democracy and education by 1911 largely through notes and references from courses she took and through assisting Dewey in some of his classes. The majority of materials and correspondence during this period relate to Dewey's course *Philosophy and Education in their Historic Relations*. Elsie took this course from October 4, 1910 through May 18, 1911. A student in the course, Elsie noted Dewey's discussion of the nature of the good and its relationship to desire. Dewey's dialogue on Aristotle's *Ethics* led Elsie to believe that the good was not simply desire nor is its end

leisure or pleasure. The pursuit of materialism did not equate with the good or the pursuit of happiness.<sup>10</sup> Dewey suggested in a Jeffersonian sense, but also Aristotelean, that the pursuit of happiness was not material or economic, but ethical. While there may be conflict, chaos, confusion and disorder in democratic society, "there is also the freedom to interact and create conditions for accelerated change."<sup>11</sup> "A progressive society," Elsie noted, "is essentially a democratic society-non-stratified, theoretically and to some extent practical as regards to social intercourse and social stimulation."<sup>12</sup> Predating *Democracy and Education* by several years, Elsie wrote in her class notes: "Education has a practical side and a theoretical one. It has a practical sense and a theory in the sense of how a body of beliefs come to be taken as truth or common sense. Education is a process where people are instilled with what the society feels valuable."<sup>13</sup> In her notes, Elsie commented on the challenge Dewey was bringing to the dualism of man/woman and society and the dualistic separation which undermined education and participatory democracy. Dewey defined dualism in traditional philosophy as a "hard and fast antithesis between terms which are related." Philosophically, this included for Dewey spirit and matter, mind and body and logic and psychology. Pedagogically for Dewey and Elsie Clapp it also included the relationship between school and community, a dualism Elsie will eventually seek to resolve in her own work linking school and community.<sup>14</sup> These were not fixed distinctions, but "relative and working."<sup>15</sup> Trying to pull this together for his students, Dewey posed the following fundamental question to his class. What is good, what is virtue and can it be taught? What is learning and what is knowledge? By posing these questions to his class, Dewey attempted to stimulate his students to reflect on the nature of the good society. Like knowledge, democratic society was flexible, changing, and responsive to the needs and experiences of the people. In this type of society knowledge could not be static or remote from human experience, however traditional education had approached knowing in this fashion; typically memorization and recitation. This practice ignored the new psychology. Educators and philosophers could also assist the transition. A new philosophic approach was necessary.

During the summer of 1911, Elsie assisted Dewey in two of his courses, *Foundations of Method* and *Social Aspects of the School Curriculum* at Teachers College. Referring to a lecture given on August 15, 1911, Elsie wrote that philosophy "should be a method, not an

intellectual insurance policy.”<sup>16</sup> What did she or Dewey mean by an intellectual insurance policy? Philosophy as an insurance policy created a false sense of comfort. In response to Dewey’s lecture and his thought at the time this new method [pragmatism] was meant to challenge philosophy as an approach to knowledge and truth that neglected questioning and inquiry and accepting things or facts without thought or reflection. Dewey’s pragmatism formed itself through human experience with thought and reflection as “the starting point.” Experience was an interaction or transaction between the individual and its environment; “a practical matter.”<sup>17</sup> Dewey’s pragmatism presented a challenge to idealism and realism, but Dewey viewed pragmatism at this time as a mediator between idealism and realism. Attempting to explain his position he wrote: “In somewhat similar fashion, it [pragmatism] claims to mediate between realistic and idealistic theories of knowledge. It holds to reality, prior to cognitive operations and not constructed by these operations, to which knowing, in order to be successful, must adapt itself. In so far, it is realistic in tendency, and pragmatism is usually recognized to have been an influential factor in calling out the reaction against the Kantian and Neo-Kantian idealism dominant before its first appearance.”<sup>18</sup> Characterizing this new approach to knowledge, and relating this to subject matter, Dewey stated knowledge is a living process, itself formulated out of hypothesis, through testing in the realm of human experience. It is not static results or the traditional approach to subject matter traditional education takes.<sup>19</sup>

In an essay *Science as Subject Matter and as Method*, published in 1910, Dewey stated that the scientific method “is not just a method which it has been found profitable to pursue in this or that abstruse subject for purely technical reason. It represents the only method of thinking that has proved fruitful in any subject—that is what we mean when we call it scientific.”<sup>20</sup> In linking scientific method to thought Dewey later wrote: “If scientific method departed essentially from the methods of reflection and deliberation employed in the daily affairs of life, education in them would be of comparatively little avail outside of the specialized pursuit of science.”<sup>21</sup> “Scientific habit of mind” embodied the traits of communication, inquiry, construction and expression and clearly associated thought with learning. Thought was a process that worked much like the scientific method.<sup>22</sup>

Continuing to respond to this lecture and building upon the previous thought, Elsie noted, “that thought is

much like the logical sequence of math, a uniform sequence of steps—uniformity which is originally externally dictated as the control of the process.”<sup>23</sup> There is a close similarity here with Dewey’s own discussion of thought in *How We Think* first published in 1910. Dewey wrote *How We Think* “out of the conviction that training children and youth in the scientific attitude of mind was the primary goal of education.” He described this “scientific attitude of mind” in terms of curiosity, imagination and experimental inquiry. Dewey discussed thought as occurring much like the scientific method which grounds itself in activity and resolving what he termed a felt difficulty. But thought went beyond just a cognitive or mental state. He linked thought to action. “The formation of reflective thought is,” Dewey wrote, “to transform, a situation in which there is experienced obscurity, doubt, conflict, disturbance of some sort, into a situation that is clear, coherent, settled, harmonious.”<sup>24</sup> Sounding much like William James, Dewey defined reflective thought as ‘active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusion to which it tends.’<sup>25</sup> Pragmatically speaking, thought puts an idea to the test to determine its workability. Thought is characterized by orderliness and a logical sequence of steps. It did not end with ‘a state of perplexity or doubt or hesitation,’ but served as the beginning of action, a “research or investigation directed toward bringing to life further facts which serve to corroborate or to nullify the suggested belief.”<sup>26</sup> It was educators, teachers who had the best opportunities to nurture this kind of thought or reflective thinking.

Reviewing Dewey’s *How We Think* for the *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Method*, Elsie’s friend and colleague Max Eastman wrote: “Thus the feature of this book, as an exposition of the new logic, is, that is what it declares true thought to be. In that respect it is unique. And that is the respect in which its author is eminent among those who are called pragmatists. Therefore I venture to say that this little “educational book” contains the heart of his philosophy. It contains it, moreover, in a form and language comprehensible to minds uncorrupted by philosophic scholarship.”<sup>27</sup> Boyd Bode wrote in *School Review* that *How We Think* was “that rare kind of book in which simplicity is the outcome of seasoned scholarship in diverse fields. Logical, psychological and educational theory are made to contribute to a work which is intelligent to the layman.”<sup>28</sup> Written with less philosophical jargon, Dewey wrote *How We Think* to

appeal to a broader audience, largely educators, opening a more public door to his pragmatism.<sup>29</sup> According to Dewey biographer George Dykuizen, *How We Think* was one of the best statements of his pragmatism, although it was primarily directed to educators interested in what was being termed by many the “new education.”

Shortly before the fall semester of 1911, Dewey and Elsie had been corresponding about courses Dewey was planning to offer on *Analysis of Experience* and *Theories of Experience*. In a letter to Elsie dated September 2, 1911 Dewey expressed his gratefulness to her. “And I have found much enlightenment,” Dewey wrote, “in what you have now sent me. So great is my indebtedness, that it makes me apprehensive, not I hope that I am someone as to be reluctant to being under obligation, but that such a generous exploitation of your ideas as is likely to result if and when I publish the outcome, seems to go beyond the limit. At the same time I want to hold you to your word about further communication.”<sup>30</sup>

In discussing philosophy as experimental method, Elsie believed and noted that traditional philosophies such as, “Idealism and materialism resolve it [philosophic method] into an illusion; to the former this life is not a trying, but a trial preliminary to a verdict...to the later everything was all over when it was begun; there is nothing to try it is all condition, no use to do anything because there is no use to do anything.”<sup>31</sup> This may be an important exchange, for Dewey soon contributed a fairly extensive definition of experience to the *Cyclopedia of Education* about this time. In the *Cyclopedia*, Dewey refers to experience as “essentially a practical matter, i.e. a matter of repeated exercise and of its effects; while it reinterprets practice as action.”<sup>32</sup> Experience was associated with trying out, to test in action, “to undergo, to endure, to suffer.”<sup>33</sup> “It is an active process,” Dewey wrote, “every organism by its nature tries its active powers upon the world around it,... it is deliberate and purposive; it involves a forecast of consequences that may follow and the endeavor to manipulate the mean requisite to produce these consequences.”<sup>34</sup> Maybe using Dewey’s own words, Elsie had noted philosophy as a method, a trying out, an experiment. It was not the acceptance of knowledge prior to experience; acceptance without testing in the realm of human existence. Nor was it simply knowledge by the acceptance of scientific fact by definition, for a fact meant nothing until human beings had given it meaning through action or interaction; experience. “Do not call it experience unless the modification of

conscious action,” Elsie wrote in her notes. “Education is a social process whereby the individual is assisted by others having foresight of consequences. All human experiences is social in character and can be explained as an interaction of biological and social factors.”<sup>35</sup> Dewey defined education as “essentially a moral and social process; it consists in the operation of all the influences, conscious and unconscious, that shape character and give direction to the affections.”<sup>36</sup> As life itself indicated, we learned by everyday experience through interaction in the real world. This was a type of continual reconstruction of experience as Dewey conceptualized it. Elsie noted the importance of understanding education as a social process and an ethical one. Traditional education sacrificed the social, stressing individuality, at the expense of community and larger democratic society. A more progressive education needed to nurture through and reflection in an environment of freedom and experimentation - just like everyday living.

Elsie’s notes further suggest Dewey’s own attempt “to effect a reconciliation of the long opposition of the empirical, the a posteriori, and the rational and a priori.”<sup>37</sup> A thought was only a tentative hypothesis, itself being formed through experience. It was subjective, not absolute or objective outside of experience.<sup>38</sup> How did all this relate to Elsie’s philosophy of education? An important relation is the pragmatic challenge to the epistemology of idealism and realism, both lodged in American schools and their approach to knowledge or subject matter. Elsie viewed subject matter as a form of accumulated human experience. Her practice at Rosemary, Ballard and Arthurdale articulate this understanding in the attempt to integrate subject matter. It is further seen in the curriculum as Elsie’s progressive colleagues and teachers sought to make subject matter relative to the real life experiences of the children living in Kentucky and West Virginia.

This relates to lectures notes Elsie kept on a topic, *The Peculiarity of Knowledge*, and its relationship to education. Peculiarity in this sense meant something different from the usual or ordinary means of knowing. It also pointed to the distinguishing characteristic of the pragmatic method and its challenge to knowledge as static or absolute. In these notes, Dewey stated that philosophy is the theory of education, yet, “it still has to take place and find duplication; its does apply itself even to the education of the philosopher.”<sup>39</sup> Here as in *How We Think*, Dewey characterized thought as reflection, as a sorting out, connecting the past with the future,

understanding its meaning and then making judgements based on one's reflection. Dewey descriptively terms this process as discerning, gazing, perceiving, searching, hunting and understanding. Trying to make sense of this new approach to knowledge and its relationship to experience Dewey wrote: "The new hope of educational progress lies in the creation of an environment which, while adapted to the pupils' capacities, habits, and purposes, shall provide problems that will evoke and direct thought, on the conceptual function, and that shall organize inquiry into a broad and fruitful view of nature and society."<sup>40</sup> In essence this is Elsie's conception of the community school and both Elsie and Dewey both understood that the traditional school setting did not foster this type of environment. It ignored individual capacity, prior experience and defined purpose for the pupil. It rarely provoked reflection or inquiry and rarely connected its approach to knowledge to the larger society. It did foster ignorance, a clear danger to democratic society.

Elsie's understanding of the community school and education is grounded here. She clearly sought to create an environment that connected school and community. One way to accomplish this was to pay attention to the prior experiences of the children, their history and their culture, helping them to understand their role in the school community, but also the community at large. Education was experimental, a type of trying out. However at this time (1911-1912), for Elsie it was more theoretical than practical. As Elsie understood and Dewey implied, education should not be perceived as strictly an individual or as a social process, it was both. While democratic society championed the freedom of the individual it did not do so at the expense of the community and society as a whole. But what was the role of the individual in democratic society?

In possibly an unpublished paper entitled, *Self and Want*, in Elsie's possession, Dewey articulated his concerns about self, desire, want and the need for the individual to balance this with an emphatic understanding of the consequences of choices.<sup>41</sup> Continuing the thought of the role of the individual in community and the larger society, Elsie transcribed Dewey's notes from a lecture entitled, *One and Many*. In the lecture, Dewey discussed the danger of atomism which he defined as equals broken up "while they may be different they come together and may seem interrelated in each other...atoms are like the democratic individuals."<sup>42</sup> The traditional school focused too much on individual success and competition rather than cooperation. It failed to understand the emphatic nature

of democratic living, what Dewey termed sympathetic character. Dewey emphasized there is responsibility and liability and sacrifice in the course of human interaction. From Elsie's notes from a class discussion on desire on October 31, 1911, most likely from PEHR, Dewey used the settlement worker as an example of one who put self-interest aside for the benefit of the greater community.<sup>43</sup> The settlement worker served as an excellent example for many progressive women reformers had some background or at least an understanding of settlement work. Dewey suggested if self or class interest dominate, democracy will find itself at risk.<sup>44</sup> While diversity is a characteristic of democratic society, it should not result in separation or balkanization where communication no longer takes place. In exchanging correspondence with Dewey, Elsie had apparently stimulated this response.<sup>45</sup> Elsie and Dewey continued to address the concepts of desire and interest during the course in *Philosophy and Education and their Historic Relations*. From a pedagogical perspective, Dewey linked interest with motive and this related to the desire to know or resolve what he termed a problem or felt difficulty related to his work in *How We Think* and scientific attitude of mind. He viewed interest as an emotional connection to some experience. In paraphrasing Dewey from notes Elsie wrote: "JD says in some situations the strongest seductive force of desire is fuel to its alliance with interest in coming to know. The edge of desire is sharpened by the sense that the only way to find out is to try, and that there are most interesting developments connected with finding out."<sup>46</sup> Experience allowed one to better utilize intelligence. The problem with traditional education was that it ignored or disconnected the interest or motive through the belief that subject matter operated outside of experience-thus, as Dewey previously suggested education becomes remote and bookish. Ignoring interest led to boredom and ignorance. The goal of the educator was to capture this interest or motivation and bond it to subject matter. Subject matter was nothing more than accumulated human experience. There was no need for it to be remote, static and impersonal. Intelligence was more than a cognitive state, it was reflective thought in action.

In Elsie's notes on *Time and Intelligence*, most likely related to the courses on *Analysis* and *Theories of Experience*, Dewey defined intelligence as analysis and analysis as resolution. Intelligence is defined as action or effort, it searches and discerns, but it is largely based on past experience as we attempt to use our past knowledge to make sense of the world. As Elsie had put



it simply, we learn by trying out, by experimenting, by testing. Intelligence was not action without reflection, but discernment. The action was guided by judgement “of forming an estimate or valuation after investigation and testing. An intelligent act, guided by judgement was reached by the “process of reflective inquiry and deliberation.”<sup>47</sup> In all its simplicity, this was the chief goal Dewey held for education in a democratic society.

Dewey sent Elsie a short summary of his lecture notes on December 15, 1911 suggesting that subject matter was experience and in process, meaning that it (subject matter) is really a culmination of human experiences up to a point in time. Subject matter was not static but constantly in flux and subject to change.<sup>48</sup> “Education is a social process,” Dewey wrote to Elsie, “whereby the individual is associated by others having foresight of consequences. All human experience is social in character...”<sup>49</sup> This reinforced the idea of education as a communal effort, at best an interaction among people. Year later Elsie wrote: “From a personal point of view, subject matters are mens interests. From a social point of view, they are usable facts that are available. Learning is, of course, always personal, and can be individualistic. But a community school has social ends of some sort in view, and arranges its plans and activities and gathers data for these.”<sup>50</sup> Although this statement was written by Elsie in the late 1930s she believed she was doing what in reforming the American school, the school as a tool to restore community life.

For Elsie education was social and individual, not an either/or, one at the expense of the other. As Elsie ended her formal student years at Columbia, she may have desired to write her own book on the analysis of experience. She had collected a folder of fifty three pages of notes and correspondence with Dewey on the subject, but she never completed a published manuscript. However, twenty-seven years later, through her book *Community Schools in Action* (1939) she chronicled her own experiences for others to analyze and to utilize. She certainly accepted that human experience was social in nature and that shaped her understanding of the community school. By the time Elsie left Columbia University and Teachers College, with a masters degree in philosophy, she had been exposed to some of America’s most innovative thinkers and philosophers, certainly in education. She considered Dewey her most important and influential mentor. She

knew Dewey on a personal and professional level, although they always referred to each other as Dr. Dewey or Miss Clapp. Both Dewey and Elsie agreed on the conceptualization of education as signifying “the sum total of processes by means of which a community or social group, whether small or large transmits its acquired power and aims with a view to securing its own continued existence and growth.”<sup>51</sup> Dewey’s major concern was the continuance of democratic society. This survival depended on a different type of education. This “new education” needed to nurture ‘scientific attitude of mind” inquiry, expression, imagination, communication, reflection and critique. Linked to this new knowledge was an emphatic understanding of the role of the individual in society. Individual desire and will had to be balanced with the shared interests of the people to benefit the common good.

Elsie was exposed to these basic ideas about democracy and the role of education in an democracy. “Democracy inevitably carries with it increased respect for the individual as an individual,” Dewey wrote, “greater opportunity for freedom, independence and initiative in conduct and thought, and correspondingly increased demand for fraternal regard and for self-imposed and voluntarily borne responsibilities.”<sup>52</sup> Community is located in fraternal regard, shared interest and working together for the benefit of the social whole. Since democracy is ethical association this demands control of individual will and desire for the benefit of the common good.<sup>53</sup> Elsie’s humanitarian and ethical understanding of democracy and community would soon be tested as she encountered racism teaching at Ashley Hall in Charleston, South Carolina. She also experienced exploitation and oppression of the working class as she participated in the Paterson Silk Workers Strike of 1913. She would soon begin to understand the power of capital, of self-interest, and their ability to undermine the individual freedoms of free speech and association. Yet, she would also learn about fraternity and solidarity, two important characteristics of democratic community. This conception of democracy and the important role of the school in the community became a crucial component of her pedagogy in years to come. The Paterson silk workers strike offered Elsie an opportunity to see ideas in action and how they played out in true pragmatic sense; by trying out and testing to see if they work, one individual child at a time.

## ENDNOTES

1. Charlene Siegfried, *Pragmatism and Feminism*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,), pp. 50-53.
2. Elsie Ripley Clapp Papers [hereafter ERCP] Special Collections, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. Collection 21. I have used the collection number followed by classification numbers to facilitate location. ERCP 21/1/1 Academic Records and Academic Correspondence. List of courses by John Dewey attended by Elsie Clapp. List of John Dewey material. From 1907 to 1908 Elsie took the following courses: *Social Life and the School Curriculum*, *Practicum and Philosophy of Education*, *Modern Ethical Ideas and Types of Logical theory*. From 1908 to 1909 -*Psychological Ethics and Logic as Applied to the Problems of Teaching*; From 1909-1910- *Philosophy of Education and Kant*; from 1910 -1913- *Philosophy and Education in their Historic Relations*; 1911-1912- *Analysis of Experience and Theories of Experience*. She assisted Dewey during the 1911 and 1912 summer sessions 1912- *Social Aspects of School Curriculum and Foundations of Method*; and in 1912 *Foundations of Method and Selected Philosophic Problems*. She may have planned a biography of Dewey due to the variety of collected materials. She also developed a catalogue list of Dewey books she possessed.
3. The period 1907 to 1913 were productive years for Dewey and can be considered the years he is laying down his foundations for pragmatism. See MW volumes 4-7 for the scope and breadth of this work. See also Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), pp. 116-152 and Robert Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 117-149 biographical and intellectual aspects of Dewey's life during this time.
4. Elsie's professional papers do not include materials prior to 1910, thus there is no discussion of her courses from 1907 to 1909. See also Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club (A Story of Ideas in America)* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2001).
5. ERCP 21/2/32. Fragment concerning the Dewey lab School. ERCP. Elsie expressed her anger at the closing of the lab school, perhaps after some discussion with Dewey. "Its end was precipitated by the President, (William Rainey Harper), of the University who, " she noted, "anxious of the impeccable acclaim the school received, contrived a merger with the Cook County Normal School, an outgrowth of the Chicago Institute headed by Col. Parker." Dewey never discussed the more personal aspects of the closure and it is reasonable to assume Elsie got her information from him. See Westbrook, *John Dewey*, pp. 110-113 for more information on the closure of the lab school and the politics involved.
6. William James, *Principles of Psychology* (New York: Henry Holt, 1952). This edition is part of the Great Books of the Western World series under the direction of Mortimer Adler.
7. See John Dewey, *School and Society*, *Middle Works* 1:25, 30. *The Child and the Curriculum* (1902) *Middle Works* 2:276. The comparison between traditional and progressive education is clearly pointed out in *Experience and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1938).
8. ERCP 21/1/22. John Dewey to Elsie Clapp, Exchanged notes on valuation, 13 October 1911.
9. John Dewey MW 9:3. For a discussion on Dewey's failure to acknowledge women see Charlotte Siegfried, *Pragmatism and Feminism* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996), pp. 45-52. Dewey referred to *Democracy and Education* in 1911 as a textbook in Philosophy of Education. See MW 6:515. Letter John Dewey to Elsie Ripley Clapp September 2, 1911. ERCP 21/1/11 Enclosing a paper amendatory of the original outline. Dewey does acknowledge Alice Chipman Dewey, Jane Addams and Ella Flagg Young in Jane Dewey, "Biography of John Dewey," in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, ed. Paul Schilpp (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1939), pp. 28-30.
10. For a brief discussion of ethics, happiness and democracy see Sam Stack, "John Dewey's Theory of Happiness," *Journal of Thought* 31 (Summer 1996): pp. 25-35.
11. ERCP 21/1/6 Notes outlining Dewey course *Philosophy and Education in Their Historic Relations*. Elsie also assisted Dewey with this course from 1923-1925, and on several other occasions. Dewey had addressed the ethical nature of democracy in *Ethics*, originally published in 1908 and revised in 1932. *LW* (1925-1953): 7. ERCP 21/1/2 Enclosing report of November 2 lecture. See John Dewey to Elsie Clapp, 2 November 1911 on Dewey's concern on

**STACK: ELSIE RIPLEY CLAPP AND JOHN DEWEY (1907-1912)**

reaching his class in understanding desire. He also suggested Elsie contribute to his preparation for this class. John Dewey to Elsie Clapp, 18 September 1911 ERCP 21/1/15 Enclosing remarks on Tolstoy's attack on science and philosophy.

12. Ibid.

13. Class notes *Philosophy and Education*, 4 October 1911. ERCP. In this class Dewey spent some time on the ancient Greeks-Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and the Sophists. He also spent some time discussing the concepts of desire and good or that is what made an impression on Elsie.

14. Elsie Ripley Clapp, *Community Schools In Action* (New York: Viking, 1939).

15. John Dewey, MW 6: 424. From Dewey's contributions to the *Cyclopedia of Education*, a five volume work published from 1911-1913 and edited by Paul Monroe of Teachers College. Dewey made approximately 120 contributions to the Cyclopedia.

16. ERCP 21/1/9 Lecture Notes. 15 August 1911. Summer courses were popular at Teachers college at this time and allowed full-time teachers to attend. They came from all over the country. Keppel, *Columbia*, 135-136.

17. John Dewey, MW 6: 447. From *Cyclopedia of Education*.

18. John Dewey, MW 7: 328. From *Cyclopedia of Education*.

19. John Dewey, MW 6: 177-356. This includes Dewey's work *How We Think*.

20. John Dewey MW 6:78. This essay was first published in *Science* 13 (1910): 121-127 and was reprinted in the *Journal of Education* 71 (1910), pp. 95-96, 427-428, 454.

21. John Dewey, MW 7: 339. *Cyclopedia of Education*.

22. Ibid.

23. ERCP 21/1/9 Lecture notes. 15 August 1911.

24. John Dewey, *How We Think* (New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1988), pp. 100-101.

25. John Dewey MW 6: 185.

26. Ibid., p. 188.

27. Max Eastman, Book review of *How We Think*, *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Method* 18 (1910): 244-248. Boyd Bode also reviewed the book in *School Review* 18 (1901): 642-645. See also Textual Commentary from MW 6: 518. Elsie was the editorial assistant to the journal during this time. It was the official journal of the Philosophy Department at Columbia University.

28. Boyd Bode, "Review of Dewey's *How We Think*," *School Review*. 18 (1910): pp. 642-645. See textual commentary from MW 6: 518.

29. John Dewey MW 6: 212-215. See the introduction to this volume by VT Thayer and H. S. Thayer MW 6: xxiii. Also George Dykuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*, pp. 139-140 and Robert Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*, p. 142.

30. ERCP 21/1/11 John Dewey to Elsie Ripley Clapp, 2 September 1911.

31. ERCP 21/2/22 Notes regarding theories of experience. Fall, 1911. See also John Dewey to Elsie Clapp, Summary of lecture on experience. 15 December 1911. ERCP 21/2/19 enclosing summary of last few lectures.

32. John Dewey MW 6: 447. *Cyclopedia of Education*.

33. John Dewey MW 6:448. *Cyclopedia of Education*.

34. Ibid.

35. ERCP 21/1/2 Notes regarding theories of experience, p. 3.
36. John Dewey, *MW* 6: 434. Cyclopedia of Education.
37. John Dewey *MW* 6: 449.
38. John Dewey *MW* 6: 224.
39. ERCP 21/1/5 John Dewey to Elsie Clapp. Notes on the *Peculiarity of Knowledge*.
40. John Dewey *MW* 6: 450.
41. ERCP 21/1/12 John Dewey paper on *Self and Want*.
42. ERCP 21/1/14 Transcription of Dewey lecture, *One and Many*.
43. Ibid. Dewey's most ideal example might be Jane Addams of Hull House, but he was most likely aware of women in the New York community like Lillian Wald, Florence Kelly, Mary Richmond, etc. See Joyce Antler, *Lucy Sprague Mitchell* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 135-158 for a discussion of these women in New York. Dewey was knowledgeable of settlement work in New York. He also lended support to women's right to vote. Alan Ryan, *John Dewey and the Rising Tide of American Liberalism* (New York: Norton, 1995), p. 161.
44. Dewey will addresses the individual role in democratic society more thoroughly in works like *The Public and Its Problems* (New York: Henry Holt, 1927), *Individualism: Old and New* (New York: Minton, Balch, 1930), and *Freedom and Culture* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1939).
45. ERCP 21/2/23 Notes regarding interests. 8 February 1912. ERCP. According to a schedule of Dewey's activities at this time he was on leave during the spring semester of 1912.
46. ERCP 21/2/24 Notes outlining *Analysis of Experience*.
47. John Dewey *MW* 7: 262.
48. ERCP 21/2/23 John Dewey to Elsie Ripley Clapp. 15 December 1911, enclosing summary of last few lectures. John Dewey to Elsie Clapp, Notes on Experience. See Notes regarding interests 2 February 1912.
49. Ibid.
50. Clapp, *Community School in Action*, p. 49.
51. John Dewey *MW* 6: 425. Unlike her mentor, Elsie had difficulty writing and completing wriitng projects.
52. John Dewey *MW* 6: 418.
53. John Dewey, *The Ethics of Democracy* (Ann Arbor: Michigan, Andrews Press, 1881).

## AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: POLITICAL ACTIVISM FOR EQUITY, ACCESS AND ACHIEVEMENT CONTINUES

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Affirmative action is being dissected in professional journal and news articles, as the Supreme Court wrestles again with its role in university student admissions policy. The debate over affirmative action continues our nation's efforts to expand human rights, access and equity for all citizens. Our founding fathers from the early days of the Republic sought to provide opportunities in higher education. Harvard College, founded in 1636, has consistently sought to provide opportunities for diverse students. Judges in the reverse discrimination University of California Davis v. Bakke (1978) mentioned Harvard as a model for student diversity recruitment. Women in colonial days were viewed as second-class citizens. Ann Hutchinson was banned from Old Massachusetts Bay Colony for riling up theologians who said that if only she had attended to her household affairs, and such things as belong to women, and had not gone out of her way and calling, to meddle in such things as are proper for men, she would have had kept her wits, and would have improved them usefully and honorably in the place God set her.

In the late 1800s university admissions officers worried women would become physically unsexed through study, and women's colleges in the east were only two stories high due to fear climbing the stairs any higher would unsex delicate women. In time through political activism women received the right to vote, to be members and officers of civic and professional associations. "Sticky floors," keeping women in low paying jobs, and "glass ceilings," preventing them from leadership positions have been dealt with. Today more than 50 percent of doctoral program enrollees in public universities are women. **Physically and mentally challenged children** were formerly hidden and kept from productive lives. Through political activism special education children are mainstreamed into the least restrictive environment, provided employment opportunities and given recognition for their work. **Educational opportunities** have been expanded through political activism.

The Truman Commission in a 1947 report sought to expand universal and free or low-cost education through the community college level. Students desiring an education to better themselves in the work force found opportunities in the community college which has become the largest component of the nation's higher

education system. In the 1960s, civil rights legislation expanded opportunities by increasing access to colleges and universities for minorities and women. Government intervention through the Supreme Court in Brown v. The Board of Education Topeka (1954) led to integrated schools. Affirmative action continues to expand access, equity and achievement for Blacks, Hispanics, women, and other minorities in our colleges and universities. The American historical record demonstrates a commitment to increasing access and opportunities for all citizens.

The current debate over the forthcoming reverse discrimination University of Michigan (Grutter v. Bolinger and Gratz v. Bolinger) Supreme Court ruling reflects a democratic dialogue unequalled in the world. The court ruling may clarify a preceding reverse discrimination case The University of California Davis v. Bakke (1978) that supported race as a factor in universities admissions but not quotas. University administrators, faculty, and students are generally supportive of the efforts to recruit, retain and graduate students from a widely diverse population. Implementing the process and the current debate is a process of fine-tuning affirmative action and represents democracy in action. More than thirty-four universities, many corporate chief executive officers, and members of Congress are imploring the Supreme Court to rule in favor of affirmative action. The Bush Administration in its amicus curiae, friend of the court proceeding, supports diversity, not quotas in its efforts toward a race-neutral admissions policy.

Charles Frankel in his 1962 *Democratic Prospect* wrote that the open struggle among special interests and the politics of pressure groups is what marks democracy as a system resting on the consent of the governed. Schemo (2003) noted the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, President Lee Bollinger decided to build support from the factories, boardrooms and military bases that depend on universities for an educated diverse workforce. Bollinger has assembled an impressive coalition to support its admissions' processes. The coalition includes more than thirty military officers including H. Norman Schwarzkopf. Affirmative action is an evolving process. A Brookings Institution report, "Racial Segregation in the 2000 Census: Promising News," reports segregation levels at the lowest point

since 1920, while the Harvard Civil Rights Project reports a trend toward resegregation in education.

What makes American democracy unique are the controversies, disputes, and disagreements that are dealt with through dialogue, not violence. Dewey (1916) in a *New Republic* article "Force, Violence and the Law," noted that our nation's common interests and amicable intercourse took place because of a community of interests, of values. Dewey (1934) also noted that dominant class interests maintain tradition against emerging changes but changes could not nor will not occur without other social interests than the dominant

ones. Many of the vocal advocates of affirmative action refer endlessly in our schools and colleges to the resistance of the dominant social class to needed change, but the changes that have occurred in affirmative action are the result of collective political action of those interested in an expanded social consciousness.

We have made great strides in achieving equity, and access, but challenges remain. These challenges will continue to be addressed in the future as in the past. That's what makes America a unique and special place in the world—we can be both proud and grateful to be Americans.

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