



insights

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*The John Dewey Society for the
 Study of Education and Culture*

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Editorial:

Jon G. Bradley

One of the most important books to appear in the last hundred years, and I might well argue the single most devastating volume that has impacted upon public education, is *The Principles of Teaching Based on Psychology* by Edward L. Thorndike.

Originally penned in 1906, this book has marked our public schools to this day. Thorndike's notions are the foundations upon which the current standards movement is based. Additionally, they typify the present state of affairs in the educational landscape in which classroom practitioners have been relegated to simple technicians who have no real power over curriculum decisions and who are too often bound by ill-designed central control administrative decisions.

Consider, if you will, the following quotation from the Introduction. Thorndike has gone to great lengths to state that teachers must have a sense of the whole, must know the purposes of the education processes, and must be "something more than the carpenter who follows without reflection the architect's plan" (page 2):

"A gain in knowledge may mean a loss in health; to arouse ideals may mean less time for drill in correct habits; in zeal for the development of love of the beautiful the interest in the dry, cold facts of science may have to be neglected" (page 5).

On the next page, Thorndike encapsulates his basic views of the classroom practitioner by stating that:

"The special problem of the teacher is to make these changes [as determined by higher authorities] as economically and as surely as is possible under the conditions of school life. His is the task of giving certain

information, forming certain habits, increasing certain powers, arousing certain interests and inspiring certain ideals" (page 6).

Akin to the dogmatic representation as portrayed by the award winning actress Maggie Smith in 1969 drama *The Prime of Miss Jean Brody*, Thorndike's ideal teacher is one who accepts the judgments of his betters. In an age when words actually meant something and were chosen with care, Thorndike's careful and measured lexicon of "giving", "forming", "increasing", "arousing", and "inspiring" show a definite orientation. Teachers, simply put, were not "to create", "to lead", "to debate" or even "to ponder". Rather, they were not to be learners themselves but become simple and efficient cogs in a well managed educational endeavour.

Ellen Condliffe Lagemann (2000) has clearly demonstrated how educational research for the last one hundred years has been unduly influenced by the directions as manifested by Thorndike. Lagemann suggests that Thorndike's view of teachers is essentially flawed and creates a paradigm that is inappropriate for the complexity of the classroom educative processes. She notes that "by defining teaching as a technical, subordinate task, Thorndike was implicitly elevating not only school administrators, but also educational psychologists like himself to a superordinate place relative to teachers" (page 60).

In 1897, John Dewey's *My Pedagogic Creed* appeared in the *School Journal*. It is interesting to note that although Thorndike acknowledged Dewey's *School and Society* as one of the "ten books so chosen as to give students an adequate view of the present status of knowledge and expert opinion

about teaching..." (page vi), he does not reference any other writings by Dewey.

I wonder how Thorndike would have responded to this personal and, in some ways, very un-Deweyan tract. Written with the pronoun "I", this creed was not revisited over the intervening decades. In many ways, this personal educative statement stands out as one of the most profound missives about teachers, public school education, the curriculum, and the entire education process. *My Pedagogic Creed* is best read out loud and alone; I wonder what Thorndike would have made of statements like?

"I believe that the teacher's place and work in the school is to be interpreted from this same basis [under existing conditions far too much of the stimulus and control proceeds from the teacher]. The teacher is not in the school to impose certain ideas or to form certain habits in the child, but is there as a member of the community to select the influences which shall affect the child and to assist him in properly responding to these influences" (page 88).

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Boydston, Jo Ann. (1972). *John Dewey The Early Works, 1882-1898 (volume 5)*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press; *My Pedagogic Creed*, pages 84 - 95.

Lagemann, Ellen Condliffe. (2000). *An Elusive Science: The Troubling History of Education Research*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

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John Dewey and Paulo Freire: Comrades or Foes?

Antonia Darder

Dewey's ideal society can only occur, we now see, when economic life itself is democratized-when all relationships of power and authority are based on participation and democratic consent.

Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis
Schooling in Capitalist America

In this historical moment, one of the most prevalent features that we must contend with in U.S. society is an increasingly undemocratic political system. Whether we turn to those factors that resulted in the declaration of two official wars in the first two years of the 21st century; or to the increasing gap of the rich and the poor in the wealthiest country in the world; or the exceedingly racialized images poured forth by the corporate controlled mainstream media; or the perpetuation of poor educational achievement among working class and racialized populations; what we quickly discover is that all is not well in America. And when all is not well with the nation, all is not well in schools, particularly in schools where undemocratic conditions have rendered impoverished and racialized students problematic to the global economy of empire.

At last count, over two million Americans were unemployed. There is an intensification of the sort of human alienation that is brought forth by undemocratic relations of production that replicate themselves in public schools, the workplace and even the home. Each day the political tensions associated with class struggle become more vehement, despite a public rhetoric that would make us blind to the actual historical facts of our time. Nowhere are these issues more preva-

lent than in the public schools of this country, where curriculum has been stripped bare, as student assessment is increasingly reduced to the "accountability" of high stakes test scores. As a consequence, students experience the plight of contemporary education through curricula and instructional methods that rob them of creativity, curiosity and human community.

In the schools of the 21st century, many of the similar problems confronted by progressive educators of the last century not only continue to exist, but have worsened. Students' lives and the content of their learning are fragmented and separated from the execution of academic work. They are forced to learn within classrooms that curtail their autonomy through increased control of their bodies and rigid classroom structures that normalize surveillance and render any question of class inequalities or racism ambiguous. As such, students become objects to be manipulated and domesticated. Their alienation increases as they are further estranged from the very knowledge that they are expected to absorb and produce. Students are pressured into time constraints that both accelerate and compress academic expectations, while the bureaucratization of schooling stresses compliance with form, at the expense of content and substance.

Public schools as microcosms of society, echo the anxieties and frustrations of an alienated populace. In the beleaguered setting of the urban classroom, democracy seems a far-away cry, obscure and forlorn. The democratic hopes of civil rights activists and educators hang from the ceiling like old tattered and weathered paint. It is with these thoughts in mind that I reflect on the relationship of two extraordinary educators-two men consistently noted among the most influential educational theorists of the last century-John Dewey and Paulo Freire. What particular insights did each leave behind and in what way do their ideas conjoin or disjoin? What can we take from their ideas as we seek to grapple with the condi-

tions that classroom teachers are facing in a world that is quickly becoming more and more economically polarized each day? And finally do the ideas of Dewey and Freire converge or diverge in the current endeavors to enact democratic principles in American schools?

John Dewey, the Philosopher

John Dewey is considered by many to be not only the father of progressive education in the United States, but the most influential philosopher and educator of the 20th century. Dewey's critical analysis of American society provides an astute critique of forces and conditions that support or thwart the development of democracy within the classroom. Dewey's commitment to democratic principles engendered his views on problem solving, the scientific method, and the need for individualized personal instruction. Through his method of inquiry, Dewey sought a new concept of philosophy to thwart the conservative American tradition in education—a tradition tied to abstract conclusions and the justification of absolute "truths". Further, Dewey recognized that every philosophy is intimately tied to the cultural environment from which it emerges.

For Dewey, education represented the ideal terrain in which to reproduce his democratic ideas, while the classroom served as the ideal setting in which students, as democratic citizens, could be initiated into practicing a personal ethics of democratic life. Hence, he called for a style of communication that could articulate the common concerns of people, while cultivating the development of community. There is no question that Dewey was a consummate advocate of participatory education. He wholeheartedly believed that democracy required that "men and women build communities in which the necessary opportunities and resources are available for every individual to realize his or her particular capacities and powers through participation in political,

social and cultural life" (Westbrook, 1991, p.xv). Dewey's democratic theory of education recognizes that the empowerment of citizens must take into account questions of discrimination and repression in the formulation of a democratic ideal of schooling.

Dewey's emphasis on experimentation and a pragmatic sensibility also encompassed the importance of translating ideas into action. He firmly believed that critical intelligence is a precondition to social progress and hence this concept was central to his democratic method. More importantly, Dewey believed that all students could learn. He argued tirelessly against the elitist notion that only a few students could achieve academically. Instead, he believed that differences between students should not be perceived as a matter of their capacity to learn, but rather as related to the time necessary to learn, the kind of teaching required, and the effort and motivation necessary to accomplish any particular task (Brosio, 1994).

Throughout his life, Dewey asserted that every citizen should be accorded the educational opportunities appropriate to his or her needs. He advocated for the availability of a broader range of educational experiences and embraced humane ideas related to questions of student discipline. Dewey also called for improved classroom materials for students and he oriented his method and curricula around insights tied to the principles of human development and the psychology of teaching and learning.

But in many ways, Dewey's democratic methods seemed to presuppose the existence of a harmonious, democratic community and an ideal pluralism where equality reigns commonplace. Unfortunately, this condition did not exist in Dewey's time nor does it exist in schools today. And although John Dewey acknowledged that schools could not "function well as an island of democracy in a sea of capitalist domination and hegemony" (Brosio, 1994, p.508), he

refused to acknowledge that the structural embeddedness of class inequalities in America prevented the democratic ideals he espoused to manifest.

In many ways, both his individualism and pragmatism lacked the means to go beyond the existing structural problems central to the American political economy. This resulted from Dewey's unwillingness to link his democratic ideas with the social struggle of the organized working class of his time. Hence, Dewey's theories of democracy and education failed to identify the collective social (or historical) agents who could enact his democratic project beyond the four walls of the classroom and onto the larger social political sphere. It is this absence that most reflects the revolutionary weakness of Dewey's brilliant reasoning.

Paulo Freire, The Pedagogue

For many progressive educators of the last thirty years, Paulo Freire stands out as the most influential thinker of this period. First and foremost, Freire sought a new concept of pedagogy that could overthrow the tradition of "banking education"—an authoritarian and domesticating pedagogy that stripped students of their agency and their place as historical subjects. For Freire, this conservative approach to education constituted a mode of production heavily laden with the values and expectations that functioned to sustain the inequalities and injustices of the political economy of the state.

Freire advocated tirelessly for a liberating or "problem-posing" education that could create the context for students to question their lives and the social conditions that shaped their world. In problem-posing education, teachers and students practice the principles of democratic life, as they critically engage the curriculum, classroom practices, and the relations of power that shape the social and material conditions in which they exist. It is not surprising then to discover that

in Freire's (1970) pedagogy of the oppressed, education constitutes a political act and, as such, schooling represents a significant terrain of struggle, when linked to the broader historical inequalities at work in the larger society. Hence, Freire embraced a revolutionary tradition that recognized pedagogy and schooling as intricately linked to external structures of power, rooted in oppressive ideologies of dominant class interests.

Given the role of ideology in the process of schooling, critical dialogue and its relationship to praxis reflects one of the most significant features of Freire's pedagogy. Dialogue is seen as a democratizing process in which teacher and students come together to "read the world and word," as they critically reflect, speak and act upon those ideologies and practices which not only hinder their individual freedom of agency, but their capacity to act collectively in the interest of community. The importance of action here is understood as central to the development of knowledge and the construction of democratic life. It is also here where we are challenged by Freire's insistence that theory and practice must function dialectically in an on-going alliance.

Freire's firm belief in the dialectical relationship between schools and the larger society served to link the struggle for democratic schooling to the larger historical context of class struggle. As such, he believed that schools could either function to produce the democratic relations of emancipatory subjects or to reproduce the socialization and conditioning of students as objects of domination. If schools were to have a democratic function, it had to begin by reconstructing the relationship between teachers and students. For Freire, this began with the establishment of greater horizontal relationships in the classroom. Moreover, Freire believed that solidarity was the outcome of pedagogical relationships in which teachers and students together construct knowledge and seek to implement actions within the classroom and *their commu-*

nities that support empowerment and critical consciousness. In essence, dialogue and *conscientização*, or the process of critical consciousness, evolves through collective relationships (or communities) where teachers and students accepted to strive toward their human vocation: namely, to love. However, in Freirian terms, this love reflects a radical political construct in which conditions of oppression are openly challenged, while rigorous, on-going efforts are made to, both individually and collectively, transform those social conditions which perpetuate human suffering (Darder, 2002).

Dewey and Freire: Convergence and Divergence

Dewey and Freire were remarkable visionaries who understood greater democratic life as linked to the reconstruction of education. Both were highly critical of traditional philosophical notions that were predisposed to the search for absolute truths and founded in Cartesian dualism. These two highly contextual thinkers deeply valued the experimental dimension of learning, placing a strong emphasis on the role of culture and personal experience in the process of learning. For Freire, in particular, personal history reflected a necessary starting point in the education of children who had experienced the ravages of poverty and racialized oppression. For Dewey, the classroom represented an ideal milieu in which to grapple with the different ways in which children made sense of their world.

Dewey (1916) and Freire's (1970) views on democracy share a distinct moral dimension—democracy simultaneously encompasses a political and aesthetically moral ideal to be embraced and cultivated within the process of schooling. Both men lived with a deeply passionate desire for the collective good, a fundamental quality of their thinking that infused their theories of democratic schooling. In light of this, they held what some might consider utopian ideas with

respect to the humanization or democratization of the society, which they associated with the capacity of students and citizens to realize their human potential. However, neither questioned this aspect of their views, since both firmly believed that all students could learn when taught with dignity, respect and compassion. And, both men would argue that a teacher's relationship with students is absolutely central to a student's capacity to learn.

Dewey and Freire immensely valued the epistemological creativity and curiosity of students, recognizing this dimension of each individual as central to the act of learning and the construction of knowledge. Neither educator fetishized methods nor formulas in the pedagogical process nor did they respect the teaching of subject matter that failed to engage students' curiosity and imagination. The process of schooling required opportunities for students to engage creatively in meaningful experiences of learning and knowledge construction. To offer students anything less was to relegate them to objects of their own learning and to disempower their potential to participate in democratic life. Both men recognized the social (and political) power of a pedagogy that deemed students' bodily and affective experiences as intrinsic to the development of critical reasoning and democratic sensibilities.

Though both Dewey and Freire deeply believed in the social agency of students within the context of a democratic educational project, important aspects separated their conclusions regarding social agency with respect to the larger social context. For Dewey, social agency constituted an individual expression of personal empowerment. He believed that students educated in a democratic context would enter the world as ethical individuals to enact the democratic ideals they had developed within the classroom. For Freire, the question was broader than that of individual ethics and more clearly linked to class struggle. Although

Freire would concur with the importance of Dewey's democratic ideals within the classroom, he clearly believed that the politics of collective struggle and solidarity had to be deliberately extended to the larger social arena. Despite Dewey's emphasis on community as a means of fighting subjectivism, his liberalism was steeped in an individualistic understanding of the larger social project for change. Freire, on the other hand, emphasized the collectivity of community as the most powerful means for social struggle—a struggle that has to be founded on an ethics of civil participation anchored in the subjective-objective dialectic of communal relations.

There are other significant differences that distinguish the ideas of Dewey and Freire. Dewey was a highly systematic thinker—a feature well reflected in his scientific method of inquiry. Freire, on the other hand, was far more interpretive and concerned with specific ideological questions tied to the oppressor-oppressed condition. Dewey believed in practical wisdom and a reasoned and true capacity to act with regard to the human good. While Freire advocated for critical pedagogical action directly linked to the interests of the disempowered. Dewey's instrumentalism shaped his belief that intelligence should be regarded as "the only source and sole guarantee of a desirable and happy future." For Freire, happiness was intricately linked to the capacity of human beings to experience passion and to intimately engage their world in the interest of emancipatory principles. Moreover, the practical for Dewey was tied to the art of doing and making, including ethics, politics and poetics. While praxis for Freire was tied to dialogue, reflection and social action within the context of a collective social and political life. Dewey saw schools as the most efficient means for educating individuals who could go out and correct the abuses and injustices of the larger society. Hence, Dewey's primary focus was to work within the context of the

status quo, even within his work on schools *for tomorrow*. While, Freire perceived schools as sites of struggle where the transformational process of critical consciousness could be cultivated in the hopes of inspiring greater collective social movement—a social movement *outside of the status quo*—against the hegemonic forces that have historically resulted in the reproduction of social inequalities.

Yet despite the differences, John Dewey and Paulo Freire have both, inarguably, informed the struggle for democratic schooling. Their combined strengths in terms of individual and collective processes for social transformation continue to be marshaled in current efforts to forge a new emancipatory movement for education in the U. S. But much work still remains to be done. More than ever, whether we follow Dewey or Freire's ideas, the task beforehand is to dismantle the alienating modes of production that permeate public schools, conserving undemocratic patterns of inequality. This is a task that must be accomplished in very concrete and practical ways, both within the private and public spheres. This effort entails critically rethinking both the theoretical and the practical conditions that shape schooling. Furthermore, it requires that we critically examine the pedagogical factors that promote the ethical evolution of civil society—a key ingredient to the protection of democracy.

And lastly, no matter our political persuasion or theoretical fancies, democracy is never guaranteed! To live democracy requires both enduring commitment and participation, as well as the moral will to critique, challenge and struggle for social and material conditions that genuinely nurture our humanity, rather than fuel capitalist accumulation. Schools truly represent one of the last public arenas remaining in a world of increasing privatization, economic exploitation, racialized incarceration, and ecological devastation. What seems most important today is that we garner the political will to criti-

cally examine together every philosophical and pedagogical insight that might move us toward greater social justice, human rights and economic democracy. There is no question that the works of John Dewey and Paulo Freire offer us many such insights. Yet given some of their fundamental differences, I would argue that they would be somewhat conflictual comrades—but fine comrades, none the less.

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AERA in San Diego -

**The John Dewey Society
Annual Symposium
Re-reading Dewey's Democracy
and Education: A Symposium on Our
Educational Possibilities**

**Monday, April 12
from 4:05 pm to 6:05 pm.**

Participants:

Gert Biesta, University of Exeter

'Of all Affairs, Communication is the Most Wonderful':

Education as Communicative Praxis

Elizabeth Minnich, The Union Institute

Pedagogy and Engaging the World

Reba N. Page, University of California at Riverside

Dewey and the Problem of Curriculum

Larry Hickman, Southern Illinois University

*Social Efficiency, Social Control, and Socialization: Putting
Pragmatism to Work*

Chair:

David T. Hansen, Teachers College Columbia University

**A John Dewey Society
Interactive Symposium
The Life and Work of John Dewey:
A Conversation with Jay Martin**

Tuesday, April 12
from 10:35 am to 12:05 pm.

Participant:

Jay Martin, Claremont McKenna College

Discussants:

Craig Kridel, University of South Carolina

Philip W. Jackson, University of Chicago

Barbara S. Stengel, Millersville University

Chair:

Kathleen Weiler, Tufts University

**A John Dewey Society
Interactive Symposium
No Child Left Behind: Educational
Reform or Trojan Horse?**

**Tuesday, April 13
from 12:25 pm to 1:55 pm.**

This session focuses on problems, predicaments, and possibilities generated for educators and students by the federal government's No Child Left Behind legislation. The session will feature up-to-date analysis from scholars who have examined in great detail both the legislation and its impact on schools and communities. Questions for both research and practice will be raised throughout the session.

Participants:

Gerald Bracey, George Mason University & The Hope Scope Foundation

Richard A. Gibboney, University of Pennsylvania

William J. Mathis, Rutland Northeast (Vermont) Schools

Discussants:

Frances O. Rust, New York University

Jolanda Maria Westerhof-Shultz, Grand Valley State University

William G. Wraga, University of Georgia

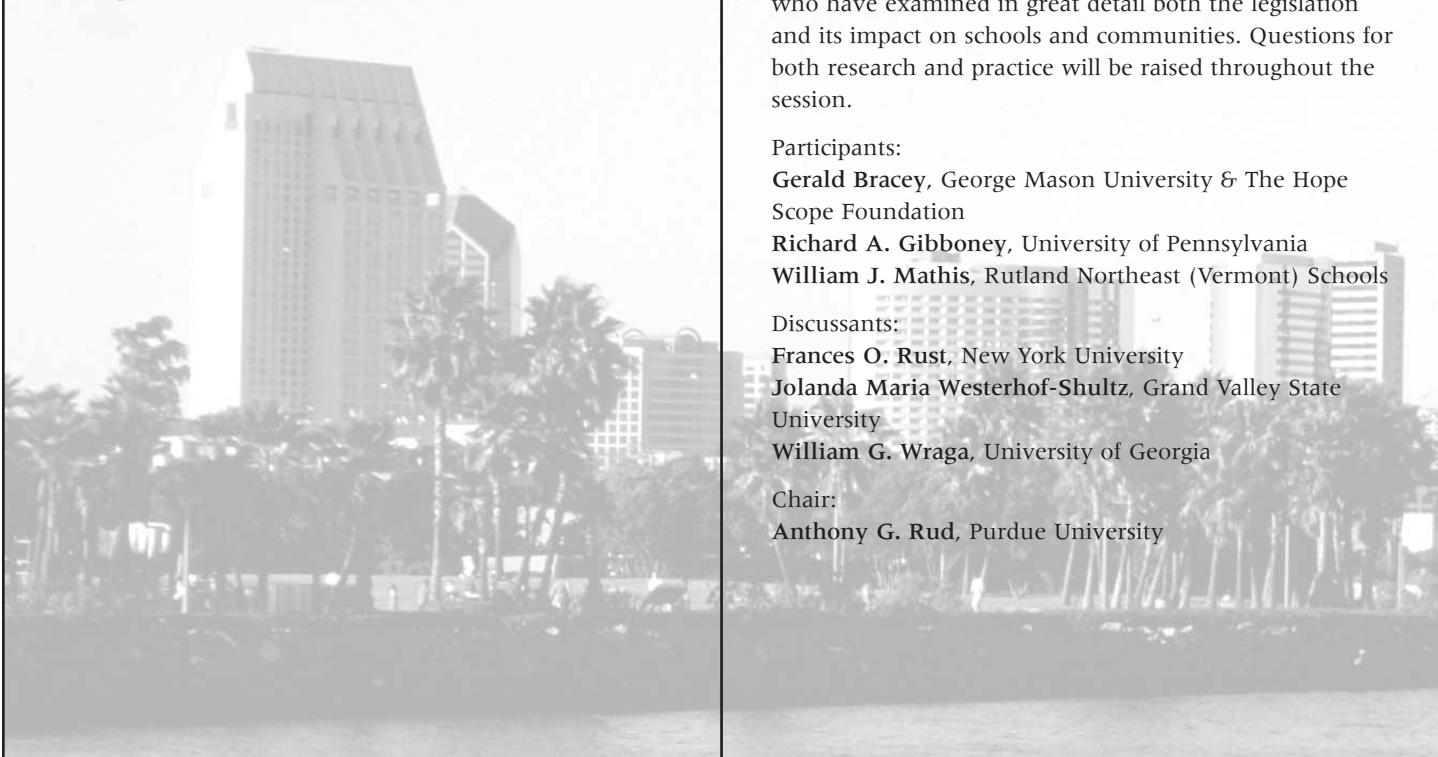
Chair:

Anthony G. Rud, Purdue University

The John Dewey Society Reception

**Monday, April 12
from 6:15 pm to 7:45 pm**

Hosted by David T. Hansen, President of the John Dewey Society, and the members of the Board of Directors



April 12-16, 2004

The John Dewey Society Annual Business Meeting

Tuesday, April 13
from 6:15 pm to 7:45 pm

President:
David T. Hansen

A John Dewey Society Paper Session Deweyan Perspectives on Teaching, Learning and Inquiry

Wednesday, April 14
from 12:25 pm to 1:55 pm.

Participants:
Elizabeth Meadows, Roosevelt University
*Inner City and Private School Teachers Relate to John Dewey's
Ideas About Art and Experience*
Lynda Stone, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Democracy-in-Practice: An Initial Study in Everyday Ethics
Donna A. Breault, Illinois State University
*Reclaiming the Scientific Spirit; Common Ground for
Educational Researchers*
Ching-Sze Wang, Indiana State University at
Bloomington
The Education of John Dewey in China

Discussant:
E. David Wong, Michigan State University

Chair:
Delores D. Liston, Georgia Southern University

The John Dewey Society Annual Lecture Education and Democracy in a World of Global Interdependence: Is Dewey Relevant?

Wednesday, April 14
from 2:15 pm to 3:45 pm.

Participant:
Benjamin Barber, University of Maryland & The
Democracy Collaborative

Chair:
David T. Hansen

A John Dewey Society Paper Session Problems and Prospects for Democratic Education

Thursday, April 15
from 8:05 am to 10:15 am.

Participants:
Aaron M. Schutz, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee
A Flight From Politics?: Free Schools and the Turn from Dewey
Roudy Hildreth, University of Minnesota
Living Citizenship: John Dewey and Civic Engagement
Deron R. Boyles, Georgia State University
*Privatization and the Future of Education: Problematizing the
Public/Private Distinction*

Discussant:
Walter Feinberg, University of Illinois

Chair:
Barbara A. Morgan-Fleming, Texas Tech University



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How to import my Dewey bookmarks

Craig A. Cunningham

In a series of three articles published in *Insights* during the last year, I discussed a wide range of Internet resources related to John Dewey's life and work. As I was working on the article, I collected a large number of "bookmarks," or "favorites" and saved them in a "Dewey" folder. Then I exported the folder, resulting in a file available on my web site. If you want to add my bookmarks to your bookmarks or favorites, here are the instructions:

Internet Explorer (version 6)

First, save my Dewey bookmarks file to your computer. To do that, go to <http://craigcunningham/dewey> and right-click (or click and hold on a Mac) on the "Dewey Bookmarks list" link and choose "Save Target As..." Put the file somewhere you can easily find it (such as your desktop).

Then, create a new folder in your Internet Explorer Favorites named "Dewey." To do that, (open Internet Explorer, then) use the Favorites menu and choose "Organize Favorites...." Use the "Create Folder" button and change the name of the new folder to "Dewey."

Then, import the deweybookmarks.htm file that you saved a few moments ago. Use the File menu and choose "Import and Export..." Follow the instructions. Choose "Import Favorites" then "Import from a File or Address," then click the "Browse" button to locate the deweybookmarks.htm file.

Choose the "Dewey" folder, then click the "Finish" button. You should get a pop-up message that says "Successfully imported Favorites."

To check, use the "Favorites" menu and choose "Organize Favorites..." See

if your Dewey folder now contains three subfolders: "Critics," "Institutional Sites," and "Personal Sites."

Netscape Navigator (version 7)

First, save my Dewey bookmarks file to your computer. To do that, go to <http://craigcunningham/dewey> and right-click (or click and hold on a Mac) on the "Dewey Bookmarks list" link and choose "Save Target As..." Put the file somewhere you can easily find it (such as your desktop).

Then, import the deweybookmarks.htm file. Use the "Bookmarks" menu, and choose "Manage bookmarks..." From the window that opens, use the "Tools" menu and choose "Import...". Locate the deweybookmarks.htm file and click "OK."

Netscape will add three new bookmark folders, "Critics," "Institutional Sites," and "Personal Sites."

Use the "Manage bookmarks..." window to create a new folder named "Dewey" to put these three folders into. Use the "New Folder..." button and type "Dewey." To move the three folders into "Dewey," simply click and drag them, dropping them on the "Dewey" folder. A "twistie" (sideways triangle) will appear showing the "Dewey" has subfolders. Click the triangle to toggle whether the subfolders are displayed or not.

If you want collect your own Favorites, here's how:

Internet Explorer: To save a website into Internet Explorer Favorites, you access the page, then use the "Favorites" menu. Choose "Add to Favorites..." See the figure below. If you want to create a new folder, click the "New Folder..." button and type the name. If you want to save the favorite into an existing folder, click on the "Create in.>>" button to display existing folder and the click on the folder you want. If the "Name" is too generic, add some specific text describing the page, and then click the "OK" button.

Netscape Navigator: To save a website into Netscape Bookmarks, you access the page, then use the Bookmarks menu. You can simply click "Bookmark this page" if you want to put the bookmark into the top-level folder. If you want to put it into a specific Bookmark folder, use "File Bookmark." See the figure below. If you want to create a new folder, use the "New Folder" button. To save the bookmark into an existing folder, click the folder on the list. If the text in "Name" is too generic, add some descriptive text, and then click the "OK" button.

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The Substitute

Naily Elhalabi

I remember her all too well, that day. She wore black dress pants and black loafers and a yellow cardigan. I remember because we all made buzzing sounds when we saw her in the classroom. I also remember her white sport socks and how every time she sat she would look down and swiftly stand up again. She would eye the front row, hoping no one would notice her faux-pas, but no one did, except me, and I sat in the back.

It was the middle of February and I was in the eighth grade when the impossible happened. Ms. Carlston called in sick for the first time in thirteen years. Ms. Carlston was somewhat of a legend at our school. You see, where I'm from, the teachers at our school were notorious for slacking off. They would call in sick on Fridays and take a long weekend. Students would be dismissed early from class as long as they were "quiet in the halls." My high school math teacher would quickly scribble a lesson on the board then dash to the door and lock it so we could all play cards- a giant round of "asshole." It is true. None of them tried hiding their truancy either. You would run into them in town buying groceries or playing golf, but no one questioned it. It was like an unwritten policy.

Anyway, Ms. Carlston was one of the few, no pardon me, the only teacher who did not follow this policy. Class began on the hour and ended fifty minutes later. There was no talking in class, no free time and definitely no going home early if we were good. She said we *had* to be good, regardless. And we were, but nobody liked it. So that day in the middle of February, when we walked into class and there was no Ms. Carlston, only a lanky bumblebee, we knew. We could be free.

"Hello grade eights!" she said smiling over the rustle and the laughter.

"Grade eights!" she repeated, but no one acknowledged her.

She just stood there for a few moments lost and disoriented, like she needed a compass. Her eyes were emitting something I cannot really describe. A mix between fear and irritation, perhaps? A type of apprehension, maybe? I'm not sure, but the class continued to ignore her until Steven, the bulkiest boy in our class and the entire school including teachers yelled, "Shut up! Can't you see this lady's tryin' to talk?" There was an instant silence. All eyes were now turned towards the bumblebee. She turned to Steven and said, "Thank you."

"Well," she continued, "now that I have your attention... Ms. Carlston is sick today and so I will be your teacher."

"Ms. Carlston is sick!" yelled Adam in a riotous voice. His eyes darted to Chris then Tariq and then Mike. Their evil glances and their intentions behind them would soon be manifested by their actions. We all knew that, except for her.

"Yes," she replied. "Anyway, Ms. Carlston has asked that each of you continue on the worksheets she gave you on Monday. You are to complete the vocabulary section along with the grammar on page five. If you are done you can go on to the next set of worksheets."

But before she had a chance to continue, the class had already slipped from her, becoming a room of chatter and gossip, paper airplane throwing and roaring laughter. No one acknowledged her pleas for appropriate behavior, or later, her threats of detention.

She never had the opportunity to introduce herself but she had written her name neatly on the blackboard at the beginning of class: Ms. Warsuk. I suppose it was a blessing that no one really noticed. The buzzes everyone made when she walked by were a far better alternative to the massacres they could have inflicted on her name. There still were a few students who worked on their assignments,

and Ms. Warsuk would go from desk to desk helping them and trying to get everyone else on task. I watched her. When someone asked "How do I do this" or "I don't get it," she did not simply jot down an answer or give a quick explanation. She would say, "O. K. let's see what you've got so far," or "let's try to work this out together." She wasn't bad. In fact, she was steady and patient, despite the raging turmoil around her.

While she helped students and said, "O.K. guys, let's get back to work," and sat and stood and sat and stood, she was oblivious to the note that passed around the class. And at 1:49, when Adam yelled "Now!" and twenty-six dictionaries (the thick hard cover ones that every class has) dropped to the floor, I watched her face, as I had received the note and was forewarned of the prank. Her eyes widened as she gasped. Her hand went straight to her heaving chest. The class broke out in clamoring laughter then scurried out the door at the bell.

I felt my heart sink. Not so much from guilt- I'll admit I thought the prank was sort of humorous- but for her dear heart. A dictionary dropping from the desk of every student, minus three of the students she had helped and myself, could produce a terribly loud bang. The startle surely could have caused cardiac complications to someone with a weaker heart. She recuperated quickly, however, as I slowly made my way out of the classroom while she bent down to pick up the dictionaries off the floor.

The next day, everyone was worried that perhaps bumblebee had left a note for Ms. Carlston, or worse, told the principal, but she never did. Actually, she was there the next day. Ms. Carlston was still sick. She stood in front of the class and said she was disappointed with their behavior from the day before and that from now on, she would like to be everyone's friend. But no one befriended her and no one needed her friendship.

She ended up being our substitute teacher for the remaining three and a

half months. Later, we learned Ms. Carlston had cancer. But our feckless spirit and boisterous demeanor left little room for contemplating the seriousness of Ms. Carlston's condition. Instead, we became hedonists during a free class. Our poor substitute tried everything. She tried being our friend, which never worked. She tried being an authority figure, but it was too late for that. She tried bribes and threats but to no avail. Instead she was seen as having idiosyncratic tendencies, which drastically lowered her credibility.

I also think she caught on to the whole bumblebee thing because when she wore the same outfit again, the buzzing became more prominent. It wasn't that funny, really. It was only a yellow cardigan, but capped with her short black hair and big brown eyes, she did have somewhat of a bee-like quality. She had tried dressing cooler one day, wearing jeans and boots and a sweater, but the girls made fun of the label on her jeans.

I think, in those three and a half months, Ms. Warsuk had one good day. She suggested the class makes cards for Ms. Carlston, and we all responded quite well. But that was it.

I wondered for the longest time, what happened to her for she never returned in September. Ten years later, however, I saw her. It was in a pub of all places. I was slightly apprehensive about approaching her, what if it wasn't her? What if it was her and she had a violent reaction? She was wearing black dress pants and a sparkly sleeveless top. As she crossed her legs I saw her white sport socks peaking underneath her pants. It could only be her. I walked towards her, feeling quite nervous.

"Ms. Warsuk?"

She turned to me startled. "Ms. Warsuk?" she repeated. She stared at me perplexed. For a moment I thought I was wrong but as her eyes softened, realizing who I was, I exhaled. "God, I haven't heard that in a very long time!" She smiled at me. "You sat in the back. "

I nodded.

"Yeah," she continued, "I remember you. You were quiet. You were good. "

I was relieved that she had a positive recollection of me. She still had short hair, but she looked more sophisticated, not as scared, tougher even. She was actually a very attractive woman, something I probably never noticed when I was thirteen.

"So, are you still teaching?" I asked. I felt like a fool as she laughed hysterically. She told me that she left teaching to peruse more "creative endeavors," whatever that meant. She said that the substituting position was her first and only time teaching; she was only twenty-two and had just graduated. She told me to think long and hard before committing to a career, because, she discovered too late that teaching wasn't for her.

I watched her again that night, as I had in the back of that grade eight classroom. She was laughing and smiling, and I was glad for her. I figured she was an artist. Probably a lousy artist.

Ms. Warsuk was wrong. Teaching was for her. I saw her with those students, patiently allowing them to think out their problems. Her calming voice and gentle demeanor that made us comfortable asking her anything. Her smile when someone did ask her a question because it meant she was building trust.

But I felt guilty this time. I knew that we took something away from Ms. Warsuk. I only hoped that perhaps in time she could look back on that class and remember something positive; that her brief presence had at least made some of us never forget her and how she tried.

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Revised Poem: There is Nothing More Hateful Than Hate

Hillel A. Schiller

*There is nothing more hateful than hate,
A disastrous psychological state,
Of this there can be no debate.*

*Can we wipe clean such damnable slates,
Make all humans our natural mates?
I don't know...*

Is this hate to be always our Fate?

[Created 7/13/03 under this title which was long ago expressed but which never gave birth to a written poem. Composed spontaneously at the suggestion of Mary Elizabeth Moore who asked us to express esthetically a cultural change that we most fervently would like to make happen. The opportunity occurred at the 2003 APPE Conference (Process, Education and Environment) organized by Malcolm D. Evans in St. Paul, MN.]

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