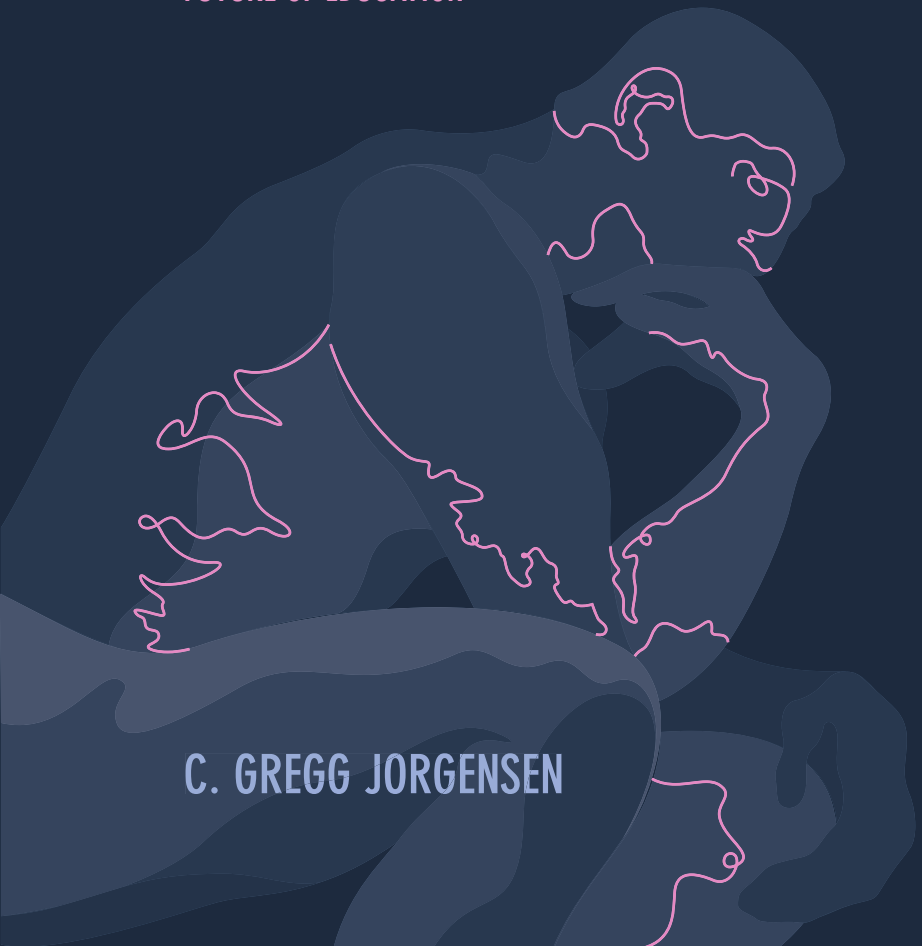
DISCOVERING JOHN DEWEY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

DIALOGUES ON THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF EDUCATION



C. GREGG JORGENSEN

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Dialogues on the Present and Future of Education

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To Diane

Acknowledgements

I want to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the 14 scholars who readily and graciously provided their time and enthusiasm for a personal interview. All 14 spoke openly and candidly about their thoughts about John Dewey and his potential role in twenty-first-century education.

It is also important to acknowledge two people who provided guidance, advice, and encouragement along the way during this scholar interview book project—a special thank-you to Jay Heffron at Soka University of America and Anne E. Gregory at Northern Illinois University. And I want to include a very special thank-you to Richard and Eileen Arndt for providing ongoing family reinforcement.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Open-mindedness.... It includes an active desire to listen to more sides than one; to give heed to facts from whatever source they come; to give full attention to alternative possibilities; to recognize the possibility of error even in the beliefs that are dearest to us.
—John Dewey, How We Think, 1933[1]

Gathered together in this book are personal interviews with 14 notable scholars conducted for the purpose of bringing together their opinions and observations about John Dewey, a renowned educational philosopher of the twentieth century. The reader will hear 14 different voices and 14 individual views about John Dewey, his philosophy, and his educational theory. Volumes have been written critiquing, analyzing, and documenting John Dewey's theories on education; a considerable number of these writings have been authored by these very scholars. In this book, however, the primary aim behind acquiring these 14 personal conversations is to determine whether John Dewey and his educational philosophy have a definitive and viable role to play in this new, twenty-first century.

It is almost too simplistic to state that John Dewey was an internationally known, prominent educational philosopher. His career stretched from the 1890s well into the mid-twentieth century. Throughout those decades, he was a prolific writer and authored what seems to be countless works—books, articles, and published lectures. College and university classes often discuss in-depth John Dewey's *My Pedagogic Creed* as a stepping-stone to educational theory. His books *The School and Society* and *The Child and the Curriculum* are widely considered to contain the most

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well known of Dewey's tenets. Dewey's seminal *Democracy and Education* is regarded as a teaching textbook for all time and all generations. Notably, there are also *How We Think* and *Art as Experience* as well as *Experience and Education*—and the list of his works goes on and on. The laboratory school he founded at the University of Chicago in the early 1900s is still considered to have established a noteworthy and extraordinary school format that exemplifies inclusive teaching and learning.

Throughout Dewey's extended career, he was identified innumerable times as a pragmatist, a socialist, a communist, a progressive, and a social democrat, among other assorted descriptive terms. These labels, generally affixed during Dewey's era by a variety of public figures, the public at large, and other scholars, both directly and indirectly precipitated misinterpretations of Dewey's educational philosophy. As a result, Dewey was often misunderstood or misinterpreted by many readers and researchers. These typical labels, together with a multitude of historical and contemporary social, political, and economic societal impacts, are discussed and scrutinized in the interviews collected in this volume.

Dewey had a penchant for redefining, or rather reassigning, common terms or words to describe his philosophical views. His usage of certain terminology has been discussed and debated, as well as misinterpreted, by many. These 14 scholar interviews revisit in-depth Dewey's terms, such as *occupations, experience, community, efficiency, savage, experimentation,* and *democracy.* I consider his use of the term *occupations* as a primary exemplar of what has led to the various misinterpretations of Dewey. His critics seized upon his use of the term *occupations* to incorrectly identify Dewey as an advocate of the social efficiency concept of vocational education versus college-bound education—or to mischaracterize what they argue was Dewey's acceptance of the proposed dualism in public school education as an outgrowth of the industrialist era. However, these scholar interviews reveal the reality of Dewey's stance, namely his consistent support of inclusive education for all students.

As an educational philosopher, Dewey did not provide specific or distinct blueprints for curriculum. That was not his forte, and in fact, he opposed the concept of one-size-fits-all education. Instead, Dewey was experimental in honing his reflective thinking pedagogy. John Dewey is not noted for attempting to make a name for himself in the sense of aspiring to run a statewide or national educational program, consulting with members of a state legislature or Congress regarding educational

reform, advocating for particular legislation, and such. He remained very satisfied to be "Professor Dewey."

He believed in the importance of content knowledge and critical thinking—and demonstrated that understanding at every turn. This posture allowed Dewey to enter into conversations on a wide variety of topics pertaining to democracy, education, philosophy, history, educational psychology, sociology, politics, and so on. With his extensive knowledge base, he arguably approached education from the perspective of an "expert" in those various fields, while at the same time not taking on that designation nor adopting a top-down structural approach to disseminate his beliefs and ideas for teaching and learning to support democratic ideals.

At the time of writing, it has been more than a hundred years since the publication of Dewey's pivotal and inspiring work *Democracy and Education*. This span of time is particularly noteworthy now that educators and all of the society have turned the page to the twenty-first century. The significance of this book project is critically highlighted by the acknowledgment of all 14 scholars interviewed that continuing a discussion about John Dewey is of vital interest and importance in advocating democratic education for all. These interviews reveal positive, sometimes negative, occasionally surprising, and consistently insightful comments that ideally will provide answers or food for thought to enable the reader to reflect on the primary question: Does John Dewey's consequential educational philosophy have an important role in twenty-first-century education and in nurturing and sustaining democratic ideals?

Note

1. Southern Illinois University Press. Used by permission.

CHAPTER 2

Consummate Dewey Intellectual: Larry Hickman

Prologue

Scholar Introduction

Larry A. Hickman is Professor Emeritus, Southern Illinois University, where he served as director of the Center for Dewey Studies and as professor of philosophy from 1993 through 2015. He is the author of numerous books and articles on Dewey, pragmatism, and philosophy, including *John Dewey's Pragmatic Technology*, *Philosophical Tools for Technological Culture*, *Pragmatism as Post-Postmodernism, and Living as Learning: John Dewey in the Twenty-First Century*, with *Daisaku Ikeda and Jim Garrison*. Also, he is the editor or coeditor of more than a dozen volumes. He has served as president of the Society for Philosophy and Technology, the Southwestern Philosophical Society, the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, and the John Dewey Society. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of Texas at Austin. He also holds honorary doctorates from Soka University of Japan and the University of Cologne (Germany).

In light of his extensive research focused on Dewey, philosophy, and his experiences directing the Center for Dewey Studies, Hickman was the first contact to whom I introduced my project to collect scholars' individual views and opinions about John Dewey. He readily agreed to an interview time. I traveled to the center, located at that time in a vintage home on the fringe of the Southern Illinois University campus that was

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very much like a Dewey-era residence. This dwelling housed a treasure trove of Dewey's legacy of writings and countless other writings and artifacts about Dewey and his educational philosophy. We met in the Dewey Center surrounded by an atmosphere that was all about John Dewey and began our dialogue on Hickman's thoughts and ideas about Dewey.

Dialogue Overview

This first Dewey scholar interview surrounds several broad-brush inquiries that allow room for topic expansion. In response to my inquiry about his view of the American educational system, Hickman states that US public schools do not present a centralized education. He attributes this circumstance to a disparity in economic resources and cultural differences. However, he believes that "there are places where Dewey's ideas have been tried and they have done very well." By Hickman's observation, US public school education in general maintains four fundamental elements that represent Dewey's ideas—theme-based learning; peer-based learning; the teacher as a coach, not an influential expert; and the concept that the student is not to be viewed as an empty filing cabinet for information or facts. Dewey believed that schooling needs to create a place for the socialization of all students. This point leads to considering Dewey's ideas for education versus today's view of homeschooling. Again, Hickman indicates that Dewey promoted schools as a facility to group and socialize students in a learning environment. Hickman believes Dewey could have had more influence if the four fundamental elements that represent Dewey's ideas had been universally adopted in schools. In his opinion, the result would have been a humanist curriculum. According to Hickman, this type of curriculum would "provide a broad-based liberal arts education that will allow its graduates to continue to learn as they go through life and to contribute to society."

Dewey and Democracy

At the time of our conversation, Hickman was intensely involved in the continuing development of existing and new Dewey Centers worldwide. I took the opportunity to inquire into his views about the overall acceptance of the Dewy Centers in other countries: Were they seeking to determine democracy? What kind of democracy? Hickman turned to US students with the observation that they "do not question whether this is the greatest country in the world. They assume it. To my mind, that's a

very dangerous thing because it means that the students are closed down with respect to important information." So the watchword becomes "do not assume." In Hickman's mind, students need to critically reflect on and discuss democracy. Educators need to "encourage our students to think about those kinds of things, not in any kind of dogmatic, ideological, hypercritical way, but by asking certain questions about who we are as a nation, what our values are." This leads to Hickman's statement that "we have to question those values; we have not only to find the ones that we want to continue to hold because they are important and good but also to find out those that we need to replace. That is a very Deweyan idea."

Education and Culture

Hickman strongly stresses that education is not an ideology. Instead, it inherently needs to be critical, perhaps acutely analytical, of ideology. Hickman observes an overlap of ideas between Dewey and Paulo Freire to some extent, but certainly there were individual, national, and societal differences. One should also consider cultural differences as potentially impacting education. From this perspective, Hickman notes, for instance, that "Dewey was influential in some aspects of education in Mexico; he traveled to Mexico, went out into the boondocks and talked to people about the schooling and so on. There is considerable interest in Dewey in Latin America."

Dewey: Pragmatist and Philosopher

When I inquire about his thoughts on which individual or individuals may have influenced Dewey, Hickman readily responds, "Francis Parker did." He shares that Parker, besides serving in education in Chicago, was about 20 years older. Hickman observes that Parker "had already established a career as superintendent of schools in Boston before he went to Chicago. It seems clear to me that Dewey took some important ideas from Parker." According to Hickman, John Dewey was also extremely influenced by William James, who is considered a prominent pragmatist of Dewey's era.

Hickman imparts that it is also critical "to see how Dewey's technical philosophy and his educational philosophy" evolved into a singular philosophy. Importantly, Hickman says, "If you look at some of Dewey's early essays, like 'The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology' in 1896 and 'The Postulate of Immediate Empiricism' in 1905, you see

a lot of James, who had a technical psychology and philosophy that worked its way over into what it means to have an organic philosophy of education."

On the issue of pragmatism, Hickman acknowledges that Dewey is a pragmatist. This leads to a discussion on what pragmatism is according to Dewey and where Dewey stood in the realm of pragmatists. According to Hickman, "Dewey gave up on the word late in his career because he thought it had been so badly misunderstood." But Dewey did refer to it in his works to some extent. Hickman proceeds to explain this observation from a triangulation of Charles Peirce versus William James versus John Dewey as various interpretations of pragmatism. According to Hickman, Peirce's view was involved with scientific inquiry, whereas James leaned toward individualist psychology. Dewey, on the other hand, reached an interpretation "in terms of social consequences of ideas, which gives him a lot more to say about the current situation of religion in America…. For Dewey it means that religious organizations are publics along with other publics." Thus, Hickman clarifies that in Dewey's view, all publics, as such, "have the responsibility to say why what they are doing is good or important."

Religion and Values

In regard to my inquiry about Dewey and religion, Hickman asserts that Dewey had a traditional view and directs attention to a paper he authored titled "John Dewey's Spiritual Values" as well as to several other points. The key to Hickman's thoughts is that Dewey subscribed to spiritual values and certainly would not attempt to influence anyone away from their religious faith. Hickman proceeds to indicate that from Dewey's perspective, "the name 'fundamentalism' is not really properly applied to those who hold dogmatic views. Fundamentalism should be a search for fundamental values and not just an assertion about what they are."

A Perspective of Dewey

In response to my question about what Hickman would say, what words he would employ, to describe John Dewey, he stated his important belief that Dewey was "moderate in disposition"—definitely not extreme. According to Hickman, Dewey believed in compromise to reach solutions and solve differences. In essence, Dewey tried to develop a third position between two opposing ideas. It stands to reason, then, that

Dewey avoided ideological positions. Indeed, in his pragmatist mode, according to Hickman, Dewey's stance was based on scientific ideas as well as Dewey's penchant to pursue new inquiry and experimentation to find tangible solutions to problems.

In discussing whether Dewey was underestimated or misunderstood in his twentieth-century era, Hickman states that he was both seriously underrated and also not understood by many, including some of his own students. Early on, Dewey did find success with the general public who read his journal articles and, I might add, perhaps listened to his periodic radio addresses. Hickman believes that Dewey fell out of favor in academic circles in the mid- to late twentieth century. But importantly, Hickman states, "It has only been most recently that his views have come back to the forefront of studies in the areas in which he was writing and with which he was concerned."

Dewey's Ideas on Teaching and Learning

A central consideration at this point of our discussion is twofold: whether Dewey influenced the American curriculum and whether he is relevant to our twenty-first-century teaching and learning. Despite the fact that Dewey-oriented schools were dispersed throughout the USA during Dewey's career, Hickman believes that Dewey was not an influence on the school curriculum. When pressed for reasons for this opinion, Hickman shares that at the heart of the structure of education in the USA is the lack of a centralized school system—instead, the system is a multiplicity of diverse local school boards and school administrations located throughout the nation. Hickman also points out that Dewey did believe in the promise of the school as community and its related values, but for Dewey, "it needed to be balanced with serious concern for questioning those values and determining to what extent they were valid and productive." Larry Hickman is in a unique position to ascertain John Dewey's relevancy in the twenty-first century. He interacts with the Dewey Centers in 11 foreign nations and in Carbondale, Illinois, on which he notes, "There is a great deal of interest not only in Dewey's educational philosophy but also among political scientists, public planners, economists, and a variety of people in various fields."

Does this translate into interest today in Dewey's theory of reflective thinking? Hickman's positive outlook is that it does and that reflective thinking can be implemented in the schools. He believes in some cases that it already has been. However, Hickman is convinced that the schools

need to bolster science understanding. He emphasizes that other countries have done so, but not the USA. Hickman believes that No Child Left Behind, still in place together with Common Core, exemplifies the opposite position from other countries.

Social Efficiency Concepts

US public education's continuing emphasis on standardized testing, under the guise of documenting teaching and learning improvement and progress, results in a reflection of social efficiency ideology that was born in the early twentieth century. This concept has continued to evolve, undergoing several iterations, into its present place in the twenty-first century. Dewey has not necessarily been clearly identified as an opponent of social efficiency; however, as Hickman points out, Dewey's view of social efficiency was much broader—well beyond basic economic theory. According to Hickman, "what Dewey thought was that social efficiency—in its valid forms—has to do with making sure that every person who is in school and every person who is an adult has the possibility to engage in lifelong learning and is able to develop themselves to their full capacity. Of course that requires educational investment."

Social Justice

Regarding the question of whether Dewey's educational philosophy has links to today's social justice issues, Hickman first highlights Dewey's activities with social justice-oriented initiatives and thus identifies Dewey as a founding member of the *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People* (NAACP) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), among other similar organizations. To his point, Hickman states that Dewey "believed that the resources of the nation need to be dedicated to supporting people in ways that help them develop their potentials."

The Legacy

Hickman considers Dewey's legacy to be Dewey's brand of philosophy, which Hickman interprets as circumventing the analytical approach dominating the field for more than 50 years into a "more biological adaptive approach associated with some aspects of process philosophy." As such, the philosophical education lessons presented in Dewey's major articles and other writings have not, in Hickman's opinion, been completely comprehended. Hickman further observes, in particular, that he

"would include in that his 1896 'Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology' article, which was groundbreaking and still has not been fully appreciated, I think, by many people in academic fields." He also points out that Dewey's legacy is that he reaches beyond academics to "teachers, who can still find ways of addressing issues in the classroom, I think, through careful readings of his work, especially his great book *Democracy and Education*."

On an ongoing basis, Hickman connects with Dewey scholars, which gives him plenty of opportunities to discuss Dewey and his colleagues. However, he singles out Dewey's political affiliation as one area still under discussion and debated during his scholarly visits. Hickman notes two different versions—one by Robert Westbrook, who sees Dewey's view of socialism as industrial socialism, and another by Alan Ryan, who places Dewey in the context of guild socialism, one that focuses on trade unions, according to Hickman.

Dewey Centers for the Pursuit of Deweyan Knowledge

Then our dialogue takes an almost natural turn back to Hickman's longtime role in directing the Dewey Center. As the former director of the globally oriented Center for Dewey Studies, Hickman observes that a broad spectrum of people come to learn from Dewey's writings. In regard to teachers in particular, Hickman notes that many are Dewey knowledgeable, even though they may have actually acquired their Deweyan teaching ideas indirectly from people who were their teachers in the past. In fact, he perceives that teachers develop alternative teaching workarounds, for instance, by "actually teaching geography in chemistry classes because they felt that the social sciences had been so badly shortchanged."

Hickman's appointment to the Dewey Center in 1993 followed Jo Ann Boydston, the first director, who retired after 30 years. During Boydston's tenure, the center staff completed the monumental task of preserving the 37 printed volumes of John Dewey's works. Hickman calls the preservation of Dewey's works "a massive and extremely important undertaking that was done with exquisite care; it really is like a gold standard of an edition." Through his own efforts, the center has founded many different approaches to the research and study of John Dewey at the international centers. He reflects that the interest in Dewey ranges from Dewey's relationship to neo-pragmatism to his ideas about religion to his educational philosophy, while for one center,

the main interest is in aesthetics. He concludes on the note that each of the centers and its resource materials are readily available and open to all who are seeking "to seriously read Dewey's work from whatever angle."

Our dialogue concludes on this very positive note for the enduring pursuit of knowledge and understanding of John Dewey. Our dialogue came to a conclusion. As I left the Center for Dewey Studies's vintage house, I took with me reflections of the vast thoughts and ideas of John Dewey that lived there.

Epilogue

This dialogue with Larry Hickman runs the gamut of aspects of John Dewey's educational philosophy, including the various scholarly and societal interpretations and misinterpretations of Dewey throughout the decades. In this dialogue, Hickman steadfastly maintains that Dewey's philosophy remains a formidable and positive influence on twenty-first-century education. Hickman advocates that Dewey's educational theory is designed to open possibilities for all children, all students, indeed, all individuals, to develop their ability to comprehend and unpack wide-ranging situations and be able to respond creatively in a consistent manner as they strive toward Dewey's democratic ideals.

Hickman's intensely acquired knowledge base on John Dewey's philosophy expands beyond his research and writings to include ongoing contacts with those who travel to the various Centers for Dewey Studies—the US home base and the other centers in 11 countries—to learn about and study Dewey's ideas and ideals for education. The appeal of and interest in the centers are explained by Hickman's remark that "Dewey was not the radical that he is often presented as being.… He had some wonderful ideas for education that had to do with the growth of the individual student—child, student, whatever level—according to ways that would open up their possibilities." I find this to be a profound opinion that portrays a positive outlook for extending John Dewey's educational philosophy into today's schools in the USA and worldwide.

Author note: All quotations in the Prologue and Epilogue are from the Larry Hickman dialogue transcript.

Larry Hickman Dialogue

TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH LARRY HICKMAN

Carbondale, IL, September 2012 (Edited)

GREGG JORGENSEN (GJ): *I am addressing readers who may only have a passing acquaintance with John Dewey, or not know him at all. What would you say about Dewey himself?*

LARRY HICKMAN (LH): Dewey was born in 1859 in Burlington, Vermont, and died in 1952 in New York City. He was a philosopher, an educator, and one of the most important public intellectuals of the twentieth century. In terms of his work, I would say that Dewey was not the radical that he is often presented as being, and that he had some wonderful ideas for education that had to do with the growth of the individual student—child, student, whatever level—according to ways that would open up their possibilities and this meant striking a balance between the preservation and transferal of received values on one side and the radical dismantling of them on the other side. So, I think perhaps in terms of the general American public of his time, they understood that he was an important educational theorist who had ideas about the central questions of education, which, to his mind, involved opening up possibilities for individuals who were children, individuals who were students, and in fact finding ways of creating more individuality in them because of their abilities to comprehend situations and respond to them creatively. As for his personal traits, Dewey was moderate in disposition, and rather "laid back" as we would say today. He disliked extreme views, and loved finding solutions that involved compromise between extremes. From early in his career he knew who he was and what he wanted to do. He was also an early supporter of equal rights for women and he was there at the founding of the NAACP.

GJ: *Was he oblivious, so to speak, to the criticism that went on or did he stop to think about it and try to respond?*

LH: He did not take offense easily, and tended to be generous to his critics. I've read his voluminous correspondence fairly carefully and can say that there were very few people whom he disliked.

GJ: *Care to identify names?*

LH: I am not talking about their ideas, or their philosophy in this context, but people that he thought had treated him, his family, or his colleagues badly. One was Mortimer Adler. Another was William Rainey Harper, a president of the University of Chicago. He did not like Hugo Munsterberg. But in general Dewey possessed a bright, sunny character. His response to criticism was just to attempt to respond in ways that were positive. At times, however, in exchanges in the professional journals, he just gives up because it is clear that the conversation is not going anywhere. In one of the more interesting exchanges, the conversation was taken up by surrogates. The exchange began between Dewey and Robert Maynard Hutchins [president of the University of Chicago] but continued as a conversation between Dewey's disciple Sidney Hook and Hutchins' defender Alexander Meiklejohn. Dewey finally closed the exchange by just claiming that he had been so badly misunderstood that there was not much point in continuing.

Despite his gentle nature, however, Dewey could be a bit acerbic at times. When heard that Adler and Walter Lippmann were working on some sort of joint project he wrote to one of his correspondents something like "Well, it's amusing but it would seem to contravene a good Biblical prohibition against yoking an ox with an ass." Which was the ox and which the ass? We don't know.

GJ: *Can you name people who truly influenced Dewey?*

LH: Yes, Francis Parker did. Parker was, I guess, about twenty years older and had already established a career as superintendent of schools in Boston before he went to Chicago. It seems clear to me that Dewey took some important ideas from Parker. In addition, Dewey was doing a lot of background work in education while at the University of Michigan and then at the University of Chicago. He was corresponding with all sorts of people and picking up ideas here and there.

But I think one of his most important influences was William James, who published his monumental *Principles of Psychology* in 1890. By 1891 Dewey was already offering a two-semester course on that book at the University of Michigan. If you look at some of Dewey's early essays, like "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology" in 1896 and "The Postulate of Immediate Empiricism" in 1905, you see a lot of James, who had a technical psychology and philosophy that worked its way over into what it means to have an organic philosophy of education. Darwin also was an important influence.

GJ: *Do you believe Dewey ever really influenced American education and specifically the American curriculum?*

LH: That is a complex question because the American educational system is very complex thing. In fact, the more I think about it the less I think that it is possible to generalize American education. I know that there have been attempts to do this—*A Nation at Risk*, published in 1983, was one of those attempts—but at this point we have too many influences in education to get a coherent picture. We have public schools that differ greatly in terms of their tax base. As you know, the American system provides for local school districts, run by local school boards, paid for by local tax bases, and that means that you have a considerable disparity in terms of economic resources. Jonathan Kozol in his very famous book *Savage Inequalities* pointed this out and I was particularly interested in that book because I went to one of the high schools in San Antonio that he mentions. So, you have these enormous disparities nationwide and even some of my most progressive friends complain bitterly about having to pay taxes for equalization of funds for school districts. So, you have that disparity. You have another disparity in terms of cultural traditions. There are cultural traditions in especially places like the South where you have communities that are almost all of one particular religious persuasion and they want certain aspects of their religion taught in their schools. You have other places where that is not an issue. Again, we have charter schools and even in the charter schools—which are public schools because they are funded and chartered by the public—even there you have a mixed bag. In terms of approach and effectiveness, charter schools are all over the place. So it is difficult to say anything in general.

What we can say, however, is that there are places where Dewey's ideas have been tried and they have done very well. I think the second thing we can say is that the extent of Dewey's influence depends on what time frame we are looking at. Are most schools better now than when Dewey started his work? Yes. Dewey consolidated and became a kind of spokesperson for many of the most progressive educational ideas of his time. Dewey was the person who was more often identified with those progressive trends.

Dewey emphasized four basic educational ideas that are now practiced in many schools, both here in the United States and in Europe. The first is theme-based learning. Southern Illinois University Medical School, for example, has had a theme-based alternative to the traditional lecture format. Students worked in teams on sets of problems prescribed by the usual curriculum, but

they did their own research and presented it to one another. They had a conference room available to them open 24 h a day and focused on solving the problems, not memorizing the lectures. That approach can work all the way from K-12 education up to the university and professional level.

The second is peer-based learning. Students learn from one another in any case, so the idea is to provide some structure that enhances those processes. I have seen this approach work for classes of remedial reading. Those are two of the ideas of the Deweyan educational system. A third idea is the concept of the teacher as coach rather than teacher as authority figure. I think we are seeing more of that in terms of the way the Internet is used in the classroom and the ways that teachers utilize educational technology. There is something of that in the "inverted classroom [flipped classroom]," where the teacher's lectures are available to students at home on the Internet and they do their "homework" at the school where they can get individual coaching by the teacher. So, you have peer-based learning, theme-based learning, and the teacher as coach. In addition, you have the idea of service learning. That means learning that takes place outside the school room in the community. Dewey struggled against the "file cabinet" model of education, that is, that the student is a kind of file cabinet into which you put ideas. For Dewey, students are living organisms who have their own individual interests and needs, their own contexts.

Now, one of the things that I think is a little bit disturbing in terms of a Deweyan approach to education is some aspects of home schooling. Of course, there are many kids who emerge from home schooling with an enormous ability to manage information. But what I worry about is socialization, which is also an important component of education. Dewey argued that a public school is a place of great importance for socialization. But home schooling tends to isolate students, or when socialization does occur, to put students into contexts where they meet only people who agree with their particular cultural or religious biases. That seems to be a recipe for further splintering of the American society.

Has Dewey had an influence on education in the United States? Yes. Has the influence gone as far as it would have gone if we had taken Dewey more seriously? Certainly, not. We would have better-funded schools; we would have an overarching national curriculum, I think, that respects regional and cultural differences; and we would have more respect and better training for teachers if Dewey's ideas were put into effect. We would not have the kind of standardized testing we have in the schools, and we would not have situations where there is teaching to the test.

So, the answer to your question is that there have been some schools where Dewey's ideas were taken seriously. There have been other schools where they were not accepted. And there have been still other schools where practices have evolved in the direction of Dewey's ideas, but with scant recognition of where those ideas came from.

GJ: *Why do you believe Dewey's ideas were never consistently implemented in the schools?*

LH: Well, I think in part because they were not understood. I think there has been an effort among certain segments of the population that has led to misunderstanding. We still have absolutists in terms of moral values, people who have historically been opposed to the kinds of liberal progressive trends in education and in society that Dewey's educational policies represented, and who believe that education is not examination of values but transmission of values. I think you can see why such people would not only misunderstand Dewey but also would oppose his project, often misrepresenting his ideas. He was misunderstood in the Soviet Union, for example. During the 1950s the article on Dewey in the *Soviet Encyclopedia* made up "quotations" from his work out of whole cloth. First, what they claim Dewey said is simply out of character with his wider project. Second, if you do a character-string search in the electronic edition of Dewey's work you find nothing even similar to what they claimed he said. That is one thing. Some Christian fundamentalists do more of less the same thing. I have found Dewey "quotations" in the works of some of those authors that Dewey never said. And some of those "quotations" have even found their way into legitimate educational journals. It is a case of someone quoting something that they got from somebody else that that person got from somebody else that started on a website run by a fundamentalist Christian. I had a case recently where a professor in educational theory wrote me to ask about a Dewey "quotation" in an article by a fairly well-known educational theorist that was just outrageous. Her question was, is this really Dewey? Of course, the answer was no, but where did it come from? So, I traced it back to its source. In Europe there were serious attempts to keep Dewey's ideas out of the public sphere; in Germany and Italy, for example. In Italy, Catholics and Marxists both worked very hard to keep Dewey's ideas out of the schools.

Another thing that creates misunderstanding is that despite the very simple vocabulary that you find in Dewey's publications, his

ideas are really very sophisticated. Sometimes his ideas are quite radical. So some people are misled. If we took Dewey's ideas seriously they would change not only our educational system but also our wider culture.

Dewey's ideas were not tried in part because we do not have or at least have not had a centralized school system in this country. As I said, we have lots of local school boards, and what that means is to a great extent, local school boards are interested in the transmission of received values; they want to make sure that their values—the values of the community—get instilled into the students in the school system. Dewey thought that was a very fine idea but it needed to be balanced with serious concern for questioning those values and determining to what extent they were valid and productive. And so there have been places where school boards did not want to have such questions raised. So, it is still the case that Dewey's idea have not had much acceptance in some school systems in the United States.

GJ: *However, there are some schools identified as Deweyan schools that are using his ideas…*

LH: Actually, there is a university in California—Soka University of America—that is very, very Deweyan. His ideas are right there in the forefront: peer-based learning; theme-based learning; the teacher as coach; and service learning. Even though the university is funded in large part by Buddhist resources, it is not in any way a religious university. There is no religious curriculum at all. It is a humanist university that attempts to produce the future leaders of the Pacific Rim and beyond.

GJ: *Would you explain how they promote themselves to perspective students?*

LH: Soka University of America promotes itself as a high quality university with excellent resources for teaching and learning. It is a humanist university that focuses on environmental issues, on peace studies, that is, on the kinds of concerns that the founder, the management, and the faculty believe will be important in a globalizing world in the twenty-first century. Although Soka University of America has only been in existence a bit more than a decade, it has national rankings in terms of faculty/student ratio, study abroad, diversity, and so on.

GJ: *What is the background of the people who founded the school based on humanistic concepts?*

LH: Their background is Nichiren Buddhism. They are lay Buddhists, not monks, and their organization is called Soka Gakkai. The founder of the organization, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, was a teacher and peace

activist in Japan in the 1930s. He was arrested, imprisoned, and eventually actually died of starvation in prison in 1944. After the war, his disciple, Josei Toda started to build an organization through community meetings. His successor, Daisaku Ikeda, has built that organization to a membership of about 13 million worldwide. I have heard Mr. Ikeda say that religion is important but education is equally important. He founded Soka University of Japan, as well as K-12 schools in Tokyo, Singapore, Brazil, and other places as well, as well as Soka University of America in Southern California. He believes the future needs leaders who will understand environmental and sustainability issues, who will work for world peace, and who will create value for themselves and those around them. And that is the mission of the university: to provide a broad-based liberal arts education that will allow its graduates to continue to learn as they go through life and to contribute to society.

GJ: *Do you think ideas like that could be expanded and funded for public schools of that type in the United States?*

LH: That is the big question. As you know, there is an enormous debate in this country about what a university is and should be. There is more and more emphasis on getting students in and out as quickly as possible at the least possible cost. In Florida and Texas, you have some studies that propose to take universities in a very different direction, very different from what they have been. The Brits are also doing this. The study there is called the Browne Report. In Britain, the universities will be defined in terms of their ability to operate as an economic engine for the nation, and students will be charged for courses on the basis of how much potential income they are liable to produce.

GJ: *Really?*

LH: Yes. Take a look at the Browne Report. I think you will find it very interesting. A good introduction, about a two-page introduction to it was written by Stefan Collini in the *London Review of Books* about six months ago, and you could probably find it on line easily enough. The proposal is a remarkable thing. Historically, we have conceived of students attending the university as seventeen, eighteen years of age in order to read, learn, and discover their place as citizens of a republic of letters, to engage in the kind of analysis of their own values that will set them up for lifelong learning.

There's nothing about that in the Texas report, in the Florida report. There is nothing, as far as I could tell, about developing the virtues of citizenship. The students are defined as consumers

instead of citizens. And, of course, the idea of a consumer is a passive recipient, whereas the idea of a citizen is an active participant. In the Texas report, there is a proposal that professors should be paid on the basis of the number of students taught or the amount of external research dollars brought in. So, what happens to a creative writing course? What happens to a philosophy course taught in the Socratic method? And since research is defined in terms of external dollars, consider a professor who works for five or six years without any external funding on a book about the unification of Italy in the nineteenth century. She publishes it and wins a Pulitzer Prize. But the university will never consider it research since no external dollars were received. Even though it receives an important prize, it is not considered research.

On the other side there's an article in the op-ed page in the *New York Times* today in which the president of Wesleyan University discusses what a university could be, and I would say a fifth of the article has to do with John Dewey's ideas.

GJ: *Interesting.*

LH: Yes, his view is that we need to be more Deweyan in terms of the way we approach education.

GJ: *When it really gets down to it, would you say that Dewey has been influential in a real sense in American education, or, not?*

LH: I think he has to a certain point. Not to the extent that he would have liked or that I would like or that people who are seriously committed to Deweyan ideas would like, but as I said earlier, I think his ideas have been influential in some places. Most K-12 schools do not have bolted-down desks anymore. Some of them use methods that are associated with Dewey—theme-based learning, peer-based learning that I described, for example—and that's more in evidence now that we have students learning online. So do you want to call these Dewey's ideas? Well, again, a lot of educators, including Francis Parker, had these ideas, but Dewey was kind of the central spokesman—you could say he was a lightning rod if you are thinking about his critics—for those ideas.

The analogy that I use sometimes is this: Dewey was president of the American Psychological Association before he was president of the American Philosophical Association, and he and his colleagues at Chicago established a school of psychology called "functionalism." But by the 1930s, there was no more functionalism. Now why was that? Well, it had been absorbed into mainstream psychology, more

or less. In other words, it had become invisible because it was everywhere. It was like that old saying, "we don't know who discovered water, but we're pretty sure it wasn't the fish," right? It was just kind of everywhere, so it was invisible. In the same sense, some of Dewey's educational ideas have been absorbed to the extent that nobody says, "Oh, those are Dewey's ideas." They are just part of the background, part of the environment. But that is encouraging. What is discouraging is that he had a lot more ideas that would change education for the better if we took them seriously.

GJ: *What are the implications of not challenging values in the classroom?*

LH: I think there is a kind of triumphalism or exceptionalism in our country in the sense that our students do not question whether this is the greatest country in the world. They assume it. To my mind, that's a very dangerous thing because it means that the students are closed down with respect to important information. I remember teaching a course at Texas A&M several years ago during the time that the U.S. Congress was pumping money into Chile to buy off legislators in order to subvert the Allende government. I'm not making this up. It was the subject of some congressional hearings. I brought this up to my students. I said: "Is this what you regard as democratic practice?" And they said, "Well, the government couldn't be doing that; we do not do things like that." I said: "Well, read the report in the *Congressional Record*. When you go to the page, you will find a record of these funds being allocated—and the whole record is there." But they couldn't get their minds around that as a possibility. That is the kind of thing we need to think about in terms of our place as a country in a family of nations and, especially, since the events of 9/11, our place among those nations that claim to have high moral authority. We have to encourage our students to think about those kinds of things, not in any kind of dogmatic, ideological, hypercritical way, but by asking certain questions about who we are as a nation, what our values are. According to one of my former colleagues, several years ago a member of the board of regents at Texas A&M gave a speech at graduation ceremonies in which he guaranteed the parents assembled that their children, after four years at Texas A&M, would leave with the same values they arrived with. My response is: well, what is the point of four years of education if they leave with the same values? So, we have to question those values; we have not only to find the ones that we want to continue to hold because they are important and good but also to find out those that we need to replace. That is a very Deweyan idea.

GJ: *What about the anti-intellectual stance we often see in politics and in the media?*

LH: You can go to the web and find an interesting kind of anti-intellectualism on the political right. Its proponents are upset with what they perceive as too many liberal professors. It strikes me that what is being confused in this case is education on one side and ideologically driven instruction on the other. These are two separate issues because education by its very nature, if it is truly education, is not going to be ideologically driven. In fact, it is going to be critical of unquestioned ideas of all sorts. Reluctance to question ideology is a mark of anti-intellectualism. So in my view that is what is behind the specter of too many liberal professors. And I am, by the way, inclined to ask, why university professors would tend to be more liberal and progressive than others? Could it be because they spend more time reading and thinking about issues? I mean, that is what they do for a living. Why is it that actors tend to be a little bit more progressive, more liberal than others? Well, it could be because they spend a lot of time thinking about how to understand how to play the role of others. And it could be that those two professions may be more liberal and more progressive because they have gone outside of themselves to try to find out more about the world in which they live. But that is just speculation on my part.

GJ: *Would you believe John Dewey's philosophy still has a role to play in the twenty-first century, and if so, how do you see it happening?*

LH: Well, I do, and I think there are a lot of other people who do as well because there is a real growth of John Dewey studies. Already we have John Dewey research centers in eleven foreign countries at this point. There is a great deal of interest not only in Dewey's educational philosophy but also among political scientists, public planners, economists, and a variety of people in various fields. I think one of the things that is most interesting about the revival of interest in Dewey is that people are, at least in academic circles, are beginning to understand what he meant by some of the terms he used. His term "pragmatism" was badly misunderstood at the time, as was his term "instrumentalism." But I think that academics and policy makers are beginning to understand the importance of those terms and the way that he used them. So does Dewey have anything to say to contemporary life? Well, at the level of the way that we teach philosophy, I think he does. I think his idea about contextualizing logic rather than treating it as merely a formal discipline is a very important agenda for reform in educational practice. I also think that his

rejection of ideological positions and his promotion of candid and informed inquiry could be an inspiration to all of us. His pragmatism was based on scientific methods, on experimentation and willingness to go to various places within inquiry where one might not be comfortable but yet where one can find objective solutions to common problems. I think that is part of the reason for the revival of interest in Dewey's work.

GJ: *Would you expand on what is pragmatism from Dewey's point of view?*

LH: Dewey gave up on the word late in his career because he thought it had been so badly misunderstood. Charles Peirce, as I am sure you know, who formulated what we today call the "pragmatic maxim," also decided to abandon the word as a name for his philosophical position. He decided to call his view "pragmatism," which, he said, is so ugly that no one would steal it. But Dewey referred to his own work later as instrumentalism, by which he meant to emphasize the role of tools, both tangible and conceptual, in inquiry.

So, what is pragmatism? Well, you have to go back to Peirce to get the original meaning. Peirce said that if you want to know the meaning of a concept then look at its conceivable practical consequences. Peirce interpreted that maxim in terms of what happens in a community of scientific inquiry. William James interpreted it in terms of a more individualist psychology. He was interested in issues such as what we have the right to believe. Dewey interpreted it in terms of social consequences of ideas, which gives him a lot more to say about the current situation of religion in America than either James or Peirce because for Dewey it means that religious organizations are publics along with other publics. And what it means to be a public among other publics is that religious organizations do not get a free pass when it comes to examination and criticism of their positions. They have the responsibility to say why what they are doing is good or important in the same sense that a stamp collecting club or a Rotary club has to say why what they are doing is good and what it means for the other publics. That is something that you do not find in James, you do not find in Peirce, I think—only Dewey.

GJ: *Do you think Dewey was religious?*

LH: I wrote a paper on that subject. I called it "John Dewey's Spiritual Values." Did he believe in one of the traditional notions of God? No. But he had certain spiritual values that had to do with ideals, with those kinds of values that are transcendent in the sense that they are

projected out into the world of our experiences and that are worthy of being realized. Those are his spiritual values. However, he said that he never tried to discourage anyone from their religious faith. He wrote to one of his correspondents that the reason he wrote his little book *A Common Faith* was for those people who thought that they had been abandoned by religion or that religious thought was no longer available to them. He wanted to tell them that religious experience as quality of other experiences was possible.

So, he was religious in that sense, in the sense of the spiritual, in the sense of working to realize ideals. He thought that most religious organizations needed to do a lot more work in terms of reviewing and reconstructing their views. He was especially critical of fundamentalists, because he argued—as I am sure you know—that the name 'fundamentalism' is not really properly applied to those who hold dogmatic views. Fundamentalism should be a search for fundamental values and not just an assertion about what they are.

GJ: *I understand that the Catholic Church in particular had right-wing elements that were quite critical of—*

LH: Dewey was able to work with certain Catholics. He was able to work with Mormons. He gave talks at Brigham Young Academy when he was in Utah. He worked with progressive Catholics. But right-wing Catholics were very, very critical of Dewey because they thought he was an extreme relativist with respect to morals. In that sense, they really never understood what he was about. They wanted to claim the authority of absolute values and he thought that values always operate as guides in complex contexts. Consequently, he was continually attacked, especially by people like Mortimer Adler, who was a convert to Catholicism. Adler was really quite critical; in 1939 he gave a speech in which he referred in a very thinly veiled way to Dewey, suggesting that Dewey and his ilk were a worse threat to America than Hitler, and that America would not be safe until they were—and the word he used was "liquidated." The word meant the same thing in those days as it does now: exterminated. You can find that astounding remark in Great Speeches of 1939, you can also find it in a footnote in Robert Westbrook's book *John Dewey and American Democracy.*

GJ: *Do you think Dewey was underrated in any way in the twentieth century?*

LH: Yes, I do. I think he has been seriously underrated. First, he was not really understood even by many of his followers in educational

theory and practice. Some of his students thought they were following his lead when they promoted "child centered" practices that did little to direct the educational experiences of children, but just encouraged them to express themselves in ways that learning would somehow occur. But of course that was not Dewey's view, so I would say some of his own students underrated him by failing to understand the subtleties of his proposals. Academic philosophers also tended to underrate him for several reasons. First, philosophy of education was considered by some to be inferior to "real" technical philosophy. Second, I would suggest that many academic philosophers underrated him because they failed to understand just how radical his views were. There was a period when he enjoyed success, but waves of existentialism and positivism eclipsed his views. Even during that time of relative eclipse, however, he was popular within some quarters of the public because he wrote so much for public journals, journals of opinion, and so on. So he enjoyed moderate success during the first couple of decades of the twentieth century in academic fields, but then philosophy moved on, psychology moved on, and he was quite out of favor from about the middle of the twentieth century well into the very late twentieth century. It has only been most recently that his views have come back to the forefront of studies in the areas in which he was writing and with which he was concerned.

GJ: *How did Dewey deal with the concept of social efficiency?*

LH: Social efficiency, that's a great question. Social efficiency is quite often thought of as economic efficiency; that is, a kind of cheap instrumentalism that is close to vulgar forms of utilitarianism. What Dewey thought was that social efficiency—in its valid forms—has to do with making sure that every person who is in school and every person who is an adult has the possibility to engage in lifelong learning and is able to develop themselves to their full capacity. Of course that requires educational investment. It requires concern with the infrastructure of education. So social efficiency in his view cannot be promoted without a strong infrastructure, meaning adequate funding for education and intelligent design of curriculum materials and other parts of the school system. That is what social efficiency was for him; a much broader notion than efficiency defined in economic terms.

GJ: *Do you think Dewey's approach to reflective thinking can be implemented in today's curriculum, and if so, what would have to happen?*

LH: I think it can be and I think it has been in some areas. I think we need more courses in the kind of critical thinking that he recommended; more courses in scientific methods in their broad sense as opposed to the narrow analytic accounts of philosophy of science. We need more attention to the realities of what happens now in the sciences and what has happened in the history of the sciences. It is a remarkable thing to me that there are so many Americans who do not accept the notion of evolution, who do not accept what the vast majority of scientists are saying about climate change. I believe there are a number of factors that militate against this kind of intelligent, critical thinking. One is economic interests. There are also class interests, and there are religious interests. These are dogmas, I would say, that militate against the kind of open reflective thinking that Dewey recommended.

Can it be done? Can we have a critical curriculum? Of course, it can be done, and it is being done in some places in the United States and in other countries as well. But, in our country we do not seem to be doing very well in that regard. Our recent experiment with No Child Left Behind, for example, took our educational system in exactly the wrong direction. If students are pressured to learn to recite material on a standardized test then they are not thinking critically.

GJ: *That is a great point, thank you.*

LH: But I think—and let me add to that—I think that Dewey would also have been less than impressed with either the canon-driven models of Allan Bloom or the virtues-driven education that people like E.D. Hirsch and William Bennett have suggested. I think he would have said that both of those approaches resemble more paint-by-the-numbers-type of educational ideas and less the kind of experimental practices that he wanted to see fostered.

GJ: *Would you address what role Dewey's ideas and ideals might have had in the social justice movement; that is, would you agree that there is a link to issues of social justice at the heart of the Dewey dialogues?*

LH: Well, sure. But it depends on what period of social justice movements you are talking about. I mean, certainly he was active as a founding member of the NAACP, the AAUP [American Association of University Professors], and the American Civil Liberties Union. He was active in all sorts of social justice–oriented movements, including the movement for women's suffrage. He believed in a kind of industrial socialism. He did, in fact, vote socialist on several occasions and believed that the resources of the nation need to be

dedicated to supporting people in ways that help them develop their potentials. And so I think he would have been appalled at the way that the minimum wage over the last few years has not reflected the realities of the economy. If the earning power of workers is such that someone can work full-time at a Walmart and still be below the poverty level, then something is very wrong. I think Dewey would have been very clear about those matters because he was such a strong proponent of maintaining a social infrastructure that allows people to develop their potentialities.

GJ: *What can teachers learn from Dewey that might surprise them?*

LH: I think that would depend on the teacher, because a lot of the teachers who I talk to are very good and very knowledgeable about ideas that they may not exactly associate with Dewey but that have filtered down to them from people who have been their teachers. So it would be difficult to field that question because the answer would depend on which teacher we are talking about.

GJ: *How about the teachers who believe they are tied to the curriculum at this point and are afraid to branch out from a mostly prescribed method of teaching?*

LH: The teachers I talk to do not like too much structure imposed on the classroom so I think they are on Dewey's side on that issue. I have talked to zero teachers who liked No Child Left Behind, and I have talked to teachers who do not like the Common Core, either. I think we have a very strong cadre of teachers in this country who feel this way and they are being shortchanged. They have good ideas—at least the ones I know and talk to—and they real need to have more room to do the kinds of things that they see as a part of their calling. I have even talked to some teachers during the No Child Left Behind era who talked about subversion. They were actually teaching geography in chemistry classes because they felt that the social sciences had been so badly shortchanged.

GJ: *Why is it not uncommon that people take only one line from Dewey and then start to expand on just that one line when in fact Dewey wrote for the next five pages on that particular line. I have always thought that all you have to do is read the next five pages to gain an understanding.*

LH: Well, he did try to address that type of problem. He believed in teachers so he tended to help them out by putting a couple of paragraphs at the end of the chapter summarizing what he just said. In *Democracy and Education* those summaries just go right on through the book. At one point I had students who were supposed to write

a paper on *Democracy and Education*. I looked at one of the papers and I realized the student had just copied the last three paragraphs of every chapter. Well, he got a really good sense of what Dewey was doing, but I'm afraid there was not much in terms of originality in his paper.

GJ: *Do you think that it is a significant issue that people just pull out single phrases or lines here and there and try and make sense of it?*

LH: Yes, some people do. Some people pull out lines as kind of proof text to show what a nasty person he was, what a nihilist, or whatever their gripe is. A badly informed person on a school board near Chicago actually wrote a letter to the Illinois School Board Journal accusing Dewey of being responsible for the shootings at the Columbine, Colorado high school. I do not normally read the Illinois School Board Journal, but the editor sent me a note that said, "Here is the issue of the journal, this is the person who wrote this letter, and would you like to respond? I'll give you some space." I said, "You bet I would." So, once again, it is Dewey's relativism that rankled. The gripe? Dewey does not recognize absolute values. Dewey does not share our universal values. In my response, I suggested that the problem was that religious fundamentalists tend to read only other fundamentalists, so that gets to be a problem when they have to understand a viewpoint that is not that of their tribe. This person had obviously not read Dewey to find out what he actually said. He had clearly, relied on somebody who had misread Dewey.

GJ: *I have always believed that his chosen use of words and even highly defined words, such as occupations, that he is consistent used throughout—in your case all thirty-seven volumes of him…*

LH: The way I see it is that yes, the words do change. Earlier he uses the term pragmatism, later it is instrumentalism. So some of those words change though time as he gets criticism, as he tries to refine ideas, he changes the connotation. But what I see is that as he continues to work things through his basic ideas remain more of less the same. And one of those basic ideas is found in the reflex article ["The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology"]. And he says somewhere—and I tried to find this the other day and but I couldn't—he says that most of his published work had been a working out, a ramification of the reflex arc concept article that he wrote in 1896 because it is just so important, so strong, and so much the basis of what he means by organic learning, the way that organisms learn in their environment.

GJ: *Is it fair to say Dewey was involved in organic learning or what is often called holistic learning; or are these concepts one and the same?*

LH: You have to start where students' interests are. And that's going to be different for an inner-city kid than a farm kid. You have to start where they are. Dewey was critical of teachers who complained that their students are sitting around in the classroom daydreaming. He said, "Now, if you engaged their interests, they would not be doing that." That is a very important part of organic learning, holistic learning, as well. But the important thing is to see the organism in its environment and see what that means in terms of context. You cannot do that with teaching to the test, it just does not work. And doing what works, as opposed to what students might have been predisposed to do, is important. Working with contexts. I will give you an example. Right after World War II there were a lot of Japanese war brides in the United States, and a good many of those were members of the Soka Gakkai. And what [Daisaku] Ikeda and his teacher Josei Toda advised them to do was give up the kimonos, start wearing Western clothes, learn to drive a car, and do not look back—look forward to integration into the American life as a part of your religious mission. That is what you need to do: a religious mission in a sense, that this is a part of your education, and you need to do this. That is a great idea, right? In other words do not hang on to old ideas, look at them and see if they work. If they do not, then get rid of them and go onto something that does.

GJ: *Teachers must know in their heart of hearts that if you begin with a student's interests—that is really where a connection can be made, but they probably feel so much pressure to just—*

LH: Teachers feel a lot of pressure but I would say that if you go to the college of education and human sciences here you will not find more than a couple people who are even interested in Dewey.

GJ: *I know.*

LH: And I think that is true for a number of reasons. First of all, Dewey's considered kind of old fashioned. Second, the young people in philosophy of education, they want to get in on French post-modernism. They want to read [Gilles] Deleuze, and [Félix] Guattari, and people like that—that is the exciting stuff, right? And Dewey is sort of considered this grandfatherly old guy who was important years ago, but nobody pays any attention to. A lot of people think that in colleges of education. There are certainly exceptions to that, but I cannot count more than three people in

the whole college of education here who would take Dewey seriously. I do not know everybody over there, but it is certainly not a hotbed of Dewey studies. But there are people at Columbia, there are people at Stanford, there are people at—well, I was going to say Chicago, but Chicago folded its department of education in about 1996 I think. The University of Chicago celebrated the 100th anniversary of Dewey's founding of the department of education by abolishing it. Eighteen ninety-six to nineteen ninety-six. That was their tribute to the founding—they just abolished it.

GJ: *What do you think Dewey might have thought of Paulo Freire? To me, they seem very much in sync with one another.*

LH: Well, there's certainly a lot, as you say, there's certainly a lot of overlap—

GJ: *Especially with his—Freire's—take on the banking method.*

LH: Yes, I think they are very similar in a lot of ways. But there is also a kind of cultural difference, obviously, since education is in many ways culturally bound—methods, ideas, points of departure are culturally bound. I think there is an enormous similarity and if you get past that kind of patina of cultural differences. And, there's another person who was not a student of Dewey's but he was there at the end of Dewey's career at Columbia went on to become the Minister of Education in Brazil and put into effect some of Dewey's ideas in Brazil. Dewey was influential in some aspects of education in Mexico; he traveled to Mexico, went out into the boondocks and talked to people about the schooling and so on. There is considerable interest in Dewey in Latin America.

GJ: *Would you tell me your thoughts concerning Dewey's "The Savage Mind" essay. Especially where he is speaking about identify and ways of expressing oneself and at the end where he talking about beauty and religion.*

LH: Now, it's a strange thing that there are young professors, young academics, who try to make their mark by finding something nasty that somebody said at some point that they think was very important. Some of them have attacked that article because of the term savage. "Oh, my God! Dewey used the term 'savage'! He must have been some kind of *–ist*! or *–ism*!" Well, what they fail to do is read the article with care. He says in "The Savage Mind" that the people who were studied were not less intelligent that we are today, but just didn't have the tools we have. They had a wonderful sense of

community with their environment, in almost this religious sense that you mention. But some of my younger colleagues seem to have missed that point. Their interpretation is superficial.

GJ: *What was Dewey's relationship with Jane Addams when they were working together at Hull House?*

LH: Well, he was secretary/treasurer of the Hull House for a while, and I think he really learned a lot from Jane Addams. One of my colleagues, Charlene Seigfried, who is a specialist on Jane Addams—sat right where you are, for several days—and read over the correspondence and the lecture notes, and she sometimes said, "Oh, Dewey still didn't get it, he still didn't get it!" And, of course what he was not getting was what Jane Addams was trying to get him to see. But I do think he learned a lot from her. I think he learned a lot in terms of Addams' notion of the social, her notion of what constitutes a problem. I mean—I am sure this did not happen—but in my mind it could have: Jane Addams and John Dewey are walking along the streets of Chicago and he is saying, "Well, Miss Addams, how do you think we should solve the problem of the slums?" and she says, "Well, Mr. Dewey, first of all I think we would have to determine what the problem of the slums is." I think, she had a real sense that you do not rush in assuming that you know the problem, and I think that must have influenced Dewey. Of course, they also had those debates about pacifism; well, different sides on the World War I pacifism issue when the progressive movement split—World War I, 1917, 1918. But they were lifelong friends and I think he did—he learned a lot from her. He was a lecturer at Hull House and he was very active there.

GJ: *How would you summarize the legacy of John Dewey?*

LH: That is an interesting question, too. I would say for the teaching of philosophy, his legacy is such that he gives us a number of ways to go past the kind of narrow, analytic approach to philosophy that has dominated the field for the last, what, fifty years or more—sixty, seventy years. So, there are a lot of tools available in terms of teaching logic—the kind of more biological adaptive approach associated with some aspects of process philosophy. There is a legacy there that really offers a great deal. I would also say the lessons of some of his major articles and major essays have really not been digested properly, and I would include in that his 1896 "Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology" article, which was groundbreaking and still has not been fully appreciated, I think, by many people in academic

fields. His legacy is also one for not only philosophers, public planners, political science people, but also for—as I have already mentioned—teachers, who can still find ways of addressing issues in the classroom, I think, through careful readings of his work, especially his great book *Democracy and Education*. And I would also say in areas such as biotechnology, that there are lessons there and in cognitive neuroscience—there are people in those fields who are taking up Dewey's ideas and moving them forward in ways that are really quite impressive. So there is a lot of interest in Dewey right now, in pragmatism in general, and his legacy. I suppose one could say that he is stimulating people in a number of different areas to take his ideas seriously and push them forward. As a philosopher, Dewey wanted to reform traditional philosophy in the way that Darwin had reformed population biology, that is, by rejecting the idea that species are fixed. For Dewey, this meant that the metaphysical essences of traditional philosophy should be treated not as fixed, but as tools used in various types of inquiry. His educational proposals were designed to overcome the traditional splits between school and society, between the child and the curriculum, and between theory and practice. He emphasized the growth of both the individual and the community. He wanted to strike a balance between the preservation and transfer of received values, on one side, and dismissing or dismantling them, on the other side.

GJ: *Thank you. What would you like to know about Dewey if you were to ask other Dewey scholars?*

LH: That is an interesting question. Well, I do ask other Dewey scholars and I have not thought of anything that I have not asked them already, so that is a bit of a difficult question. I suppose I should think about that and see if I could come up with something. I mean, I do read the books and articles of other Dewey scholars, and I talk to them, and so I suppose I have received most of the answers to the questions that I have had and do not have any really outstanding at the moment.

GJ: *Can you recall any issues or questions that you have discussed in this context that might be of interest to others?*

LH: Well, one involves Dewey's political affiliations. There is an interesting kind of debate—although I do not know that the two people ever got together to do this in person, but in terms of their work—between Robert Westbrook's book on Dewey and American Democracy, and then there is a book by Alan Ryan on Dewey, and

in those works there are really two different portrayals of Dewey's type of socialism. In Westbrook one sees a kind of industrial socialism, I would call it; one in which Dewey is interested in a larger pattern of activity that has to do with the resources of the nation. And in Alan Ryan's book there is more of a guild socialism, and that is a smaller kind of socialism; it has to do with trade unions and so on. So there is a bit of a debate there that I find rather fascinating. I have also been fascinated by talking to John McDermott, for instance, who's a professor at Texas A&M—and John has supplied lots of interesting information about Dewey's life, and his colleagues and so on, and his relationship to his colleagues—at Columbia, for example—that one really does not find in the literature. So these kinds of conversations are very helpful.

GJ: *Could you provide just a few details on your role at the Dewey Center and, even though you have spoken about it briefly before, the growth of the centers internationally?*

LH: Sure. I came on board here [the Dewey Center in Carbondale, Illinois] in 1993; that is quite a long time ago, now that I think about it. My predecessor, Jo Ann Boydston, was retiring after more than 30 years at the center. She and her staff had successfully completed work on the print edition of the thirty-seven volumes of the collected works of John Dewey. It was a massive and extremely important undertaking that was done with exquisite care; it really is like a gold standard of an edition. When I came on board, things were changing rather rapidly in the field of editorial work because of the rise of electronic publication. And so one of the things that we did was that we published an electronic edition—The Collected Works—in 1996, and we were also working from the time I arrived on Dewey's correspondence. Now, we have published four volumes of the Dewey correspondence—something in the neighborhood of 24,000 items of correspondence now available in electronic form, fully searchable. And in fact we are about to publish a new edition—in fact I was just working on it—that adds another 1257 items. And during that time also, with the help of the John Dewey Foundation, we have been able to help establish several international Dewey Centers, and I would mention China, Japan, Germany, Italy, Spain, Hungary, Poland, Turkey, Argentina, and Brazil. Our newest one just opened in France, in Paris. Each of those places has a cloth edition of Dewey's Collected Works, they have access to the online databases, they have a dedicated workspace and computing facilities for visitors to the research center, they also have a website, and

they have online access to information about what they do. They also put on workshops, conferences, that kind of thing, but for the most part provide access to Dewey materials for local researchers of any level, from high school up to very senior scholars. It has really been a great pleasure to work with the directors of these centers because they are all interested in Dewey and they think that his work is important and should be available.

GJ: *Even though you have talked about this a bit, is there a common theme of interest in Dewey internationally?*

LH: No. I would say, for instance, at the center in Poland the main interest is aesthetics. The centers in Italy and Germany are more interested in Dewey's educational philosophy. The one in Japan is focused on Dewey's educational philosophy and also his ideas about religion. Let's see, of the others, I would say the one in Hungary is more interested in Dewey's relationship to neo-pragmatism. There are a lot of very different approaches to his work in these centers. And of course, they are not exclusive. I mean, in each of these places, the resource materials are there and the facilities are open to anyone who wants to seriously read Dewey's work from whatever angle.

GJ: *But democracy and education are constant ideas and ideals?*

LH: Democracy and Education, in Dewey's sense, go together, they're interdefinable. See, if you look at where these places are—China, Hungary, Poland, Turkey, Argentina, Italy, southern Italy, I should say—these are all places that are struggling to determine what democracy is, more so perhaps than in Germany, which has had that struggle for a long time and has sort of come to consensus. These are all places that are struggling in ways that perhaps we in this country are not, but should be, to determine what kind of education they want, what the profile of democracy will work in their country vis-à-vis their educational system. That is the motivation, I think.

GJ: *Thank you so very much.*

LH: It has been a pleasure talking to you.

CHAPTER 3

Champion of Change: Linda Darling-Hammond

Prologue

Scholar Introduction

Linda Darling-Hammond is Professor Emeritus at Stanford University. During her long-term career at Stanford, she launched both the Stanford Center for Opportunity in Education and the School Redesign Network. She also served as a faculty sponsor for the Stanford Teacher Education Program, and she is a former president of the American Educational Research Association. While serving as executive director of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future from 1994 to 2001, Darling-Hammond's blue ribbon panel issued the 1996 report "What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future" that led to sweeping changes affecting teaching in the USA. Later, in 2006, this report was named one of the most influential reports affecting education in the USA. At the same time, Darling-Hammond was named one of the most influential people impacting educational policy during that decade. At the outset of President Obama's presidency, she led his education policy transition team and remained a policy advisor to the president. In addition, over time, Darling-Hammond has amassed more than 300 publications, including *Powerful Teacher Education*, *The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future*, and *Teaching in the Flat World: Learning from High-Performing Systems.*

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Fortunately, Linda Darling-Hammond was able to carve out some time for an interview out of her demanding schedule at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) 2016 annual meeting in Washington, DC. She concluded an AERA Past Presidents' invitational lunch in the mid-afternoon and sat down with me in the emptied-out banquet ballroom to talk about her ideas about John Dewey and his educational philosophy.

Dialogue Overview

Is Linda Darling-Hammond the leader of what might be called the John Dewey and Democracy Support Team? Perhaps so. I will let you decide after reading the transcript of our conversation. But first, I need to share that Linda Darling-Hammond quickly and in a very straightforward manner identified key facets of what she believes to be Dewey's positive influence on schooling then and now. While many refer to Dewey's seminal work *Democracy and Education*, Darling-Hammond deftly circles around his writing *Education and Experience* to support her various points of view.

Real Experience

I find her comments on Dewey's reflective thinking ideas refreshing and enlightening. For instance, she strongly encourages educators to teach "real"—specifically real experience, real people, real events. This stance on teaching methodology opens the door to understanding our society today and the important aspects of acquiring knowledge that lend themselves to understanding. Darling-Hammond states, "I remember the statement that education is not for life, education is life—or something to those effects."

Social Justice

These ideas continue as she reiterates what she identifies as the three *C*s of Dewey, that is, he talked about "common, communication, and community." As she expresses, "the more you build communication across and within diverse communities, the more you build out the community so it is more inclusive." In her opinion, this indicates Dewey's strong support of social justice concepts.

In an innovative manner, Linda Darling-Hammond muses over Dewey's assertion about "living in a hostile environment." While this phrase identified a statement that she would want Dewey himself to explain to her, Darling-Hammond transfers it over to her own current endeavors involving

initiatives to deal with bureaucracy, administrators, and educational policy. She proceeds to relate it to politics by concluding, "If we just stay here we will never be able to create a new environment."

Trust in Teachers

Darling-Hammond points out an important aspect of what I term John Dewey's legacy. She uniquely expresses that "he never, kind of boxed things up into a prescription. In fact, he resisted doing that." In essence, this reinforces that Dewey placed his trust in teachers to develop creative and innovative curriculum to inspire students to think critically and form solutions to current issues and problems of importance to their lives and to their communities.

Our fast-paced dialogue was infused with Darling-Hammond's energy and her positive outlook for Dewey's continuing role in twenty-first-century teaching and learning.

Epilogue

Linda Darling-Hammond reminds us that Dewey's educational thought is not always reflected in all aspects of the overarching themes of those who have constantly been battling for influence, if not control, of the American curriculum. At the same time, she steadfastly believes that his ideas and ideals continue to be applicable to those who are interested in advocating aspects of social, political, and cultural development that support democratic classrooms. Darling-Hammond suggests that, even today, for students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members—no matter how each situates himself in terms of the unique circumstances he may encounter in his life or that are reflected in the time in which he lives—Dewey's thoughts continue to influence teaching and learning in ways that provide meaning.

Using a unique lens, Linda Darling-Hammond's view of Dewey's influence on education and the American curriculum in many respects is poetic. She observes, "The river gets a little bigger at some moments in history and smaller at others, depending on all of the political forces that are going on, but it has never dried up." Certainly, the voluminous works of Dewey published over decades can be visualized as a river of educational knowledge and philosophy. But in Darling-Hammond's eyes, it is more likely that Dewey's contribution is a flowing river of

experience and education, that is, a flowing reflective process of teaching and learning that both grows and sustains democracy and education.

Author note: All quotations in the Prologue and Epilogue are from the Linda Darling-Hammond dialogue transcript.

Linda Darling-Hammond Dialogue

TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND

Washington, DC, April 2016 (Edited)

GREGG JORGENSEN (GJ): *I am going to be addressing readers who may have a passing acquaintance with John Dewey, or not know him at all. What would you say about Dewey himself for this audience?*

LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND (LDH): In terms of who he was—well, I guess people think about John Dewey as a philosopher. That is one kind of attribute, but I also think about him as fundamentally an educator who thought deeply about teaching and schools and the role of education and society in ways that are very pragmatic and practical as well as philosophical and theoretical.

GJ: *Do you believe that John Dewey's philosophy still has a role to play in the twenty-first century, and if so, how do you see it happening?*

LDH: Absolutely. I often think about John Dewey as the person who plagiarized all of my thoughts before I had them. Whenever you think you have a new idea that will help solve the fundamental difficult problems of education in this century, you find yourself reverting to ideas that Dewey had a century earlier. There is certainly a lot of relevance. Do you want me to go into some of the areas where I really think that is the case?

GJ: *Yes, please do.*

LDH: I think there are three different examples of that, which come to my mind. One is the work that he did around experience and education. There he was making the fundamental point that education is rooted in experience and that experience is the route to learning. And that unless you figure out how to shape experience so that it can be a source of educational learning, you cannot get the kind of learning that will be really transferrable and deeply understood and applied in other settings. We struggle with that to this day. The problem when

experience is not considered a key part of the educational process, is that kids or adults are encountering things that are remote, which they may feel are difficult to understand, distant, theoretical. The application of what we are thinking about is where we do most of our learning. It is where we try things out, where we find out what works, does not work, make mistakes, correct those, and engage with other people who are in that same realm. Every time there is another round of school reforms, we go back to a realization that we have to link head and hand and heart to experience and learning. In California, there is something called Linked Learning, right now. That links classroom work and schools with experiences in the work world and makes the two of them link that learning together. It is very powerful. The outcomes are so much better for young people. One of the things that Dewey taught us also, is that as we think about it, vocational education and academic education should not be separated; and, that students who may be heading to college need vocational, applied, hands on learning as much as kids who may be going straight into occupations. These divides that we have created are artificial and dysfunctional for the learning process. That conversation is every bit as relevant today as it was a 100 years ago, when he was raising that issue. Great teachers always understand that they are creating experiential opportunities for their students where they can see, touch, hear, consider, engage with real events, real experiences—real people to understand what societies are, what science, what mathematical ideas look like in application and so on. That is one area that is very perennial. Another area is, of course, that we engage in an iterative fashion—that we are engaging today—is the whole issue of educational equity. And you know the famous words that Dewey penned around what the best and wisest parent wants for his or her child, must also be what the community wants for all of its children, any other narrow and unlovely purposes that is acting upon it, destroys our democracy. Or something to that effect—a little paraphrasing in there—is something I use all of the time when I am speaking to policy audiences as well as to education audiences about what we have to be doing to correct the profound inequalities in access to education that we still experience. And it is so resonant, whoever you are talking to goes: yes, yes, that's right. Even if they have not had that thought before, even if they were not crusading for educational equity. It makes a mark on them in a way that creates an awareness that I think we can work with, and act on to make progress in that area.

GJ: *Do you think Dewey was underrated in any way in the twentieth century?*

LDH: I really do not know. I mean, people I know, in the education world, certainly have for many decades had a strong appreciation for Dewey. I am sure he felt ignored in his own era, which is often the case with great minds and great people. And the scientists were kind of winning at a moment in time, and I am sure that was painful. It would have been better if he were better attended to. At the same time, throughout the twentieth century, all over the world people took up his ideas. If you go to China, Dewey's ideas are very well populated or the landscape is well populated with Dewey's ideas. You could go to a hundred countries I could name and people attend to the work of John Dewey. I guess the answer is probably yes and no.

GJ: *As they are so often.*
LDH: Yes.

GJ: *Do you believe that Dewey ever influenced the American Curriculum?*
LDH: Yes. But we have always had curriculum wars going on. You cannot talk about the American curriculum as though it is one thing, right? There have been many ways of thinking about curriculum in the United States. They change at moments in time, and, they are different across communities and states. But there is a thread, or a river of the American curriculum, that Dewey influenced very strongly. And, that is the thread that is always trying to bring experience into education, engage students in problem based and project based learning, and experiential opportunities. You mentioned social studies in your work. You know all of the work that places like Bank Street College of Education, New York, and Teacher's College [Columbia University] were also part of that; and others engaged in where social studies became the heart of the curriculum. In fact, all of New York State has maintained for decades and decades and decades a strong commitment to an experiential social studies curriculum. It is a very interesting phenomenon. You can go to parts of the country where there is no engagement with the social studies. And, you could not have that experience in New York. Because those ideas got deeply planted, not just by Dewey himself, but by people who worked with him and who followed his work. There is a strong, component of curricular thinking and doing in the United States, that has long been influenced by Dewey, and it never goes away. The river gets a little bigger at some moments in history and smaller at others, depending on all of the political forces that are going on, but it has never dried up.

GJ: *How did Dewey deal with the concept of social efficiency?*
LDH: I do not really know. I am not sure.

GJ: *Any thoughts on pragmatism from Dewey's point of view?*
LDH: I would have to go back into the literature and read it.

GJ: *Do you think that Dewey's reflective thinking approach could be implemented into today's curriculum? And if so, what would have to happen?*
LDH: I think it is implemented. Again, in these places that have carried on these ideas. I am not sure what the question means in terms of what would have to happen. For it to be more widely implemented, we would need to have a conception of learning that is not just about the transmission of pieces of information, and then the recall of those pieces of information, and producing those items on a test or something similar that would constitute learning. That process really did not constitute learning from John Dewey's perspective. Learning happens in the reflective process following and during experiences. And, so the learning occurs when we experience things, and then we are reflective on the meaning of those things. We are guided to do that in ways that are deeper and deeper, that we may see more and more possibilities in terms of the levels of implication or meaning or application in the experiences we have had and in the ideas that we have learned. There is also an iterative quality of that as well. It is not like you learn something in a moment of time, then you move on to the next thing, and you are done learning the first thing.

GJ: *Yes. Correct.*
LDH: And we put that in a little box—it is off to the side, and we move on to the next thing. It is much more that we experience, we learn, we reflect on that, and it informs our continued learning, but we are continuing to reflect. And the levels of understanding become deeper, the various tributaries that we can take become more plentiful. In order for that to exist in a schooling context, you need both a way of conceptualizing the curriculum that is in part about inquiry and experience and that is also not so driven to cover "x" number of things in order to repeat back pieces of information for those things that you cannot slow down and work with children or young people on, as they are having the actual learning experience that occurs as they are reflecting.

GJ: *Would you address what role Dewey's ideas and ideals may have had in the social justice movement?*
LDH: I think I started that earlier. The notion that every child's education should be what the best and wisest parent wants is at the core of social justice. It is about a notion that there is a central commitment to equity. There is another piece of his thinking that I think also informs

the social justice movement. He talked about how the words "common" "communication" and "community" have the notion of common ground. That is as you communicate, you are building a more common understanding. People have to get their ideas into a form where other people can understand them which means they have to understand something about the other people's thinking and ideas that when you communicate you also build community. When you do that, you are building a broader kind of common ground. I think that over the years there have been all of these battles, partly in the social studies curriculum, about a plurality, diversity, and multiculturalism on the one hand, and a view that if you allow for this, we will not have enough in common. We will not have a common American view, vision, understanding, language, or whatever on the other. But, if you take a Deweyan perspective on it, then the more you build communication across and within diverse communities, the more you build out the community so it is more inclusive, and the more you build a broader, stronger, common ground on which people can stand. Which means that multiple cultures, plural ideas, and so forth, are actually the building blocks, if you will, of this common understanding and mindset that brings people more together—rather than driving them apart.

GJ: *What can teachers still learn from Dewey that might surprise them?*

LDH: There is no such thing as a single view among teachers, right? Every teacher has different things to learn from Dewey, depending on what they already think and know and what their experience has been. I do not know what would surprise a given teacher. I will tell you as a teacher, for me, when I was first coming into contact with Dewey, the set of ideas around *Experience and Education* were very powerful for me. And I am sure that is true for other teachers. There are undoubtedly other things that are powerful for others.

GJ: *What would you still like to know about Dewey if you were to ask other Dewey scholars?*

LDH: I do not know who would know the answer to this—whether it be scholars or Dewey's parents, or who—but I would really be interested in what got him engaged with and so deeply interested in the ideas about education. You know, how did he come to this? And, what motivated his thinking? I mean at some point you know he got engaged in starting the lab school in Chicago and all of that. But before that, what happened to get him turned on and thinking into these issues this way.

GJ: *If you were at a dinner party and Dewey were there, what would you ask Dewey, and what would you tell Dewey about yourself*?

LDH: One of the things that I always love that Dewey talked about was—he talked about how the great machinations of schooling and administrative apparatus and all of that, that people—that was something that educators wanted to leave to the bureaucrats, administrators, and politicians, and they did not want to really get involved in it but he made the point that you have to get involved in that. And a lot of my life's work has been around that. I started out as a teacher but I work both in research and policy trying to create an environment in which the type of schools that Dewey was trying to create can be nurtured rather than stamped out

You know, living in a hostile environment. I have thought about that statement of Dewey's many times. I think it has been a call to me to try to engage with the much less pleasant world of administration, bureaucracy, and policy and politics to try to create that idea. And then he must have as he ran into the same kind of difficult forces that we experience today, he must have had that same thought. If we just stay here we will never be able to create a new environment in which this kind of nurturing education can be widespread. I want to ask him first of all what caused him to make that statement. And, secondly, what did he learn in trying to engage with those forces that might be helpful for us today.

GJ: *How would you summarize the legacy of John Dewey?*

LDH: Well, on the one hand you could say the legacy is helping people think deeply about educational purposes, methods, strategies, approaches, that will lead children and young people to experience an empowering kind of learning that will enrich their lives. I remember the statement that education is not for life, education is life—or something to those effects. Yes, education is such. I think those ideas that people come to generation after generation and say yes, yes, I know this to be true. I think it is a very affirming legacy. It is affirming for educators, every time people encounter Dewey for the first time and they say "yes, that is what I have been trying to say" or "I've been thinking about this, I think that's what it really means." And then—but then you have people who take up the ideas and then go further because they are generative. He never, kind of boxed things up into a prescription. In fact, he resisted doing that. So, it is both offering insights and planting seeds from which people generate their own understandings. Food for thought in the most nurturing sense of the term.

GJ: *Thank you; I appreciate your time and the conversation!*

LDH: You are welcome!

CHAPTER 4

Education Reform, Politics, and Change Advocate: Michael Apple

Prologue

Scholar Introduction

Michael Apple spent his graduate education years of study at Teachers College, Columbia University, in New York, where he earned his doctorate in curriculum and teaching. Apple then journeyed to the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where, after 40 years, he continues to enjoy an esteemed teaching and writing career as an internationally known scholar. During these years at Madison, Apple's close colleagues have included Herb Kliebard and Fred Newmann, among many others. He now serves as the John Bascom Professor of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies. His academic honors include the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Educational Research Association and the UCLA Medal for Distinguished Academic Achievement. Apple's numerous publications include *Ideology and Curriculum*, now in its third edition, which has been acclaimed as one of the most important books in education in the twentieth century; and, more recently, *Knowledge, Power, and Education: The Selected Works of Michael W. Apple* and *Can Education Change Society?*, including many other writings.

Among scholars, Michael Apple is regarded as an expert on the effects and politics of educational reform. With this thought in mind, I contacted Apple to request a time to interview him about John Dewey,

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educational philosopher and scholar. At Apple's suggestion, we met in a café in his neighborhood close to the university campus. Our coffee and conversation became an energized exchange of Michael Apple's ideas embracing curriculum and instruction, politics, and John Dewey.

Dialogue Overview

Michael Apple's past history with John Dewey's philosophy of education is quite unique compared to the experiences of other scholars interviewed for this book. A significant difference between Michael Apple and most of the other scholars interviewed is Apple's lack of exposure to John Dewey's writings early on in his educational path. He was essentially advised not to read Dewey. For instance, during Apple's time in college, Dewey's *Experience and Education* was considered outdated scholarly material. As Apple advanced to graduate school, the approach in place in his philosophy classes was analytic philosophy—a curriculum that in Apple's experience considers Dewey not worth reading. What, then, transpired to motivate Apple to both acquire and advocate Deweyan philosophy?

Discovering Dewey

Apple intently shares the personal story of his undergraduate and graduate studies to convey the span of his student experience from never reading Dewey to an almost osmosis type of adaptation of Deweyan teaching. At last, Apple experiences an epiphany and reaches an understanding about the value that Dewey's writings bring to education. He discloses, "I came at Dewey in a different way. I was interested in the question of knowledge and power. I still am. Dewey made fundamental contributions to the sociology of knowledge." In Apple's case, it "was the sociology of knowledge that was the fundament of much of my work."

Apple points out that many teachers may exhibit Deweyan ideas of teaching and learning without ever realizing it. As such, Apple believes Dewey is influential, but indirectly, through teachers searching for knowledge-based teaching, not necessarily borrowing directly from his writings. Apple posits that "the residual effect of what teachers do echoes Dewey's words." Drawing on these thoughts, Apple reflects that in his day, Dewey was underestimated as a philosopher, and also that Dewey was underrated in influencing curriculum in the schools. But in today's environment, Apple sees a Deweyan resurgence, which he welcomes.

He strongly believes it is possible to reread Dewey and agree with some points. At the same time, it is possible to fundamentally disagree with some of Dewey's ideas. Today in his classroom, Apple finds it a good sign that even those students he considers radical and activist want to read Dewey. He acknowledges, "They read him through open eyes. That's smart to me."

Building Dialogue on Ideology

The conversation moves on to Apple's idea about what he considers a sound curricular foundation for today's schools. He outlines, "If you want a counterhegemonic reality, build a school where people are respected from day one, where their voices are heard.... But it must be done through dialogue. So, it's Dewey, [Antonio] Gramsci, [Paulo] Freire." This brings Gramsci along with Freire into our conversation. Similar to his experience in reading—or not reading—Dewey, Apple never read Freire in college. Instead, he did not discover Freire until after he had begun his teaching. Subsequently, he traveled to Brazil at Freire's request. Their discussions were based on school ideology—what directions to pursue.

Apple reveals that Freire had read *Ideology and Curriculum,* and also *Education and Power,* "so they became movement books down in Brazil. We had discussions, but usually not about Dewey." Nevertheless, Apple states, "Freire was one of the most voracious readers that I ever met.... I would be deeply surprised if there had not been a Deweyan influence on him. I just cannot imagine that there would not be." Based on his experience, Apple draws solid parallels between Dewey and Freire: "both have this vision that the task is not to replace one ideology with the other; it must be done through dialogue and democratically." Thus, Apple believes that Dewey and Freire essentially combine in very robust ways.

When I specifically ask whether Dewey influenced the American curriculum, Apple quickly responds, "There is no one answer to this." However, he qualifies his remark with the comment that Dewey was influential through his laboratory schools, which evolved beyond the University of Chicago to a number of campuses. And, he adds, "Oddly enough, in African American segregated schools, that's an untold story."

Transforming Schools

Apple mentions W.E.B. Du Bois as one example of several scholars basically advocating "let's transform schools to transform society,"

acknowledging that this is very much like what Dewey was proposing. Apple extends this idea to socioeconomically impacted people with the caveat "I do not want to say just Dewey—but progressive aspects had a significant impact in many of the African American schools." However, after expressing that most teachers begin with a progressive emphasis, he observes that today many are adversely impacted by circumstances such as class size or No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Common Core policy factors. From this viewpoint, Apple believes teachers lament, "This is not teaching. This is for tests. I'm bored, kids are bored… here is what I am trying to do to make it interesting." For Apple, this last phrase is critical. He determines, "Even when they are not reading Dewey, there is this tension of consciousness that is quite Deweyan." Apple's conclusion is that "it is the progressive movement that lives."

Dewey's Dilemma with Social Efficiency

In discussing social efficiency, Apple notes that Dewey actually cites Edward Thorndike in his own writings. Apple advises, "Thorndike was a scientific progressive. This is weird. But progressivism was a faith in science and rationality as a democratizing force." Thus, Apple continues that Dewey in his "early years of learning psych and Thorndike—who was racist and sexist—you see Dewey quoting from him." This is a point of interest for Apple, who concludes that Dewey "was more eclectic than people like to admit, and more complicated." Apple almost pairs Dewey and Thorndike by using the example of Dewey stating, in essence, "Look, what we do not want is the mind as a muscle. The mind is active." Conversely, Apple assigns the same phrase "the mind is active" to Thorndike, but with the caveat that Thorndike would expand social efficiency reasoning with the idea that "some minds are better at that than others," thus providing a very different connotation.

On this note, Apple elaborates, "here we have a different way in which Dewey is looking at science and rationality as forms of progressivism, but science not as a form of positivism." This causes Apple to ask himself what Dewey is finding or looking for in the people he cites in his research—referring in particular to Thorndike, who morphs his progressive scientific ideas into forms of control linking together with the likes of John Franklin Bobbitt, W.W. Charters, and David Snedden. Thus, Apple's dialogue allows us to see that it is possible to determine that advocating the development of the whole person within the context of vocational education is a hopeful proposition as well as a service

opportunity in a real and concrete sense. However, Dewey's notion of vocational education as embracing hope and possibility embodies the idea that education is much more than training for a job. He steadfastly opposes the ideas of Bobbitt, Snedden, and the like—particularly when it comes to controlling outcomes that would limit the opportunity of possibility.

Teaching Reflective Thinking

Regarding my inquiry as to whether Dewey's reflective thinking ideas can be implemented in today's curriculum, Apple takes the position that reflective thinking teaching is happening today. As almost a side note, he shares, "I think we do the right a favor—the political right and economic right—by assuming it is not going on; it is in classrooms already. I actually think this is crucial because otherwise we contribute to cynicism and we make teachers into puppets." Apple expands this idea with a conversational footnote that the right is solidly on the opposite side of reflective thinking theory and observes, "When I go into schools, I see some teachers struggling like crazy to keep above water to make lessons interesting to kids, and I see a lot of test prep."

Remaining on this reflective thinking topic in general, Apple adds, "Nothing that we are doing or that we have to face is any harder than was faced by the progressives and others, or when the United States was an apartheid society." Apple transfers this thought to his idea that educators have made progress in promulgating critical thinking in classrooms today. He determines that "the right is now telling us there were too many victories," which he considers quite a compliment for contemporary education—and in essence a Deweyan education. To emphasize, Apple underscores that "those victories came because educators participated with other movements—democratic socialist movements, movements for women's rights, movements for oppressed people"—as well as with "teachers fighting back." Thus, it is possible to define Apple's mantra for today's educators with his statement that "one of the things I try to argue in the new book is [that] we can win, but only if you participate in other movements—that it cannot be done in education alone."

Interest Leads to Reflective Thinking

Apple strongly believes that teachers can be surprised by what Dewey has to say about teaching and learning. A case in point for teachers is that interesting topics do not necessarily equate to sound knowledge.

According to Apple, Dewey's "message of *Experience and Education* was not, 'If it's fun, it's good.'" Apple readily concedes that teachers should lead with interest, but with an idea that develops into a path that "will be democratically discussed and arrived at and must be constantly examined and reflected on, but there is real science and real math that is actually quite important if we are going to reconstruct society." He qualifies these thoughts by stating, "That is Gramsci—that is a leftist position; that is profound." I personally add that this is also Dewey in alignment with Gramsci.

In other words, Apple is reminding teachers that they are following in Dewey's footsteps by using issues-centered active learning strategies in reflective, critical, and engaging, but meaningful, ways. Considering questions in the classroom that challenge assumptions and beliefs that are deemed conventional ways of knowing, including cultural norms, values, and traditions that support the status quo, creates an opportunity for critical thinking. Apple suggests, for example, that math and science can provide avenues from which solutions can be arrived at through learning processes that embody strong integrated or interdisciplinary content knowledge, critical pedagogy, and experimentation—not just entertaining discussions or projects that lack serious in-depth understandings. Dewey was well aware of the need for content knowledge across the disciplines—and especially in the fields of math and science—and Apple indicates the social, political, and economic issues of hegemony can only be addressed from multiple perspectives that take this approach as well.

It is interesting that Apple's interpretation is that teachers have adapted what he terms "the easy stuff" from Dewey. Apple does relate this into a short story about a teacher bringing teddy bears into the classroom because these stuffed animals are much loved by children. He points out that Dewey would actually agree with this tactic. But then Apple qualifies this observation by adding that Dewey may also very possibly express, "Let us now think about what were the conditions of work for the people who produced those teddy bears…. The people who built it in Haiti or the Dominican Republic or Malaysia worked very, very hard. So, let's do some study about the way in which the economy works and the debts that we owe to unseen people and culture—that the community extends outside the classroom." We both agree that this is Deweyan and that Apple's example verifies that teachers can be surprised by Dewey.

In Lieu of Summation

When I ask Apple to summarize Dewey's legacy, he bluntly states, "I can't." Apple continues by essentially taking the position that one cannot sum up what Dewey has left for future generations of educators and citizens. He steadfastly asserts, "I do not think there is one summary you could make of somebody as complicated as him." Apple designates Dewey as an ongoing challenge for educators. Thus, when I change to: inquire what more he might want to know about Dewey, Apple indicates that he would like to know what other scholars had to say about Dewey in this volume. This was a good point at which to bring our dialogue to a close.

Epilogue

As one might expect, any dialogue with Michael Apple would cover myriad topical ideas. In this case, he starts with a narrative of how he came to Dewey, transitions to a course he currently teaches at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and then moves into a multitude of ideas and understandings of curriculum that impact teaching and learning from multiple perspectives.

Importantly, two of the 20 books that Apple's graduate students read in the doctoral course that he developed, and continues to teach, serve to compare and contrast: Dewey's *Democracy and Education* and Raymond Williams's *The Long Revolution,* which Apple describes as being "about people's knowledge." Dewey is speaking about the philosophy of education—education in democratic communities of practice—and Williams is considering the effects and implications of political ideology in related contexts. Apple believes that these two books in particular serve to bring his graduate students an elevated comprehension of politics and education as well as theory. In addition, Apple shares his view that students do become interested in learning Dewey's ideas and ideals. This experience indicates that, ultimately, through an emphasis on teaching experimentation in conjunction with his teaching at Madison, Apple has found a merger of ideas from John Dewey, Antonio Gramsci, and Paulo Freire.

Michael Apple reminds us that Deweyan ideas and ideals readily extend into teaching and learning in twenty-first-century contemporary education. As Apple advises us, just reread Dewey—or read him for the first time—and you may discover notions that you agree with or that you

critique. Either way, John Dewey has a prominent place in critical thinking regarding the future of education in global landscapes.

Michael Apple Dialogue

TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL W. APPLE

Madison, WI, August 2014 (Edited)

MICHAEL APPLE (MA): So, you ask the question.

GREGG JORGENSEN (GJ): *Does Dewey's philosophy still have a role to play in twenty-first-century classrooms; if so, how do you see it happening?*

MA: I need to give you some background because this is more complicated for me. I had heard of Dewey and I had never read him; we were told not to. So, in my undergraduate work, we would read an essay by him. You may have read *Experience in Education*. But it was seen as outdated, interesting in terms of utopian visions, relatively unimportant for the slum schools of Paterson, New Jersey. At this little state college, we spent much of our time on methods and not a lot on foundations. The methods were sometimes progressive, but they tended to come from different sources than Dewey. I then went to graduate school, and my program was in analytic philosophy originally before I shifted to a program in philosophy, sociology and curriculum studies which, in other words, no longer exists. Analytic philosophy felt that Dewey was worthless, not worth reading. It is programmatic, it is not descriptive, it was not sophisticated enough and when it was sophisticated enough, it was by accident. It was largely language therapy. We read R.S. Peters, Israel Scheffler—my advisor in philosophy of education was a language therapist. A brilliant guy; very smart; took me from state teachers' college and made me into somebody who people might recognize now but I was not recognized then. I was wrong, uninformed—I had not even finished my bachelor's degree yet. I was accepted before I had two more courses to take for my bachelor's degree. I came in being relatively rhetorical—I had been a union president, so I was good rhetorically—but all of that meant that I would sort of sound Dewey-like without knowing I was being Dewey, and then would get bad grades when I was told I was smart but I needed to be much less rhetorical. That is actually important because in

most of my graduate schooling, even in philosophy of education and curriculum studies, Dewey was seen as old fashioned, nonimportant, so I came at Dewey in a different way. I was interested in the question of knowledge and power. I still am. Dewey made fundamental contributions to the sociology of knowledge. I came to Dewey with the issue of knowledge and its connections to social life, knowledge as a collective production, so I have an odd history with Dewey. It was from his epistemology, and from his ideas about knowledge and then knowledge as a social product, and then later on when it is at the educational level. So even though what I did in my classrooms when I was teaching was deeply resonate with the Dewey inform, it cannot survive in urban classrooms unless you try connecting knowledge to social life. I had a politics of survival as a teacher, trying to be good. So, I was doing Dewey without knowing I was doing Dewey. I think a lot of teachers are like that; even if they have not a clue that they are being Deweyan. For me, I was doing Dewey amateur-like, without the epistemological or theoretical formations, and graduate school did not help me in that. It was, as an example my advisor indicated there are three kinds of knowledge: knowledge that, knowledge how and knowledge to. And we would be therapists; that is, your statements make no sense. So, my formal professional schooling in philosophy was that. And the history of philosophy, on which Dewey would spend one week. Even though when I crossed the widest street in the world—120th Street from Teachers College for the philosophy program at Columbia—our seminar was held in Dewey's office where they had a large portrait of Dewey in the background—we spent in our year course in history of philosophy, one week on Dewey, almost as an afterthought. My reason for saying that is twofold: one, a lot of people do Dewey without knowing it, and two have not read his books or been influenced by him. At the same time, sometimes they come to him in unknown ways in other areas. For me, it was the sociology of knowledge that was the fundament of much of my work. So yes, he is absolutely crucial. And yes, he is strongly influential but it is not through his work. That is, it is not though the formal things of democracy in education, or experience in education, or his work on logic. It is the residual guilt that we have when we are not doing good teaching in classrooms, and he was productive about that. It is in the reading assignments, and then writing lessons, and democratic schools with some people being influenced by that sort of third-order stuff that starts out with Dewey and [Harold] Rugg and [George] Counts, Myles Horton, and all kinds of people, and

not realizing that much of it comes from an influence of the progressive tradition where Dewey was the star. It is a hard question to answer in some ways because of the influence on its relevance. The relevance is there for anyone who wants to see, but it is third-order relevance. It is without people doing it sometimes with the knowledge of its generative moments—it is like people say, "I am doing feminist work, but I am not a feminist. I have never read feminist thought," but "your classroom looks like you are doing it." So, it is a complicated story. It has never been more relevant, and it has probably never been less read. I will give one example of some of this.

I am a professor at the Institute of Education in London, so I spend a lot of time in England. Dewey was very popular in England, especially in the time of the British Infant School. When I would walk into any major bookstore—Waterstones is the big store next to the University of London—in the seventies and eighties when I first started spending a lot of time in London, the philosophy of education section was one of the largest sections in education. Now it is two shelves and the rest is assertive discipline—enhancing your kids' chances on tests, writing objectives so you can measure them, et cetera. It looks like Barnes & Noble. On the other hand, when I go into classrooms in England, even with the national curriculum teachers' unions fighting like crazy to maintain teachers' autonomy, to build curricula based on communities, to have the school a community—so the material is not read—but the residual effect of what teachers do echoes Dewey's words. I am not telling you anything you do not see yourself.

GJ: *Do you think Dewey was underrated in any way in the twentieth century?*

MA: Yes. Certainly, he was underrated as a philosopher, since if we want to look at the foundations of relativism and some of the best of poststructuralism and postmodernism—even though he would have been horrified by that last sentence—the idea that knowledge is socially produced; that truth is a creation, it is not only there to be found; that it is complicated; that it is based in communities of practice—that's Dewey. That is his epistemological forms. So, I think there was a resurgence of interest, whether it is Charles Taylor or all the people in philosophy who have rediscovered the Dewey tradition. Certainly, he is underrated in philosophy, but I do not think as much as twenty years ago; certainly not as much as when I was a graduate student. I think he is fundamentally underrated in

curriculum studies; and there has been a resurgence with that now. I think he has been underrated politically, and I think increasingly people in critical education and in critical pedagogy—whatever those words mean today—I have no idea. I used to know what they meant; I do not know what they mean anymore—are rediscovering Dewey. That, I think, is a very, very good thing. I think they are a little romantic about Dewey.

I have some major criticisms of Dewey, so you may ask me about this later, but I think there is a danger of relativism in Dewey and I am not a relativist. I think there is a danger of process eating content, and that is a debate that went on in Dewey's lifetime. That is the Counts versus Dewey debate; that is the indoctrination debate. I think Counts was quite reductive and a utopian in his own way, but I think that tension resides in Dewey. And so, I have major criticisms of one of my teachers, but our task as people who are standing on Dewey's and other people's shoulders is to take it seriously and argue back. Sir Harold Bloom once said that all poetry is an argument with your mother and father. He didn't say mother; I would prefer you say mother and father. But it seems to me that is how you respect Dewey. You say "I agree here, I disagree fundamentally there." I am pleased with the relevance of some Deweyan points and the rereading of Dewey. I will give one example: each year, I give my Ph.D. students choices in a course where I am the titular head and I come in when I am needed. There is like ten of them and they develop the reading list, and, they talk to me before this process. I say, "that's good, here's other reading that is not so good, here are better selections," and they run it themselves. Every third week, I am wheeled into respond. But it is self-pedagogic; I really believe strongly in that. The first two books of the twenty that they read was Raymond Williams's *The Long Revolution*, which is about people's knowledge, and the other is [John Dewey's] *Democracy in Education*. That coupling—one is the politics of popular culture; the politics of literacy coming from communities, and then Dewey saying, "Yes, and in schools, too." So, to them, that was a coupling. That is really interesting to me. I think that with even my most radical students—and I have a lot of them, as you might imagine—they want to read Dewey. That, to me, is a very good sign.

GJ: *That is a good sign.*

MA: They want to politicize him. They read him through open eyes. That's smart to me. If you want a counterhegemonic reality, build a school where people are respected from day one, where their voices are

heard—but not where the teacher commits suicide, where you are not simply a therapist, that you do think that there is important knowledge and you are not going to throw that out. But it must be done through dialogue. So, it's Dewey, [Antonio] Gramsci, [Paulo] Freire.

GJ: *Interesting.*

MA: They see relations that it took me years to discover.

GJ: *Tell me about the possible connections between Dewey and Freire from your perspective?*

MA: Here I must speak partly out of ignorance. Freire was a friend and I spent a lot of years with him. I came to these ideas—I like Dewey. I never read Freire when I was a graduate student. It was not until I was halfway through *Ideology and Curriculum* as a book that I began reading Freire more, with discipline. I read a couple of essays, but I am formed out of this sort of anti-racist, laborious pedagogies of the United States which have a long history with Myles Horton, with anti-racist work at the Highlander Folk School, and all kinds of things. My first teaching was reopening a school that had been closed in Prince Edward County, Virginia, when the White Citizens' Councils bought the schools for $1 because they were closed. So, at the age of fifteen and sixteen I went down in a bus as a kid to teach reading to kids. Freire was sort of like Dewey to me. I came to him later. My conversations with Freire were—this would sound egotistical and I do not mean it in that way—he is one of the most profound teachers I have ever met and he is truly influential on me. He was the best teacher I have ever seen—we were equals. That is, I was brought down there in 1986, the week after the military government was kicked out. I had been in contact with him. He asked me to come in. Freire had read *Ideology and Curriculum* and *Education and Power*, so they became movement books down in Brazil. We had discussions, but usually not about Dewey. It was more about how do we deal ideologically with schools, "Michael, you are the former president of the Teachers' Union. Here I am, Minister of Education in Sao Paolo. Teachers unions are mad at me because I am bringing in all these militants and they are not very respectful of teachers. What should I do?" So, I am listening to him teach me about what is going on in Brazil and about the epistemology he understands, and has found a pedagogy and is better at it than I will ever be. We did not spend a lot of time talking about Dewey, but Freire was one of the most voracious readers that I ever met—from biblical texts; he was a sort of lapsed

priest. Not quite, but almost. I would be deeply surprised if there had not been a Deweyan influence on him. I just cannot imagine that there would not be. But that is not the conversation that he and I would have.

GJ: *I'm sure.*

MA: No, we would have conversations about pedagogy and Dewey would be nodding like this, I am sure. There are several unbelievably strong similarities between Freire and Dewey; politically, as well, though Dewey was slightly more of a social democrat and Freire more of a democratic socialist. But both have this vision that the task is not to replace one ideology with the other; it must be done through dialog and democratically. So, that blends them together in powerful ways that's different from any of the Bolshevik motions that the left loves to do in education now through people like [Peter] McLaren and other kinds of folks which make me more than a little nervous. I do not think that is Marx, actually; I have other reasons for suggesting that this is not the second international Marxism. This is not what we should be about; it is what Marx himself rejected.

GJ: *Thank you.*

MA: I am sorry, I cannot give short answers to these things.

GJ: *I very much appreciate that. Do you believe that Dewey ever really influenced the American curriculum?*

MA: There is no one answer to this. Yes, certainly, at laboratory schools. We had a lab school here [Madison, Wisconsin]. Wisconsin High School was the example—one of the schools which was Ralph Tyler's attempt to say that Dewey was sort of right. Tyler, he was a little more progressive at certain things than people give him credit for, actually. Even though I dislike his curriculum model intensely, the guy was very intelligent. He was sort of a [Georg Wilhelm Friedrich] Hegel. He liked some of Dewey, oddly enough, which always puzzled me. And there are some hints that he gave money to Highlander. This is not the Ralph Tyler I know.

GJ: *Nor I.*

MA: It is puzzling. The Eight-Year Study at one of the high schools was here on campus. So, at Ohio State, at TC [Teachers College], here [Wisconsin] … Dewey was read, he was studied; it was the little red book, in some ways. There is much—[L.] Thomas Hopkins, people

like that, worked on project-methods measurement of curriculum. But Hopkins was the proponent of a second-order type of assessment—the TC project study crowd was dismissed when I was at TC; they were all, "Get away from that child-centered idea!" Yes, through them, at laboratory schools. Oddly enough, in African American segregated schools, that's an untold story. In my book *Can Education Change Society?* I sort of say, "Here's [George] Counts as an example, and DuBois, and others saying, 'Let's transform schools to transform society'"—sounds like Dewey. But then I look at the history of black teachers in the segregated schools in the South, and I come across some items. In the curriculum of Virginia Public Schools from the 1930s—that is not for white kids, but black kids. But I—more than intuition, I think we are beginning to have some evidence that for those people who felt oppressed, that Dewey and—I do not want to say just Dewey—but progressive aspects had a significant impact in many of the African American schools. I would love to see a book on that; somebody has to do the work, so there is some evidence of it. It is not robust; I may be wrong, but at least there is some. Certainly, in places like a socialist Sunday school and similar places like that, there is some evidence about that in alternative and opposition stuff. That is what Ken Teitelbaum's work is good on—a book called *Schooling for Good Rebels*. He also gave us guilt. I think that guilt is a productive emotion if you do something about it. If just makes you feel [expletive], that is not a good emotion. But I think most people go into teaching with this sort of progressive underlying type of disposition. And they get ground down or they realize that they are scared out of their minds about a discipline, and that is true. It is true in the undergraduate teacher education program here. They see students who are very progressive when they come in start saying, "That's nice, but what am I going to do with this class size-wise and I am afraid of the kids talking back to me or they do not care, I am really frightened about going out to schools for my student teaching—how do I discipline kids?" I cannot imagine a teacher education program where those things do not get asked. In today's climate, as we were saying before, is NCLB and Common Core. Those become additional questions; they become the other questions. But there is still the guilt and this urge to say, "I do not feel like I'm really teaching." When I talk—one of the courses that I teach is an elementary/middle school curriculum course. We spend a lot of time talking about what is going on in schools and their lives. There is a lot of lament, a lot of sadness, and the sadness is against this residual memory, this

sort of ethics that says, "This is not teaching. This is for tests. I'm bored, kids are bored… here is what I am trying to do to make it interesting." That, actually, is really important. Even when they are not reading Dewey, there is this tension of consciousness that is quite Deweyan that we ought to be doing something more and think, "What kind of society do I want these kids to be in? It's not just for jobs." I am sort of quoting my students now and that is really interesting to me. I think Dewey had this sort of—its too easy to call it guilt—a set of dispositions that stayed and they stayed because nobody goes into teaching to make money, or simply to get married, or because they could not figure out what the they really want to do. There are some people who do that, obviously, but that is true for teachers and professors. I think that there is still this hidden influence that we do not like to talk about but we actually love talking about and we have teachers talk about it all the time without ever mentioning the name Dewey. It is the progressive movement that lives.

GJ: *I think that's absolutely true. When I first began teaching secondary Social Studies Methods, the very first day of class I would ask them, "We haven't learned anything yet, we've just barely been here a few minutes, but all of us can anticipate what it's like to be a teacher. What are you most afraid of when it comes to teaching?"*

MA: That's good.

GJ: *Almost every single one of them would go, "Well, I am really afraid that I'm going to act like I don't know what I am talking about, or I'm going to be embarrassed, or I won't really know the content."*

MA: All of that is true.

GJ: *But the interesting thing was I would later be with them during student teaching. We would meet a week after that experience began. I would say, "What are you afraid of?" They would say, "Oh man! Classroom discipline! I've got to improve on that!" Hardly anyone was worried about content knowledge in general—*

MA: That is true. I spent a lot of time in—you know, there were [what] Jim Beane called Democratic Schools—

GJ: Yes.

MA: Jim Beane's wife is a former PhD student of mine who decided she was going to stay teaching. She became the Curriculum Coordinator of Sherman Middle School in Madison [Wisconsin]. I

would spend a lot of time going in with my students to try and help in the classroom. Even some of the students who were about as theoretically elegant as one might expect –it has to be grounded in something—cannot do theory about nothing. So, we would spend time in the schools. I know that's bad—it's not academic enough. Anyway, we would watch. There were times I taught in the slums a lot. These kids were out of control at times. But you do not get them in control with whips and objectives and a [expletive] teacher. So, I would watch my former student work magic. But it was not in one day; it was in one month. She and I and my students and her student teachers and the special education teachers she was working with in the class would spend hours talking about "how do you answer this question?" It never goes away. It is as you were saying before, it is the question you ask. Why are you a teacher? You could become a police officer instead.

GJ: *How did Dewey deal with the issue of social efficiency?*

MA: I am fascinated by Dewey's use of certain folks. He has footnotes to Thorndike. Thorndike was a scientific progressive. This is weird. But progressivism was a faith in science and rationality as a democratizing force. But not only is it a democratizing force—Taylorism, which was latched onto it by capitalists as if it was God—that is the roots of the curriculum field, so [Franklin] Bobbitt and [W. W.] Charters were "Taylors." They are also founding members of the popular eugenics movement—and Thorndike is a founding member of the popular eugenics movement. When compared to mental discipline, his [Thorndike's] notion is much better; at least it has a focus on an environment and you can change peoples' behavior by using reinforcement. So, in the early years of learning psych and Thorndike—who was racist and sexist—you see Dewey quoting from him. That is interesting to me. I think Dewey was more eclectic than people like to admit, and more complicated. Dewey would say, "Look, what we do not want is the mind as a muscle. The mind is active." He has sort of what Marx called a species-being argument. A sort of philosophical anthropology: what are human beings like? They are meaning-makers, and they are social, and you have to care about the institutions that build that sociology. We have to think about the mind as fundamentally active. It needs raw material. That is why we are going on all these field trips, et cetera. I mean it is really interesting. What is Thorndike saying? The environment counts and we need to reinforce certain things in that environment. And the mind is active. There are—some minds are better at that

than others. And [according to Thorndike] that black folks, their brains are not quite—they are active in the wrong way. So, I actually want to turn the question around.

GJ: *That would be good.*

MA: I want to say, "What is it about Dewey that he received partially progressive moments"—I am not a book-burner, but when I come across Thorndike—whew! And when I see his other writings and the fact that he wrote, by percentages of students, the largest selling textbooks in the history of the U.S. outside of the old McGuffey Readers. I want to say "Hmm, Dewey is an interesting guy." So here we have a different way in which Dewey is looking at science and rationality as forms of progressivism, but science not as a form of positivism. He has a sort of an antipositivist approval about it. He wants rationality, but in a German sense—rationality's clear-disciplined thinking that is based in communities of practice; that is what we would call it now. There's this puzzlement that I always have about reading Dewey, about "What's he finding in these people?" and it makes me remember it was his—well, [Herbert] Kliebard's point—that progressivism had many iterations and compared to the very conservative ideas before, Thorndike looks progressive in terms of 'science.' But he turns science to eugenics, and he turns it to forms of control, and he turns into the major supporter of Bobbitt and Charters and [David] Snedden, et cetera. And they are all at TC!

GJ: *You are right; I had not thought about that.*

MA: So people say, "You're sort of a TC-type, Michael." I say, "Only one point of a percent-type."

GJ: *Do you think Dewey's approach to reflective thinking can be implemented in today's curriculum, and if so, what would have to happen?*

MA: Revolution. First of all, I think we do the right a favor—the political right and economic right—by assuming it is not going on; it is in classrooms already. I actually think this is crucial because otherwise we contribute to cynicism and we make teachers into puppets. One of the reasons—so let's take—of the books I have done, this little book that was published originally by ASC [Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development], *Democratic Schools*, which has close to half a million copies in print. It has been translated by the Japanese Teacher's Union; I mean, it is all over. What does that say? It says that there are tons of teachers and

administrators and community workers who are looking for materials that embodies the most reflective teaching possible that also is not simply theoretical but practical, because here is what it looks like when you do it. I think that is actually really important. That is not meant as a hymn to Jim Beane and my ability to tell good stories. It says something about what is going on in schools. The right would not be so upset at schools if schools were doing what they wanted them to do. Something must be going on. Why is the right so angry? Well, partly it is because they are duplicitous and want to blame anyone but themselves, and capital is exactly the same way. Teachers are to blame throughout [their] employment. Oh, but you just said you are the job creators, so how can teachers deal with this if you are not creating jobs? There is this sense, it seems to me, that I want to take the enemies of good education serious. If they are disturbed it must be because something is going on that they do not like, and some of that is they are not teaching real knowledge; they are not teaching the basics. What are they teaching? Well one way of looking at it is saying the curriculum in U.S. schools is one damn thing after another. That is partly true. There is no real coherence. It also is true that there is a lot of teaching going on that is really interesting. When I go into schools, I see some teachers struggling like crazy to keep above water to make lessons interesting to kids, and I see a lot of test prep. This is a complicated story. My first answer to this is to be careful when we ask and answer this question. Diana Hess has this book called *Controversy in the Classroom*, where she goes into schools and social studies classrooms and looks at what is going on, even in very conservative schools. There is some awfully interesting reflection going on, even among hard-line Christian conservative kids, with good teaching. That says something very important. I also want us to be honest. Revolutions go backwards as well as forwards. We are seeing an ideological revolution in the United States. Gains that we thought were cemented in place are being taken away; I hope not forever. An example would be the deunionization of teachers. So, social studies teachers who used to be able to say certain things in schools now have to look over their shoulders because there is some community member who is going to bring a case against them to the school board about evolution, about too much conversation on minority people, about what are these books—Howard Zinn?! Anything. It has now become legitimate to do that. So, I think that we have to ask, "What is possible in these kinds of situations?" That is where history to me becomes so important. Nothing that we are

doing or that we have to face is any harder than was faced by the progressives and others, or when the United States was an apartheid society. Nothing is harder than that. What does that tell us? That is one of the reasons I am interested in apartheid. I find there has been a loss of memory. I want us to say, "Okay, so the situations were really horrible before. Well, the right is now telling us there were too many victories. Okay, thank you for the compliment." But those victories came because educators participated with other movements—democratic socialist movements, movements for women's rights, movements for oppressed people, teachers fighting back against really unacceptable conditions, for lowering class size, for more funding, for better working conditions, for more freedom for texts that were not simply wrong and incorrect material and for the right to choose their material—all of these were preconditions, and all of that is being washed away. One of the things I try to argue in the new book is [that] we can win, but only if you participate in other movements—that it cannot be done in education alone. When I look back at social movements that changed education, teachers, curriculum people, professors participated in those movements. That is how we made change. I also think we have a lot to learn from the right. They are revolutionary. What did they do? To them, everything counts: schools, sewer commissions, textbook publishing, and slowly but surely, curriculum and teaching changes—so that it looks like educational issues that make me want to tear my hair out. They spent thirty years doing that. As the self-help gurus say, "it's twenty miles into the forest, so now walk out." I think we want to be honest about what we can learn from the right and how complicated this is. And how hard it is going to be. But also, I am what is called an optimist with no illusions whatsoever. We have been through this before. Let's find out what we did before and learn from it.

GJ: *What can teachers still learn from Dewey that might surprise them?*

MA: That disciplined study is important. That simply because it is interesting does not mean it is good knowledge. He wasn't simply—the message of *Experience and Education* was not, "If it's fun, it's good." It was exactly the opposite actually of subject matter. You start with the interest, but you are going somewhere and that path will be democratically discussed and arrived at and must be constantly examined and reflected on, but there is real science and real math that is actually quite important if we are going to reconstruct society. That is my position. That is Gramsci—that is a leftist

position; that is profound. So, I think the ideas that teachers have taken from him is the easy stuff. You know, now we are going to bring in teddy bears because the kids love to hold their teddy bears. Good, and I think Dewey would agree. But for me and my friend John, Mr. Dewey might say, "Let us now think about what were the conditions of work for the people who produced those teddy bears. And you better love that teddy bear to death because the people who built it in Haiti or the Dominican Republic or Malaysia worked very, very hard. So let's do some study about the way in which the economy works and the debts that we owe to unseen people and culture—that the community extends outside the classroom." He might choose a different example, but that is sort of Dewey. There is a reason he thought about Trotsky and criticized Trotsky at the same time. So I think there is still a lot we can learn from Dewey that is surprising.

GJ: *How would you summarize the legacy of John Dewey?*

MA: I can't. It's too complicated, and it has elements that are good and elements that—not because of him but because of what has happened to him—that I think are less strong. But I do not think there is one summary you could make of somebody as complicated as him.

GJ: *What would you like to know about Dewey if you were to ask other Dewey scholars?*

MA: These questions that you have asked!

GJ: *I appreciate our conversation. Thank you.*

MA: Thank you. It was fun. It has caused me to think about things I have not thought about in a long time and some that I have thought about recently, so it is good.

CHAPTER 5

A Curriculum Scholar for All Time: Herbert M. Kliebard

Prologue

Scholar Introduction

Herbert M. Kliebard is the quintessential scholar to interview about John Dewey and Dewey's potential impact on American public education. Kliebard has authored numerous books, book chapters, and articles over an extended career. His renowned work *The Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1893–1958* is no doubt on the bookshelf of a vast majority of educational scholars—most likely frayed and worn by frequent referrals to it. A native of New York City, he grew up attending public schools and City College before teaching in the public schools. He completed his PhD at Teachers College, Columbia University. Then, Kliebard moved from his home city to join both the Curriculum and Education and the Educational Studies departments of the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1963. He remained a distinguished member of the faculty. Many decades later, he was awarded professor emeritus status at Madison but never really retired from his endeavors in education.

Herb Kliebard readily invited me to meet at his home in Madison, Wisconsin, in August 2013. I was very fortunate, perhaps even lucky, to secure another interview. This interview was actually our second meeting. My first introduction to Kliebard was through Fred Newmann in August 2008. As a PhD candidate, I was seeking to consult with scholars in a quest for guidance on my theory and research for my chosen

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dissertation topic, for which I identified John Dewey as a key player in the development of the subject of social studies. Our first meeting was an incredible mentoring experience that was truly enlightening. I left to resume my research encouraged and renewed in my efforts. When I sat down in Herb Kliebard's living room for the second time, it was in a friendly and collegial atmosphere. His home was very much the same as before—populated with a collection of career and personal memorabilia as well as favorite books and his collection of writings, including *Changing Course: American Curriculum Reform in the* twentieth *Century.*

Herbert Kliebard has since passed away (June 8, 2015). Scholars from all corners of the country recognized the tremendous loss to the field of curriculum studies as well as to the history of American education. He will remain revered. His writings will continue to be quoted by educators and researchers. Kliebard's finely honed ideas on the curriculum and his opinions on public education over the decades serve us well and should continue to enable us to meet and solve the challenges in education.

As I opened our conversation about John Dewey, Herbert Kliebard sat back, relaxed, and enjoyed sharing with me his thoughts and personal memories of his research on Dewey as an educational philosopher.

Dialogue Overview

Despite not being active on the front line of education for a number of years, Herb Kliebard launched into an anti-teaching-to-the-test diatribe using Dewey as his point man. Kliebard recalled a Dewey article, perhaps 1901 vintage, in which Dewey considered the structure of curriculum and of schooling as a significant factor on teaching and learning that, I would argue, is generally beyond what citizens imagine. Kliebard had several examples of not teaching to the test. One was actually a former student at the Dewey school when Dewey himself was still there. Kliebard invited the prior school student to talk to his University of Wisconsin teacher education class. There, the Dewey school student was asked about Dewey's method of teaching at the school, particularly his approach to teaching reading. With no recollection of actual reading lessons, the reality was that, according to Kliebard, the student "learned reading while doing other things. And that is Deweyan." In contemplating the Dewey school's curriculum, Kliebard indicated that Dewey "was not in favor of heavy testing in his own time." Kliebard himself was really

hoping that teachers today "could learn to somehow modify their great faith in testing as the end-all of all teaching."

A Public Intellectual

Kliebard named Dewey as "probably the number one public intellectual" in the USA. At the same time, he believed Dewey did not influence American education. When directly asked whether Dewey influenced the curriculum, Kliebard's immediate response was, "No. Quick answer: no." However, it is reasonable, after speaking with Kliebard, to consider that Dewey was influential in schooling, but through an indirect pathway. In discussing Dewey's handling of the social efficiency movement permeating the industrialist leanings of his time, Kliebard lamented that he wished Dewey had gone beyond ordinary, commonsense writings and "done more to confront that particular thing… that movement." Then, Kliebard noted that Boyd Bode, who studied Dewey's works, was the one to later pick up the baton and "went through them [ideas] one by one, and really caught their social ideas beautifully." As an aside, Kliebard stated, "I am a big fan of Boyd Bode." As a disciple of Dewey, according to Kliebard, Bode's book *Modern Education Theories* is "where he goes to town on social efficiency."

Disciples of Dewey

I expanded the Bode discussion to include H. Gordon Hullfish and Alan Griffin, whom Kliebard called "the Ohio State crowd." It is interesting to note the link between these scholars: Bode, a professor at Ohio State, studied Dewey intently; Hullfish was Bode's student; and Griffin was a student and then a colleague of Hullfish. And after Bode retired from Ohio State, he returned to Illinois. He taught one more year as a visiting professor, and Kliebard was a student there at the same time. The Bode students from Ohio State, who subsequently became notable professors, held Dewey in high regard. Throughout their individual careers in teacher education, each brought Dewey into their teaching and learning curriculum. So, unlike some of Dewey's followers during the so-called progressive era, who precipitated many misunderstandings of Dewey's ideas and writings, this linkage of, as Kliebard says, disciples of Dewey did influence a flow of Deweyan ideas and ideals into teaching and learning practices in the schools.

Kliebard did believe that "private schools were more influenced by Dewey than public schools" because they were willing to be experimental.

However, one Rutgers professor shared with Kliebard her idea that field trips in the public schools were examples of Deweyan practices. Kliebard basically disagreed but, at the same time, shared his own experience, early in his student days serving as a volunteer, of taking public school fifth-grade students on field trips—trips he planned ad hoc. His assessment was that "it was for me probably one of the best teaching experiences I ever had."

In Kliebard's book *The Struggle for the American Curriculum*, he defined and discussed what might be termed four interest groups of the early twentieth century: humanists, developmentalists, social efficiency educators, and social meliorists. He placed Dewey into the social melioration group—more typically called *social reconstruction,* according to Kliebard. In a more contemporary context, Kliebard defined the social reconstructionists' interests as social justice issues and stated that Dewey "was more in tune with that group." However, Kliebard stopped short of identifying Dewey as an actual member of the social meliorists or any of the other three groups.

Reflective Thinking

My question about the role of Dewey's reflective thinking theory took us to Kliebard's own reflection on Dewey's laboratory school, where the children learned by doing. Kliebard observed, "If they run into a problem, they problem-solve." But in Kliebard's words, "you cannot just give them a problem and say, 'Think this way.' I do not think that would work." Dewey's ideas on problem-solving and his steps for reflective thinking are in his book *How We Think*. It is interesting to note that in Kliebard's opinion, Dewey's work on education was concentrated into his years in Chicago. And Kliebard indicated that Dewey focused on philosophy after moving on to Teachers College, Columbia University.

Prior to his time in Chicago, Dewey was an educator in Michigan, but according to Kliebard, he did not write about education until he was in Chicago. And there Dewey made a connection with Jane Addams and Hull House—her program for educating immigrants and integrating them into the community and citizenship. Kliebard believed it was a very good connection for Dewey.

Kliebard brought into the discussion other previous scholars involved in education reform—Lawrence Cremin and Ellwood P. Cubberley—as he reflected on his book *The Struggle for the American Curriculum*. In this book, which details educational reforms and reform groups over

the decades of the twentieth century, Kliebard clearly points out that he never uses "progressive" as a descriptor for the curriculum reformists.

The Logic of Experience

In considering Dewey's legacy, Kliebard speaks about Dewey's logic of experience as the key to his lasting legacy to education. He discusses that Dewey the philosopher had a very different interpretation of logic—one that used the experience as its basis. For instance, Dewey's *Art as Experience* employed social philosophy as its base. Dewey projected his ideas out from experience using reflecting thinking and incidental learning. This thought triggered Kliebard to share what he would like to know about Dewey from other scholars. In this regard, Kliebard would have asked, "Can people really be taught to think?" His personal view was that in reality, Dewey strongly believed in incidental learning as the outflow of how we think. Then, by way of example, Kliebard summed up, "It is like teaching reading; you do not teach it from reading a book. You teach it because it's a natural process in certain kinds of activities."

According to Kliebard, Dewey's interest in education grew out of his experiences teaching at the University of Michigan. He pointed out that the university at that time was advocating college entrance examinations and, in conjunction, established a system of sending their professors to the high schools to meet with various teachers in order to form an opinion about the school. Kliebard explained that if the professors issued a good report on a particular high school, then the university was likely to accept its students. He noted that Dewey took this university process quite seriously and actively participated in the venture. Referring to his copy of the complete Dewey bibliography, he concluded that Dewey did not really write about education until he left Michigan and went to Chicago. Kliebard added one additional important observation about Dewey as a professor in education at Michigan: It was interesting to note that at the time, it was widely thought that going to college would be an overly demanding task for women; in fact, "it would harm their heath." However, Kliebard identified that Dewey "wrote against that commonly held position; it was not directly on education, but it had to do with certain beliefs at the time relating to education." This led us to Dewey's affiliation with Jane Addams and the Hull House program that she established to educate immigrants in Chicago. Kliebard commented, "It was a very good connection. He admired her a lot." Kliebard's reflection about Hull House is a prime example of John Dewey's advocacy for the education of all people.

Epilogue

In our conversation, Herbert Kliebard steadfastly held to his belief that John Dewey was not an influence on the school curriculum. He very candidly shared facets of the basis for his opinion. At the same time, Kliebard was resolute about his opinion that Dewey's educational philosophy was and remains both a stimulus and an inspiration to teaching and learning, that is, a methodology for preparing students and for guiding teachers. He integrated stories of his personal experiences as well as those of third parties as examples of what he termed "Deweyan" learning situations or issues.

It is evident from our dialogue that Kliebard devoted significant time to researching and learning about John Dewey. He discussed Dewey's endeavors in higher education and what Dewey thought about the societal issues surrounding his long-term career. The background of Kliebard's experience in doing his research brings unique insight about Dewey as well as other noted scholars of Dewey's time.

As Herbert Kliebard's own career evolved and grew to a preeminent status, he became and remained an admirer of John Dewey as an educational philosopher who was defined by his countless writings. Kliebard recounts that Dewey "wrote more than one book on social philosophy… one of his best books is his book on art." Kliebard concludes that Dewey's legacy is what he wrote, leaving us with quite a challenge in absorbing his philosophy and taking it into our own thinking.

Author note: All quotations in the Prologue and Epilogue are from the Herbert M. Kliebard dialogue transcript.

Herbert M. Kliebard Dialogue

TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH HERBERT M. KLIEBARD

Madison, WI, August 2013 (Edited)

GREGG JORGENSEN (GJ): *My first question is: Does Dewey's philosophy still have a role to play in the twenty-first-century classrooms; if so, how do you see it happening?*

HERBERT KLIEBARD (HK): I think it could still have a role, but it's highly unlikely. And I think the–part of this, relates to the importance that people now attach to tests. In fact, Dewey wrote an article—I think it was in 1901 or so—and he said there that the structure of schooling has a far greater effect on the teaching than people imagine and he used testing as an example. You can have testing and have teachers who want to be good teachers, and they will teach to the test. When I was teaching at the Nyack Public Schools they did not have that kind of testing but they had regent's tests; they were tests that you had to take for every subject if you wanted an academic diploma. There were teachers in that school that did practically nothing but teach to the test. So, the only thing—again, I saw this on a news program, I think it was on PBS TV also which reminded me of Dewey—and there is a lot of talk now that one way to improve schools is to do away with the summer vacations. It is a crazy idea; but it is not really a vacation anyway. I have forgotten where the school is located, but they went to a school where instead of teaching reading and math and getting a little bump which goes away very fast, they spend half the day going places. Like going to the woods and watching birds, and finding things, and what is this and what is that and so on. Now, that would be Dewey. Or very close; I do not think it is consciously Dewey but it is very close. I remember that I once knew someone who lived here in Madison who was a student in the Dewey school when Dewey was still heading it, and he had a marvelous memory. I brought him to the Teacher Education building to give a talk and he gave a nice talk, he remembered everything, and then one student asked "What method of teaching did he use?" And he said "I don't remember being taught reading," and he had a remarkable memory! He did not have a lesson in reading, but they learned reading while doing other things. That is Deweyan. If that comes back, I will be very happy, but I do not know if it ever will.

GJ: *That really would be amazing.*

HK: By the way, this man's name, he was Dr. H. Kent Tenney. There is a Tenney building here in Madison, and Tenney Park. He had a program called March of Medicine which I used to listen to; it was on public radio. He had a very good interview program, and he would interview people about such and such a disease, how did they treat it in the old days and how do they treat it now, that kind of thing—and one day the host says, "Dr. Tenney, you have so much enthusiasm, so much confidence in your work. Where did that come from?" and he said "Oh I went to the Dewey school," and I picked up my ears. I later called him and asked to interview him. He told me other things, but the part that relates most to your question has to do with not teaching reading in the formal sense. I once quoted this, and I cannot remember where it was from Dewey's writing,

but he said "pick up any reading textbook and ask yourself whether it would not be an insult to any child's intelligence." I quoted that somewhere.

GJ: *That's a great line. Do you think Dewey was underrated in any way in the twentieth century?*

HK: Well, he had it both ways, in a way. He was probably the number one public intellectual. I have even run across ads for like tires or something, and they have a picture of Dewey—it has nothing to do with tires, but just having him on his ad made it legitimate in some way. And he got this huge reputation. Everybody says, "Well, Dewey influenced American education," but I don't see any sign of it. He had a huge reputation on one hand, maybe the number one public intellectual in his time, and there's nothing left of it in schools. Speaking of that, I can recall now—and this was at an AREA [American Educational Research Association] meeting; they had a colloquium or something like that—and it was on Dewey. Dewey came up, but it was on the occasion—you have read Lawrence Cremin I guess—well, I had three courses with him. He had a heart attack at a fairly young age and he died, and this symposium was in his honor. There was this woman; I knew her quite well—who has written a few books; I think she has taught at Rutgers, possibly—and she talked about Dewey's enormous influence. I said to her, "what do you see in today's schools that you can say is Deweyan?" Know what she said? "Field trips." I mean, I do not think the idea of a field trip ever occurred to Dewey! Now you see much more informality both in appearance and in the relationships with teachers to students. Teachers get called by their first names. I think that is what makes people think that is Dewey. It is just a natural process that—when I started teaching, for all the years that I was teaching high school, I wore a suit and tie. For my first three or four years here, I wore a suit and tie, even in the summertime. Look at the faculty there now; they are all wearing jeans. So, the informality came in, but it was not caused by Dewey.

GJ: *In reality, do you believe that Dewey ever really influenced the American curriculum?*

HK: No. Quick answer: No.

GJ: *Would you talk about how Dewey dealt with his ideas in the era of the heavy influence of social efficiency?*

HK: He uses the term every once in a while, but I think it was just—when he writes about efficiency, it is more in the ordinary sense. It is not so much social efficiency. I wish that during his lifetime he had done more to confront that particular thing; you know, that movement. The person that did, who was a student of Dewey's, I believe, is Boyd Bode. I am a big fan of Boyd Bode. He went through them one by one, and really caught their social ideas beautifully, I thought. So, I cannot say that Dewey—he would write things that were totally different from social efficiency people like [Franklin] Bobbitt and [David] Snedden. I think he may not have even heard of them [social efficiency ideas]. But Bode; he got right into it.

GJ: *In a social efficiency view of Deweyan aspects?*

HK: He was a disciple of Dewey's but he was more into the world as we know it; the school world as we know it. Bode, after he retired from Ohio State, did a visiting teaching year at the University of Illinois when I was a graduate student. I remember my advisor saying when we were talking about Bode, "I followed him around like a puppy dog." He said, "I went to every class he taught there." He was a big fan of Bode's and I had become one, too. *Modern Education Theories* is a wonderful book. That is where he goes to town on social efficiency.

GJ: *That is great to hear. I have been researching some of Bode's followers—H. Gordon Hullfish and Griffith.*

HK: The Ohio State crowd.

GJ: *Yes. That has been really interesting.*

HK: One of the things that I also was puzzled about was the eight years'—four years' study. Nothing happened as a result. And it did not show anything, either. It did not—it was a tie between the students—well, there were students; about half the thirty high schools were public high schools and about half were fancy preparatory schools. No one came out ahead. One of the problems was you cannot assume—I think they assumed—that these public schools were influenced by Dewey, but it is not true. In fact, I think private schools were more influenced by Dewey than public schools.

GJ: *In what way?*

HK: Well, they were more experimental in general; whereas the public schools—there were some public schools—but they picked the experimental public schools, so they did not get much of a difference. Or any difference, really. But everybody says that the eight

years' study proves such and such. I do not think it proved everything, and I read all five volumes of their findings—I do not think they proved a thing. It was the eight years' study; if I said four years,' I meant eight years' study because it was four years of high school and four years of college. They wanted to see whether one kind of student would do better in college than another. I admire Dewey a lot, and I guess I always will, but I cannot say he was influential. I cannot find it if he is influential; I do not see it. Certainly, not in field trips. I mean, field trips are fine. I was reminded when I saw this TV program about the school that has the summer program—when I was an undergraduate, I volunteered to show up at a public school and get permission to take students—I guess they were in fifth grade—on trips. They were all black students. I would get there once a week and I would say there were about fifteen students, and I tried to think about where we were going to go. I thought, well this time we will go to the docks and we will see the ships coming in and things like that, and that will be new to them—or we would go to a museum, and things like that. It was very informal; not like the school of today. It was for me probably one of the best teaching experiences I ever had. And the kids were wonderful.

GJ: *Probably just being active made a huge part of it.*

HK: Yes, they did not talk to me much about what was going on in their class, but I got the impression that they wanted to get away from it and they looked forward to these trips that we would take. Sometimes it would be raining—I took them to the movies one day because it was raining so hard that I did not think we could get around very much. We went to the zoo, places like that. That is what this summer class was like. You give these students the experience that middle class and upper class children get anyway, but they do not get. They do not go to zoos and docks and the harbor and that kind of thing. We went on a ship one time—they let us up in it and we walked around. I think a lot about where—I was always desperate to find a good place to go the next week, but I enjoyed the experience. I got very attached to those kids.

GJ: *Why do you think that social efficiency has had such a stranglehold on everything?*

HK: It was a sign of the times. First of all, I have written a lot about the efficiency movement minus education. There were all these people who made their living and their reputation by being efficiency experts, and that was highly respected. They would go around with a stopwatch and

watch people work and so on. Everybody wanted to hire these people so they could get their workers to work better. I poked a lot of fun at that—I mean, it was absolutely crazy. And the way this transferred over to schools was—one of the best-known efficiency experts was [Frank Bunker] Gilbreth; have you run across his work?

GJ: I do not believe I have.

HK: They made a remake of this movie, but it is called *Cheaper by the Dozen*—there is an older movie and a newer movie, and that is his wife's memoir. It is about him, mainly. The theme of the book—and you can rent the movie sometime—but the theme of it is when you have a dozen children as he had, you can run the family more efficiently because this child will do this, this child will do that and so on. And, so that is carried over into schools. His point was you first find the good workers and you see what they do. His example was, I think, bricklaying. You follow—how does an expert, master bricklayer lay bricks, so I will know what to teach the bricklayer. By the way, I was once at the Hilda shopping center and they were putting a new façade in bricks. There were benches there. I sat down and I was watching them lay bricks, and just kidding around, I went up to one of them and I said, "you know, you are doing this all wrong." Because one of the things he [Gilbreth] said—this is how ridiculous it got—the master bricklayer, what he said—and I do not even know if it is true or not—bricklayers by and large when they put a brick in, they will tap it two or three times to make sure that it is in the right spot. And he [the master bricklayer] said, "You only have to tap it once," so you save two taps. So, these workers were tapping three times, and I said "you know, that is all wrong," and they got a good laugh out of it because they knew I was kidding them.

GJ: *Right.*

HK: But, let's say in social studies—you know, the big thing was you teach citizenship in social studies. What should you teach? Well, the social efficiency people—there was one big study where it was practically a copy of Gilbreth's study—how do you teach good citizenship? You find the good citizens and you see what they do, and you just teach the bad citizens to do those things. It was the same idea. That is how it got into schools. Initially, it was not in schools.

GJ: *What do you think about the power of it?*

HK: It is very appealing today to people who are business-oriented. People run for office—presidents, senators—and they say, "Well I

have the experience as a businessman so I can govern." But government is different from a business, and schools are vastly different from a business. You cannot run them the same way. But that has become a point of pride—you know how a business is run so you know how everything is run.

GJ: *Right.*

HK: Government is very different from a business, you know? They have no stockholders, so most of the CEOs—almost all of them, I guess—they are just out to satisfy their stockholders. So, anything they do to make their stock rise puts them in a better position to ask for even more money. That citizenship study, I had great fun with that. A lot of it was just the language used. Like Bobbitt for example, he would refer to his school as a plant. That comes from the larger social efficiency movement. In other words, the school is just like a factory; therefore, what we do in the factory, we can do in the school. You set standards, and you find a way to bring people up to those standards. That was the efficiency in a nutshell. But Gilbreth was one of the big ones. I am not sure he ever wrote on education, per se. But people like Bobbitt and Snedden picked it up from there. I am trying to think of what other language they picked up. Oh, yes, they refer to teachers as engineers. They design a bridge according to certain specifications and then they build it, so it is the same idea in schools, right?

GJ: *What could possibly go wrong with that? Do you think Dewey's approach to reflective thinking could be implemented in today's curriculum? If so, what would have to happen?*

HK: I do not think it could be introduced by itself, it would have to be introduced in conjunction with other things. For example, in the Dewey school, I went down to the—he left his papers to the Southern Illinois University; they have a Dewey center there—and they have a lot of research information on Dewey there. One of the things they have is a lot of pictures of—a photographer came to the Dewey school when Dewey was there and took a lot of pictures. You see a lot of pictures of kids building a hut, kids planting a garden; you know, kids doing all that sort of thing. That is how they learn what else they are doing. If they run into a problem, they problem-solve. But you cannot just give them a problem and say, "Think this way." I do not think that would work. The whole subject of problem solving is dealt with in Dewey's book, *How We Think*. There are two editions of it. I once compared the two

editions. The second one is slightly different from the first—not slightly different; there were some important points of difference, I thought. Because he denies—a lot of people assume that the process of thinking was steps—he said they are not steps. I do not think that appeared in the first edition, but it does in the second.

GJ: *I will have to look at that. Because that was 1910 versus 1932, I believe.*

HK: Something like that.

GJ: *So he probably did have a lot of time to—*

HK: He might have gotten criticism from some people because to this day, I think the teachers say, "Well, this is how you think." You sort of recognize the problem, and then you do this and then you do that. And I do not see people ever doing that. Even Dewey did not do that.

GJ: *Another question I have I wanted your opinion on this—I was thinking that stemming from reflective thinking and both the Dewey How You Think volumes were picked up by Alan Griffin and [H. Gordon] Hullfish—following Dewey and being influential on that—that has really become kind of the crux for perhaps the social justice movement.*

HK: I think that was another part of it. In *The Struggle for the American Curriculum*, one of the groups that—I talk about these four interest groups—the one I called social melioration; it is normally called social reconstruction, but I think that is a bit of an overstatement. They were not going to reconstruct the whole school, but they wanted to make it better. That is, what they studied were social justice issues. And Dewey, I would say he was more in tune with that group than any of the other groups. People say now that he was the child study—but if you look at the child study movement itself it has some elements of Dewey in it, but not that much. When it came—when I wrote about those four interest groups, it came time—I knew I was going to have to say which—people were going to ask which one does Dewey belong to—and I remember my line was that he really was not a member of any of them but he hovered above the fray. In one book review, someone says, "What does Kliebard mean by 'hovered'?" What do you think I mean?

GJ: *Now that they have hovercrafts, maybe people understand it more.*

HK: Yes. And when you work on the computer you have to hover over something once in a while.

GJ: *What do you think—what can teachers still learn from Dewey that might surprise them, even today?*

HK: I think it probably relates to testing. Because even in Dewey's times—and he was not in favor of heavy testing in his own time—but it was nothing like now. Now, testing dominates everything. And I understand that [President] Obama has tried to move away from that a little bit, but it is still there. It has a great public appeal for social efficiency reasons. You are supposed to teach people how to think, well, let's see how they think. But they do not ask that; they ask easy questions like, "Did they teach reading?" and, "Did they teach math?" So, I think that it would be—if they could learn to somehow modify their great faith in testing as the end-all of all teaching. There have been all sorts of studies on what is good teaching; I reviewed those for a long time and most of them were social efficiency-oriented. What do good teachers do as opposed to bad teachers? Someone at the University of Wisconsin did the biggest study on that. He would observe how many times the good teachers said "uh" and "sometimes" and how many times the bad teachers—he would count. He has a table showing the difference, and it was just ridiculous. There was no theoretical base for that. You just go in, and, you have good teachers and you have bad teachers and you see what they do differently, and you teach the bad teachers what the good teachers are doing. That is the [social] efficiency model.

GJ: *As long as they do not engage in reflective thinking, because that is not very efficient. Or experimental, right?*

HK: Yes. I have always believed that I could tell a good teacher. I could not tell you how I know, but I think it has something to do with the ability of the teacher to sympathize with the child's state at that time; you know, what would be confusing to the child, what would the child respond to in terms of clarifying a problem and so on. And you see that—but people do that naturally; they have not been taught yet to do the social efficiency way of doing it.

GJ: *How would you summarize the legacy of John Dewey?*

HK: Summarize it—I would say he had great ideas and they worked for a time in his own school, but when he left to go to Columbia other people came in who were infused with Dewey ideas up to a point, but then it gradually drifted away. I visited the present-day Dewey school and you can see some elements of Dewey there, but not nearly—there's a big bust of Dewey in the classroom, but I do not think he was able to sustain that over a long time. When he

went to Columbia, he gave much less attention to education than he did when he was at Chicago. At Chicago, he was the head—he was hired as the head of the department of philosophy—psychology. Philosophy and psychology were considered roughly the same. Philosophy, psychology, and pedagogy. He took seriously that he had to deal with pedagogy, and he wrote as you know an enormous amount about education. But he wrote an enormous amount about everything! I once asked one of Dewey's students—I met him at a cocktail party, and I did not want to bother him, but we got into a conversation. This was [John L.] Childs; he became a famous philosopher himself. I said, "Well, what do you think is Dewey's greatest legacy?" [That] was essentially the question, and he did not hesitate a moment. He said, "His logic." Nothing to do with education. I did go into it—his logic—and it was totally different from the logic that was conventionally used at that time. In fact, William James wrote a review of that—of his logic book, and said, "it's like nothing you've ever read before in logic." He was very admiring of the fact that Dewey could break with that because logic in its formal sense is—you have this statement, and that statement and that statement and that—Dewey has nothing to do with that. He says it all rises from experience, as you would expect. But, I was surprised when Childs told me that it was his logic. And, he [Dewey] wrote more than one book on social philosophy; he wrote—one of his best books is his book on art. There was hardly anything in the philosophy world of that time that he did not write about. When he went to Columbia, he wrote—he was not in teacher's college, he was in the philosophy department at Columbia. He did all the things that they do, too. But people who are in education tend to associate him almost solely with education; and he, I would say, maybe his work on education is as much as 25% of what he wrote, but probably less, I would say. As a rough guess.

GJ: *You indicate that Dewey discusses in his writings the role citizens should play in society. Do you see his ideas about citizenship being taught in the schools?*

HK: You just identify the good citizens and you teach people to act that way. Simple.

Actually, the whole idea that history is for the purpose of citizenship is not a good idea to begin with. It may have some effect, but it could have the opposite effect, too. You know, read about things and say, "oh, this is terrible. The government—I'm not going to participate in it. I'm not going to be a good citizen."

GJ: *Yes. How did Dewey feel about even just the ideas of patriotism?*

HK: I think in the end he was a patriot when World War I broke out. At first, he was alongside the people who thought America should not get involved, but when America did enter the war in 1917, he showed his patriotic colors, and he approved of it; he said America did the right thing. I am not sure if he was right there, but… World War I was a horrible war. And nothing came of it; in fact, the only things that came of it were bad things.

GJ: *Nerve gas and—*

HK: Yes. And German resentment toward the French in particular for extracting so much money in retribution from them and breaking them and so on. That is how Hitler came to power. He was able to play on the Versailles Treaty as a way of downgrading Germany. That is why—that had great appeal to Germans. But he got that—you know, Hitler himself was a corporal in World War I—

GJ: *I did not realize that.*

HK: So, he got that idea then.

GJ: *What would you like to know about Dewey if you were to ask other Dewey scholars?*

HK: Let me think. I think there are a lot of questions. I might ask one of the questions you asked, which is, "can people really be taught to think? And if so, tell us how according to Dewey?"

GJ: *Do you have any personal feelings on that?*

HK: Well, so many other things like the way he taught reading in the Dewey school—not him personally, but his teachers. I am assuming—I do not think he ever said this—but I think he was a great believer in incidental learning. In other words, you do one thing and you learn something else. You build a hut and you learn about dimensions and measurements and things like that, and the nature of different kinds of woods and so on. But really, you are just building a hut. And you have to have a teacher nearby to explore those issues when they come up, but you do not just say, "twelve inches equals a foot" or something like that; you show it to them as the situation arises. That's how I think. It is like teaching reading; you do not teach it from a reading book. You teach it because it's a natural process in certain kinds of activities.

GJ: *I wonder why that has not been picked up more. That would seem like something you really could do in a classroom.*

HK: That is what I think they were doing in this school that I watched on TV about a week ago, where they were taking people out and finding things and showing them things mainly about nature; you know, lakes and things like that. How they follow through on that, I do not know. But the idea was a good one.

GJ: *As I continue my interview process, who would you recommend that I speak with?*
HK: On Dewey?

GJ: *Yes.*
HK: Let's see. The people I know are all dead. I am trying to think of who's still alive that you can speak to. Well, have you talked to Elliot Eisner at Stanford? I am thinking of various people that I interacted with but I do not think they are alive now. But Eisner was a serious student of Dewey's. He did not study in his class, but he knew Dewey very well, I think.

GJ: *That would be great. Did you ever run across people who had any idea about what kind of teacher Dewey was when he was even—*
HK: Yes.

GJ: *What did you find out?*
HK: Well, the students when he was—initially, when he got his PhD he went to Michigan and he taught there ten years with one exception: he was a visiting professor in Minnesota, and then he came back. But the student newspapers at that time would talk about him as a professor. The picture I got is he would sort of think aloud in class. And he did not look directly at the students. He would try to solve something right there in class. He would not have solved something at home and then come in there. One thing he took seriously at Michigan, which I think had an impact on his interest in education, was that there was a—schools were beginning to use test to get into college, but Michigan had a different—I think it was called the Michigan system or Michigan plan—they would send their own professors to high schools and if the professors had a good report about a given high school, they would tend to accept students from that school. That was sort of the idea of it. And Dewey took that quite serious. He visited several schools at that time, and he would talk about the Latin teacher and the Algebra teacher and so on. I once got the complete Dewey bibliography; in fact, I have it downstairs. I looked to see if he wrote anything on education and there

was one thing that was sort of on education, but it was not until he got to Chicago. The one thing he did write at Michigan was it was believed then that women going to college would be too demanding of their delicate sensibilities; it would harm their health. In fact, I think G. Stanley Hall was an advocate of that and he said it would harm their health so if they go, they should not take demanding courses. And he [Dewey] wrote against that commonly held position; it wasn't directly on education, but it had to do with certain beliefs at the time relating to education.

GJ: *I have to say that I do not think he would be associating with Jane Addams.*

HK: Yes.

GJ: *What was their relationship like, do you think?*

HK: He was a great admirer of Jane Addams. They were quite friendly, I know. I think—when I went across some of his correspondence, I believe that when he was considered for the job at Chicago one of his former students wrote him and said, "You know, that is the place where Hull House is, so you will find a good connection there." And it was, it was a very good connection. He admired her a lot. Her influence has kind of died out, but she was a remarkable woman, I think. She had this—Hull House was basically for immigrant people.

GJ: *He had a pretty good relationship with James Harvey Robinson, I would imagine.*

HK: Yes, I think so. The history department… I have forgotten where I wrote about this, but I was sort of doing things on textbooks; I cannot remember exactly what. James Harvey Robinson wrote an introduction to a particular textbook. It is a social studies textbook. What is the biggest seller; do you remember what—

GJ: *William Mace.*

HK: No, that is not the one I was thinking of. But he wrote an introduction to that one and it was full of new ideas about history. And he praised the way this textbook was written, which—people were turning their nose up at it. So, I read the textbook—I actually read it—and it was quite good! I do not know why people who did not read it are just saying it was old fuddy-duddy history, but Robinson was a leader in the new history movement. And he liked the book—in fact, this Magruder; [Frank Abbott] Magruder is his name—he was a student of James Harvey Robinson's and I suppose

he asked Robinson to write the introduction. And that is where I first got the idea that I have to read this book to see if it is what people say it is. And it really—it was very—I mean, it had some old-fashioned ideas, but a lot of it was quite modern. I can point to examples where—silly things—but those were common beliefs at that time; I cannot hold him to account for that.

GJ: *Right.*

HK: First time I ever read anything of Magruder's, but it is talked about constantly—I think it was in press for 20 years or more. *Struggle for the American Curriculum* has been in press for over 20 years. Well, I wrote that—I knew I was taking a chance because I was taking issue with my former professor, [Lawrence] Cremin. You know—transformation of the school; he has one version of what those reform movements in that time were, and he—I knew him quite well—he liked to think of himself as the spokesperson for the new history in education and in some respects I guess he was, but in the end he talks about—at that time, there were the stodgy old historians like [Elwood P.] Cubberley, who is always defamed because he wrote the old—it was a bestselling book—and there was the new wave who were critical of the way history changed during this so-called progressive era. I came away thinking, "Well, he is the old-fashioned guy; he is saying 'Well, it came out good in the end,'" and there was this great legacy of progressive education—and as I told you before, I never saw it. I was trying to think of another way to conceptualize that period, other than saying it was the progressives versus the traditionalists. If you read that book carefully you see I never used the word progressive.

GJ: *In fact, don't you say that it has so many meanings, it was almost pointless?*

HK: It is true. The original members of the child study movement—what became the Progressive Education Association later on—they were private schoolmasters. And people say they were doing—well, they had one element of Dewey's ideas, but Dewey would not have advocated what they did.

GJ: *Thank you so much.*

HK: Thank you.

CHAPTER 6

Teacher as a Scholar: Nel Noddings

Prologue

Scholar Introduction

Nel Noddings is the Lee L. Jacks Professor of Education, Emerita at Stanford University. She began her academic career at Rutgers University, where she earned her master's degree in mathematics. Noddings then moved from the East Coast to the West Coast, to Stanford, to study and receive her PhD in educational philosophy and theory. Subsequently, Stanford became the campus to begin her higher education teaching career. Noddings has worn many hats at Stanford, including serving as director of teacher education as well as associate dean of academic affairs and dean of the School of Education. The entire spectrum of her career spans every aspect of teaching, from elementary to secondary to postsecondary. She is also past president of the Philosophy of Education Society, the John Dewey Society, and the National Academy of Education. Noddings's voluminous publications include books, countless articles, and book chapters. Listed among her latest books are *Critical Lessons: What Our Schools Should Teach*; *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*; and *Education and Democracy in the 21st Century.*

When I first approached Nel Noddings for an interview, I thought we might meet on the Stanford campus. She readily agreed to an interview, but the meeting would instead be at her longtime residence in New Jersey,

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on the ocean shore. On a sunny day in September 2015, I arrived at her home. We proceeded to an upper-level porch with a view of the Atlantic Ocean and settled down at a patio table to begin our dialogue about her thoughts about John Dewey and his career as an educational philosopher.

Dialogue Overview

Noddings views Dewey as having been approachable and friendly. However, she cautions the public in general to be patient reading Dewey's work. According to Noddings, if one rereads and goes over Dewey's material, one is more likely to "see where he was getting at in the beginning and … know better what to think." Regarding whether Dewey has a role in the twenty-first century, Noddings believes he "has a greater role to play now than he ever did." However, she has taught in a variety of classrooms and has not actually seen Dewey's ideas and ideals often occuring in today's educational environments.

Continued Hope

Related to this thought, Noddings expresses that Dewey did have influence on the curriculum, "but not as deeply or broadly as he could have." For instance, she notes that Dewey's book *Democracy and Education* was very popular for years, and then it basically disappeared from any conversation. Noddings also is of the opinion that Dewey was misunderstood or underrated during his time, "but some of it, he brought upon himself." However, when it comes to Dewey's relevance in the twenty-first century, she believes "there is still hope."

Many of the thoughts that Noddings shares are teacher oriented, that is, ideas about how and in what manner to teach. She reveals that a section of Dewey's *Democracy and Education* led her to teach through an understanding of the students' backgrounds, community conditions, and societal situations. Specifically, she states, "This is what I got there: you cannot teach directly. You have to teach through the environment." To examine controversial issues, she stresses that teachers need to teach critical thinking everywhere—for instance, in subjects such as math and English. As an aside, she notes that today's "Common Core is heavy on critical thinking but it never says what it is." The critical thinking topic leads into whether Dewey's reflective thinking approach can be implemented in today's classroom. Noddings matter-of-fact response is, "Sure. But, what would have to happen is that, we would have to listen to our kids."

Practices of Promise

Today's education involves an ongoing discussion about fostering best teaching practices. According to Noddings, "what Dewey would say is 'do not call them best practices, call them promising practices.'" In her opinion, the fallacy of best practices is that for each teacher to do the same in each classroom with impressive outcomes in every instance is not a realistic possibility. In essence, one size does not fit all. Importantly, Noddings indicates that best practice is, or can be, a mistake made over and over again.

At one point, our discussion reverts back to whether the current laboratory schools at the University of Chicago are indeed Deweyan. In Noddings's experience, the lab school starts as Deweyan in the elementary grades but then becomes less so in the middle grades, and Dewey is not very evident in the high school. Yet she finds the laboratory schools most interesting, and she specifically walks the conversation through the physical school plant, painting a clear picture of organized school structure.

Moral Education and Inclusion

Our discussion also touches upon moral education and religion, as Noddings believes that "in the background of moral education, religion played a very heavy role for a long time." Today, many argue that religion is essentially removed from public education, and it remains a concern to Noddings that this should not be the case. Instead, Noddings proposes, for instance, having an interdisciplinary team teach something on atheism. For a seminar or classroom setting, Noddings states, "I go through quite a lot of possibilities of what you could do there, and inviting critical thinking. What do you think about this … pointing out how close the thinking of some so-called atheists is to that of believers…. At the end of that, I ask the question: would you really be allowed to do this?"

Noddings does take the position that Dewey actually has influence within the social justice movement of today. However, she draws the difference between the so-called ideal theories and non-ideal theories. Noddings places Dewey in the non-ideal category and in disagreement with the "ideal." Dewey, for instance, travels beyond the path of ideals, values, and beliefs set forth by Plato and Aristotle. One way Dewey does so is by portraying specific ideals as real-world issues and problems, including those of justice. Indeed, Dewey commented extensively on the realities of the world and critiqued a wide variety of disciplines, pedagogical approaches, and philosophical thoughts, including problems that

involved issues of fairness, access, equality, and opportunity in education. In particular, Dewey addressed different types of educational opportunities as well as approaches that potentially would afford students different outcomes. And he accomplished this in real time, over extended decades throughout his life, by specifically commenting to individuals as well as to the public through the use of notes, letters, articles, books, and speeches on an ongoing basis.

Dewey, An Intellectual

It is interesting to note that Noddings believes that in today's schools, Dewey may be new to teachers—or not well known. However, for her, the so-called surprise to teachers is "how deeply intellectual a lot of his recommendations were." She believes Dewey wanted more than a child-centered curriculum, and that is why he wrote *The Child and the Curriculum* as well as *School and Society.* Noddings adds, "I think if teachers today read his pages on geography, for example, they might be surprised at how deeply intellectually he is thinking about geography." Perhaps as a young, new teacher, if Noddings had the opportunity to initiate a brief meeting with Dewey or maybe see him at a group dinner—hypothetically—what would Noddings tell Dewey about herself? Noddings indicates that she would start explaining the broad scope of her education—how she started in math and then changed to curriculum and then changed to philosophy at Stanford. In the end, math came back to serve her in the Stanford Philosophy Department, because at the time, the program was mostly analytical philosophy, thus relating directly to her mathematics education.

Dewey's Legacy

Noddings firmly believes that many people, especially scholars, should be able to acknowledge that Dewey's legacy is significant. However, according to Noddings, "you would never know it is significant by looking at our schools," and importantly, she adds, "But the potential is extraordinary, really." Then she laments that if only Dewey would have cut to the chase. She states, "In almost everything I pick up of Dewey's I can find something significant. But sometimes he drags on for pages and you kind of wish he would get to the point." Related to her viewpoint, Noddings shares that, at the time of this interview, she is preparing to give an invited lecture in a few months. Essentially, for her talk about Dewey, she indicates that part of the title for the lecture is going to be the continued

quest for certainty. She shares, "So in thinking about that, I am going to be reading *The Quest for Certainty*. And there are pages that even I have a hard time getting through." This reminds us of Noddings's cautionary comments that Dewey's writings are sometimes difficult.

At the close of the interview, Nel Noddings offers a wish for the future of our schools: "So there's no denying that Dewey could have been clearly more succinct. But there was the warning way back in the 1920s that in education there isn't just one best way. It's a matter of learning from one another, trying things out, seeing how they work for you with these kids, in this place at this time, and that to me is so powerful. I just wished it was having some effect on our schools." I had ample time to contemplate this introspective thought on the drive back to the Newark airport.

Epilogue

Nel Noddings welcomes and relishes her dual role as teacher and scholar. Her educational theory tracks with John Dewey in many aspects. However, she is not hesitant to admit that Dewey's notion of reflective thinking can be somewhat problematic to educators of all types. At the same time, she strongly believes that Dewey's reflective thinking theory offers a tremendous tool for educators to apply to teaching and learning. Indeed, one facet of Dewey's theory is the encouragement for teachers to adapt an experimental teaching style. This method is the heritage from the Dewey Lab School and is consistently presented in his writings. With this in mind, Noddings imparts a good argument in her dialogue for John Dewey's sustainability in twenty-first-century education relative to his focus on reflective thinking.

In addition, Noddings, as a woman who values the precision and the power of words—individually as well as collectively—asserts that the "potential" of Dewey in our schools is "extraordinary." She does not say that Dewey's ideas and ideals could be simply useful, or interesting, or even possibly beneficial. Instead, Noddings specifically indicates that Dewey's potential in the schools at this time is remarkable.

Let us hope that we can raise the mantle of twenty-first-century educational opportunity and access by keeping Noddings's compelling and persuasive choice of words about the credible impact Dewey can still have on teaching and learning in our schools. After all, John Dewey's ideas and ideals affect our democratic values as well as the global view of the benefits of democracy—and that truly is extraordinary.

Author note: All quotations in the Prologue and Epilogue are from the Nel Noddings dialogue transcript.

Nel Noddings Dialogue

TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH NEL NODDINGS

Seaside, NJ, September 2015 (Edited)

GREGG JORGENSEN (GJ): *I am going to be addressing readers who have a passing acquaintance with John Dewey or do not know him at all, what would you say about Dewy himself for this audience?*

NEL NODDINGS (NN): Dewey was certainly willing to talk to anybody. He was a very friendly, outgoing person, but I guess I would warn people to be patient when they are reading Dewey. In fact, at Stanford I taught a lot about Dewey, and I told students not to use their critical intelligence right off the bat. I told them just be patient, do not ask really hard questions right away, read more. Read and believe, not forever, but for a while, until you get to the point where you just have to ask the question. And that, by the way is a pretty good general tactic I have found in teaching. Because so many university students, in particular, feel that they have to attack right away, or ask questions right away. I ask why don't you read something before you ask a question? And it is so important with Dewy.

Because some of the work I am reviewing now is discussion of communication and democracy and education. Right at the beginning, right in the very first pages, he says the most astonishing thing, "All communication is educative." Well, you can pounce on that right away. But if you just wait a couple pages later, he qualifies that, and he says there are exceptions. Communication, "supposed" communications, that are clichés and meaningless words—no they are not communicative, they are educative. And communication there is cast in a mold, which takes some practical learning for a teacher. That is not educative. So, we warn people in the beginning, and we tell them in a subtle way, to be patient and keep reading.

GJ: *Especially because students often find a significant passage from Dewey, and then four to five pages later, he clarifies what his position is.*

NN: Sometimes it seems almost self-contradictory. Until you go back over it again and say, well I can see where he was getting at in the beginning, and now I know better what to think.

GJ: *Do you believe that John Dewey still has a role in the twenty-first century? And if so, how do you see it happening?*

NN: The first part of it, yes, I think he has a greater role to play now that he ever did. But do I see it happening? No, I do not. I do not see it happening, because what I see happening is everything getting tighter, more authoritarian, more money-oriented, with the whole reason of going to college just to make more money. We put far less emphasis on the good life or developing a deeper mold of people who care about the common good. No, I do not see it happening. I am trying to be super careful in some of this criticism because as people get older people they tend to get crabbier, and I do not want it to be thought that it is just because I am getting to be an old crank, that I am talking this way. I am not alone on this. There are a lot of people who are worried, very worried about the direction that education is taking.

GJ: *Do you think that Dewey was underrated in any way in the twentieth century?*

NN: By some people for sure! Yes, by some people for sure, but some of it he brought upon himself. He wrote prolifically, and it was not always easy to figure out what he meant. But see, we already talked about that you have to be patient, you have to keep reading, and when you are troubled on page three you may find the answer you need is from page 87.

GJ: *Do you believe that Dewey ever influenced the American curriculum?*

NN: Oh yes, but not as deeply or broadly as he could have. But there is still hope. I mean when you look at how popular his book *Democracy and Education* was for a few years, and then there were curriculums all over the country that used it, and then it disappeared almost entirely. It is another thing to think about with teacher preparation, usually we do something along with history education, but we do not do what we should do in that line. I meet and talk with math teachers who do not even know that there was such a thing as the new math in the sixties—how can they be math teachers and not know?

GJ: *It created quite a controversy—I believe you should know the history involved in your own discipline.*

NN: Yes, you should, and in particular when they are talking about how much more rigorous the core standards are. I do not see anything new in them really—I have them all in there, the whole stack, the whole batch of them and all of the stuff from the sixties because I did my masters in math. And I just do not understand how people can look at something and say that it is new, when it is forty years old. Except for the technology aspect, of course.

GJ: *Why do you think that they package it that way? Just re-bundling it, and re-packaging it, and re-naming it?*

NN: It is because the professors are making money. If you had pressed me a couple of years ago on this, I would have acknowledged it, but I would not be as standup about it as I am now. It is all about money! And the publishers do not even care that the core standards are going to go away, because what do they do when the standards go away? They make more money. Publish more books.

GJ: *Yes, unfortunately.*

NN: And that is not to say that everything that they publish is bad. Because some of it is still good, but it has been sold in poor pretenses. The money could have been spent on kid's lunches.

GJ: *Great point.*

NN: In some cases, the breakfast program. There are so many desperate needs in this country, and Pearson and other publishers in this country have made millions, probably billions in Pearson's case. It's not right, it's not.

GJ: *How did Dewey deal with the concept of social efficiency?*

NN: Well, everything in his philosophy of education would have been against it as a background for curriculum and teaching. He would not necessarily be against it, if it came to running school business and that sort of thing. But he is strongly and appropriately contrasted with people like [Franklin] Bobbitt. With the curriculum, he certainly would not approve of having a specific learning objective, for every lesson, every single day.

GJ: *I agree.*

NN: I know this is something not necessarily what you want to hear here, but I am looking for people who are interested in writing more about this movement for specific learning objections as a method for particular control. Are you doing anything along those lines?

GJ: *I am.*

NN: Because it was not that I was not aware of it at all, but it was not at the front of my thinking like it is now, because I cannot see any other reason for it. I mean, of course every teacher has on some days a specific learning objective. Sure, you would have to be an idiot to deny that. But on many days, we do not know specifically what we are going to teach, because it depends on all kinds of things. It depends on what went on in the school last night. We have to talk about some of those things. It depends on how the

kids did on the last lessons, depends on whether somebody comes in and pushes somebody else, or asks an interesting question, or if something pops into your own head. And teaching is so much more interesting when it is open like that. When it is genuinely collegiate.

GJ: *Yes. And Dewey suggests it is difficult for that to happen when adults make the decision to teach a lesson the adult has predetermined and believes will be of importance to his or her students in the future—even though the topic or subject is of no interest to them, nor pertinent to their present state of growth.*

NN: Right, so be quiet and learn. And tomorrow there will be a test. I was reading a section of *Democracy and Education* last night, because of something that somebody sent me. This is what I got there: that you cannot teach directly. You have to teach through the environment. And then, of course, that brings a lot. But again, you have to be patient and see what he is going to do with that and what he means by environment, and by relationships and how they furnish the ground for teaching.

GJ: *Do you think Dewey's approach to reflective thinking can be implemented into today's classroom? If so, what do you think would have to happen?*

NN: Well, of course it could be. But what would have to happen is that we would have to listen to the kids. Do more listening. We have to do more group work, because you want them to listen to one another. You would have to pose more open questions, more sort of "I wonder" questions. In fact, I just finished writing a response to an article about Peirce on moral education. In it I suggested that we have to find a way to teach controversial issues. Common core is heavy on critical thinking, but it never says what it is.

GJ: *You make a strong point.*

NN: It does not say what it is, but you have to do critical thinking in English, math, and everywhere right? Well, we won't talk about that. I posed the question, and in the background of moral education, religion played a very heavy role for a long time. But there are still people who feel that since we do not allow religion in the schools, the reality is everybody is going to hell. So, I said, suppose that an interdisciplinary team decided we should teach something on atheism, for example. And, I go through quite a lot of possibilities of what you could do there—inviting critical thinking. What do you think about this? What do you think about that? Pointing out how close the thinking of some so-called atheists is to that of believers. And get kids thinking about it. At the end of that I ask the question: Would you really be allowed to do this? I don't know. I mean in some school you

would. If you are talking about the middle level Chicago lab school where I spent some time, you could, but in everyday public high school, I don't know. I know you could not in some.

GJ: *Exactly.*
NN: Absolutely.

GJ: *I think that some may say that is a great idea, until the parents started complaining.*
NN: But it takes us back to the question we were talking about earlier. It is not a matter of teaching advocacy so we can teach atheism and have everybody become an atheist. That is ridiculous, and I would not even consider such a project. But so much of our teaching is like that now. You have a specific outcome that you want; and if the outcome you want is reflective thinking, then everything else is sort of open.

GJ: *Tell me about your time with the laboratory schools.*
NN: I was director of the laboratory schools for one year. It was just a couple of years after I got my Ph.D. And I loved it. Vicky [my daughter] loved the schools too. But my husband hated Chicago. Well, where we were living was nice, but he had a long commute and he didn't like the cold. Since I was rather fond of moving, I said alright we'll go back to California. That's the way that was.

GJ: *Did you find the laboratory schools operated in a very Deweyan way?*
NN: Only at the elementary school level, at the elementary school level there were still very strong vestiges, but by middle school that kind of faded, and by high school it was gone. So, it is a very interesting school. It is built in a rectangular form, so you can start at the director's office and go through the elementary school, the middle school, and then through the high school. But at the high school level, it is just a very strong academic private school."

GJ: *Would you address what role Dewey's ideas and ideals may have had in the social justice movement*?
NN: That is a great question. Certainly, he had influence on some people. But what you get into here is the difference between so-called ideal theories and non-ideal theories because probably the biggest influence has been John Rawls and his ideal theories. In thinking about that over the last couple of months, again I find places in Dewey where he speaks distinctly and specifically against the kind of ideal thinking that John Walls did. Of course, he wasn't talking to John Walls, but there are these nice lines where he said, "We cannot

make up out of our heads the ideal society." And, then he goes on to say how we have to build it. We see something that we think is wrong, and then we see a place where they are doing it right. You can learn from this. Then he says another thing that is just absolutely wonderful—he says, "But don't just copy it!" Which is common. I mean back in 1916 [the year that *Democracy and Education* was published], doing work against this. People are different, situations are different, times change, and all the rest of it. It does not mean we cannot learn from these other places. But do not copy them—Dewey. It is terrific. That is something I learned on page 87.

GJ: *Do you see this in the concept of best practices?*

NN: Again, what Dewey would say is "do not call them best practices, call them promising practices." Take a look at them, learn from them, talk to them and tell them what you are doing. I mean, how much more sensible can you get, really?

GJ: *Yes, indeed. Great point.*

NN: And it reminds me, have you read anything by Debbie Meier?

GJ: *Yes, I have.*

NN: She and I used to talk quite often; we have not in quite a while. But when she left Central Park East where she did such a terrific job and went to the New York City Board of Education, she was just worn out. We were at a conference together in Tennessee, she looked so tired, and she said "You know I can't do this. They want me to make all the schools just like Central Park East." And I said, I know you can't do that. You do not need to convince me. So, she only stayed in that job for a year or two." But see, it is that kind of mistake that we just make over and over and over. Find something and you think it is the best practice. So, everybody is going to do that now; and then at the end of a year or two that does not work out, so we throw it out entirely. It's brainless.

GJ: *Yes. And I think it goes back to the belief in social efficiency and just seeing what is the most effective way—schools are not like a factory.*

NN: That is nonsense, and seems ridiculous.

GJ: *What can teachers still learn from Dewey that may surprise them?*

NN: Probably everything would surprise them, because they have not read it. It might surprise them how deeply intellectual a lot of his recommendations were. They were not just telling a story, a video. It might surprise them to know he was actually at odds with the

child-centered people—they got along well with him, and he liked them and liked much of what they were doing, but he did not want it to be a child-centered curriculum, he wanted it to be more than that. That is why so many of his books are *Child and the Curriculum* and *School and Society*. So, he is not going to pull things from the basket. He is going to work cooperatively and collegiately. I think if teachers today read his pages on geography, for example, they might be surprised at how deeply intellectually he is thinking about geography.

GJ: *What would you still like to know about Dewey if you were to ask other Dewey scholars?*

NN: Actually something like that was nagging at me just the other day, but I will have to try to think of that more.

GJ: *If you were at a dinner party and Dewey were there, what would you ask Dewey, and what would you tell Dewey about yourself?*

NN: Well, I don't know. It would depend on the conversation, the other people there. People would evolve you know. Dewey would say that. This is irrelevant I guess, but it reminds me of meeting Lawrence Kohlberg. Did you ever meet Lawrence Kohlberg?

GJ: *I never had the pleasure of meeting him. That must have been a great experience.*

NN: It was; it really was. We were at lunch, he was sitting on my left. We had a fascinating conversation. But some food kept dripping down his beard on to his jacket. I wanted to wipe it off for him, but of course I didn't. But that did not get in the way of the conversation. Oh goodness. Right before that he had made a visit to Stanford. I do not know if I got to see him on that visit, but my closest colleague, Dennis Phillips did. He went over to the philosophy department where he was going to hear Kohlberg. He was sitting in the back of the room and there was someone that Dennis thought was the janitor—this is because Kohlberg did not dress up. He was just not dressed up. A very nice fascinating life. But almost everyone that knows him and has met him can tell you a funny story about him.

GJ: *Do you know what you might tell Dewey about yourself, if you were to meet him?*

NN: I do not know—if it came up, I suppose the variety in my life might be of some interest. You know, starting off in math and when I went to Stanford to get my Ph.D. and my very first term there I had to organize the courses that I took. The courses had to be close together in time, because I still had a house full of kids. I wanted to get all of the required classes done as quickly as possible. So, my

first term there I had two courses in philosophy and education to get them out of the way. I had a course in psychology with Nate Gage and sociology. As the term wore on, philosophy books began piling up all over the house. I was totally hooked, totally hooked. So, I switched from the curriculum major that I started in with Elliot Eisner, who is a wonderful colleague, and I had to start taking courses in the philosophy department, because I had never taken any classes in the philosophy department. What was so fascinating to me about this was that my background in math was enormously helpful, because the Stanford Philosophy Department was mostly analytical philosophy at that time. So, my work in math and logic was relevant. But I remember telling my advisor the very first course I took in philosophy was epistemology. I had no trouble following the arguments, but I did not know why they were arguing. That is the sort of background that you have to acquire. Why would they be arguing these things here? So, it was that, that I had to catch up on. And I loved it.

GJ: *How would you summarize the legacy of John Dewey?*

NN: I would say that anyone would have to acknowledge that it is significant. That right now because it is the one-hundred-year mark, it seems very, very significant. But I am not sure if that is not just part of the hundred-year celebration. Because you would never know it is significant by looking at our schools. So, the potential is enormous. I suppose that some wished that Dewey would have written more clearly than he did. But the potential is extraordinary, really.

GJ: *Yes, it is.*

NN: I have been in the business a long time now, but in almost everything I pick up of Dewey's, I can find something significant. But sometimes he drags on for pages, and you wish he would get to the point. Interestingly, that is not true in *Democracy and Education*. In *Democracy and Education*, it is pretty vibrant from beginning to end because I am doing an invited lecture on Dewey in December and part the title is going to be the continued request for certainty. So, in thinking about that, I am going to be reading *Request for Certainty*. And, there are pages that even I have a hard time getting through. So, there is no denying that Dewey could have been clearly more succinct. But there was the warning way back in the 1920s that in education there is not just one best way. It is a matter of learning from one another, trying things out, seeing how they work for you with these kids, in this place at this time, and that to me is so powerful. I just wished it was having some effect on our schools.

GJ: *Thank you.*

NN: You are welcome.

CHAPTER 7

A Deweyan View for Teacher Practice: Ellen Condliffe Lagemann

Prologue

Scholar Introduction

Ellen Condliffe Lagemann's career has taken her to numerous prestigious positions in higher education. She is now the Levy Institute Research Professor at Bard College in New York. Lagemann is also Distinguished Fellow in the Bard Prison Initiative. On her career journey to this point, Lagemann, as a historian of education, served as a dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and she is a former president of the Spencer Foundation located in Chicago. Lagemann has served as president for both the National Academy of Education and the History of Education Society. She also served as vice chair of the board for Stanford University's Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral and Social Sciences; as trustee of the Russell Sage, Greenwall, and Markle foundations; and as president of the board of Concord Academy, Concord, Massachusetts. From 2005 to 2011, Lagemann chaired the National Research Council's Committee on Teacher Preparation. Notable among the many books, articles, reviews, and reports she has authored are *An Elusive Science: The Troubling History of Education Research* and *What Is College For? The Public Purpose of Higher Education*.

Ellen Condliffe Lagemann readily agreed to be interviewed for this book and suggested we have our conversation about John Dewey by

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telephone. In April 2016, we met on the phone for an intense and lively discussion about Dewey's educational philosophy.

Dialogue Overview

Ellen Condliffe Lagemann gives a unique description of John Dewey. According to Lagemann, one frequently hears the title of "Father of Progressive Education" attached to Dewey. However, she views Dewey as a multifaceted philosopher who reached well beyond such a title. Owing to his style of educational philosophy, she believes that Dewey has a huge role in our twenty-first-century designs for schooling. She states, "Dewey's philosophy on education really defines at least theoretically what education should be." In addition, she believes it is important also to examine him as a political philosopher as well as a social philosopher. At the same time, she insists that "to be a teacher in a Deweyan world is an extremely demanding task." She strongly believes that Dewey's ideas have enormous significance but that it is intensely challenging to translate them into practice—it "is really very hard."

Experimental Approaches

The complexity of Dewey's writings is possibly one of several reasons that, during his era, Dewey was misunderstood, although not necessarily underappreciated in Lagemann's opinion. As such, she indicates that Dewey was not a major player in the formation of public school curriculum. However, she observes that if a typical public school curriculum did exist, then Dewey did, and continues to, influence at least some of the best progressive schools—which more often than not are private schools. Lagemann states in a straightforward manner, "I think he has had more influence in the private school sector than he has had in the public schools."

Dewey has frequently been labeled a pragmatist—a term often subject to multiple and different definitions. Lagemann indicates that pragmatism is frequently misconstrued as practicality. About Dewey, she states, "Pragmatism for Dewey was understanding what the consequences of an idea were by putting them into practice. So pragmatism was a constantly experimental approach to ideas and their actualization."

Unintended Consequences

This is a most interesting observation to unpack—at least a little. In many ways, the concept of unintended consequences as articulated by Dewey has continued to be relevant in today's world. For example,

when political leaders, educational policy makers, school administrators, and even local communities develop what is considered to be a good idea, they often witness outcomes and circumstances that were arguably unforeseen. The underlying issue is that the ideas and ideals often advocated, and often quickly supported, appear not to be well thought out in advance of their implementation. Frequently, such ill-formed ideas have a significant impact in unintended consequences ranging, for instance, from invading a foreign nation to overthrow an authoritarian leader with the idea of spreading democracy with no end game in sight to an educational policy such as No Child Left Behind—a program that was exacerbated by inadequate plans for funding which derailed its full implementation in many instances.

Equality in Lieu of Social Efficiency

Dewey's era ushered in the concept of social efficiency generated by the developing business practices and demands on society from industrialists in the early twentieth century. However, at this juncture in our conversation, Lagemann takes the position that social efficiency is not a primary consideration in gaining an understanding of Dewey. It certainly was a critical concept of the era, but Lagemann expresses, "I do not think he was so concerned with efficiency as he was with equality." This is an interesting view on what many scholars believe is an important topic for Dewey and his contemporaries.

The social efficiency movement of the twentieth century, which has migrated and morphed into perhaps more contemporary motivations in the twenty-first century, is generally thought to be positioned far apart from today's social justice movement. However, my inquiry about Dewey relative to the social justice movement required some dialogue between us to reach a common-ground understanding of what one means by a social justice movement. In my opinion, Dewey believed in the notion of a pluralistic society; Lagemann believes that Dewey cared about equality and the establishment of a community of different people with different experiences. Thus, we both agree that the lack of access to educational opportunity for all in this nation continues to be an ongoing issue that is relevant to Dewey's ideas.

Reflecting on Experience

Needless to say, our dialogue about Dewey references Dewey's ideas regarding different experiences of people. So when I ask Lagemann if Dewey's reflective thinking theory could be implemented in the

schools today, her response is clear and direct: Lagemann believes that John Dewey brings reflecting and experience together. That is, in her view, "thinking is always a process of, in a sense, reflecting upon experience." At this point, Lagemann engages in some reflection of her own regarding schools and curriculum in today's environment relative to Dewey's ideas about reflective thinking. She appears to be hopeful for twenty-first-century teaching and learning but also considers that "much depends on the schools, and the circumstances."

Practice by Teachers

For our twenty-first-century teachers, Lagemann believes there is, and will continue to be, a great amount to learn from what Dewey offers. However, she cautions that one should read Dewey again, and again, to understand the nuances imbedded throughout his writings. This is particularly true when it comes to the blending of philosophy with the practical. She states, "I happen to be one of these people that I think is very Deweyan, who believes there is nothing as practical as a good philosophy." As a result, she definitely has an interest in seeing Dewey's ideas put into practice by teachers. In response to my inquiry about what she would still like to know about Dewey, Lagemann poses this interesting question: "how can a Deweyan kind of perspective—not necessarily his ideas verbatim but the kind of approaches he leads one to—how can those actually be translated into tools, and teaching materials?" Following on this thought, if Lagemann had the opportunity to speak with Dewey, she would very much like to ask Dewey which of his ideas are important today and which ones would be important to teaching practices. And conversely, she would want to tell Dewey how much she has learned, and continues to learn, from him. But, like perhaps many of us, she primarily wants to hear what Dewey would have to say to us.

Linking Education and Democracy

As our conversation comes to a close, Lagemann notes the scope of Dewey's works and ideas, how he links education and democracy. About his legacy, she states, "To me, it is a comprehensiveness. It is not a system, but it is the fact that he joins up so many different problems, issues, and topics that are dealt with separately—that is what I find most interesting I think." Indeed, it is Dewey's interrelated and interdisciplinary approach to the consideration of problems and issues of vital importance in a society that continues to resonate in twenty-first-century education.

Epilogue

It is thought-provoking that Ellen Condliffe Lagemann finds that comparing Dewey with Thorndike is useful to her. One reason is her belief that "Thorndike represented everything that Dewey did not represent." Lagemann notes that, in her opinion, "Thorndike's ideas were much easier to package and to disseminate." And therein lies Lagemann's conclusion—much to her disappointment—that Thorndike had more influence.

Whereas Dewey could be accused of conversation involving the use of abstractions—perhaps using democracy as an example—Thorndike's vocabulary was, for the most part, systematically concrete and easy to comprehend. Thorndike avoided what was, arguably, thought to be the circuitous logic, extended reasoning, and dialogue that were engaged in the marketplace of ideas. Rather, Thorndike's working vocabulary for schooling included terms designed to provide a much less complicated message than the nuanced and expansive ideas Dewey provided. Thorndike preferred concepts, such as measurement in the form of testing, that in theory would provide mean and lean outcomes argued to be statistically and thus scientifically defensible and replicable.

In essence, Thorndike endorsed a mechanistic approach to education. Conversely, Dewey's concept of a scientific method utilized experimental techniques to develop a hypothesis or hypotheses that included considering the potential consequences of the solutions identified. Whereas Thorndike concentrated on what he argued were efficient educational practices designed to eliminate waste, Dewey believed that education in a democracy should open the door to all human possibilities.

Author note: All quotations in the Prologue and Epilogue are from the Ellen Condliffe Lagemann dialogue transcript.

Ellen Condliffe Lagemann Dialogue

TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH ELLEN CONDLIFFE LAGEMANN

April 26, 2016, via Telephone (Edited)

GREGG JORGENSEN (GJ): *This is Gregg Jorgensen. How are you doing?*
ELLEN CONDLIFFE LAGEMANN (ECL): Hi, I am fine. You are right on time.

GJ: *Well I appreciate your time to give this interview. Is this still a good time for you?*

ECL: Yes, this is fine.

GJ: *I am going to be addressing readers who may only have a passing acquaintance with John Dewey or not know him at all. What would you say about Dewey for this audience?*

ECL: Well, give me a little bit of a clue, are you talking about his biography, his ideas, what about Dewey?

GJ: *The audience will be—some people will know him as an educational philosopher, some people will not know much about him or his work. Speak to any aspect of Dewey that will help readers get to know and understand him.*

ECL: Okay. I think you know Dewey is often called the Father of Progressive Education, but I think that is much too narrow a conception of his importance. I think he was important as an educator, as a philosopher. He was after all not just an education philosopher, he was a political philosopher, a social philosopher. He was also important in many numbers of institutions, and courses, so he was much more multifaceted than the sort of title of Father of Progressive Education implies.

GJ: *Do you believe that John Dewey's philosophy still has a role to play in the twenty-first century? And if so, how do you see it happening?*

ECL: I think Dewey's philosophy on education really defines at least theoretically what education should be. So, I think it continues to have huge roles into the twenty-first century. I think one of the difficulties with Dewey is that his ideas are very hard to carry into practice. To be a teacher in a Deweyan world is an extremely demanding task. And that is just one example. And so, I think that his ideas have huge relevance, but I think simply trying to translate them into practice is really very hard.

GJ: *Do you think Dewey was underrated in any way in the twentieth century?*

ECL: I think there have been interpreters on every thought of Dewey. And I think that many of them have misunderstood him. So, I do not think of your question as having been underappreciated. I think it is more that he has been misunderstood at times. In many ways, Dewey is much more radical than people have realized. I think people kind of left Dewey on the side. In my view, it is useful to contrast Dewey and Thorndike as I have done in my writing. Because Thorndike represented everything that Dewey did not represent. And Thorndike's

ideas were much easier to package and to disseminate. Thorndike, I think, has much more influence than Dewey's ideas, unfortunately.

GJ: *This next question in part goes to that point. In reality, do you believe that Dewey ever really influenced the American curriculum?*

ECL: I think he has influenced some people and some institutions. And I think he has had a great influence there. But I do not think that he has been a prime shaper of the typical public school curriculum—if there is such a thing as the typical public school curriculum. He certainly had a prominent influence on some of the outstanding progressive schools, which have often been private schools. But, John Goodman—well, I guess that was a private school too. I think he has had more influence in the private school sector than he has had in the public schools.

GJ: *How did Dewey deal with the concept of social efficiency?*

ECL: Well, I do not think of social efficiency as being a conception that was particularly important to Dewey. I do not think it is important in interpreting him or reading him. I mean it was certainly around in his era but I do not think he was so concerned with efficiency as he was with equality.

GJ: *Would you talk about the notion of pragmatism from Dewey's point of view?*

ECL: Well, pragmatism is so often misused to mean simply practicality. Pragmatism for Dewey was understanding what the consequences of an idea were by putting them into practice. So pragmatism was a constantly experimental approach to ideas and their actualization.

GJ: *Do you think Dewey's approach to reflective thinking can be implemented into today's curriculum, and if so, what do you think would have to happen?*

ECL: I think for Dewey reflective thinking and thinking were the same thing. I mean, thinking is always a process of, in a sense, reflecting upon experience. It is a graphic story and how we think of the child and the candle. Unless you think about the consequences of something, you will keep repeating it and you will not think and you will not learn. Is there room for thinking in the schools of the early twenty-first century? I would hope so, but I think it very much depends on the school, and the circumstances and the conditions in the classrooms for teachers. I think that many teachers want children to think. But it is awfully hard when you have so many kids in the classroom that you can hardly keep track of them. Still, is there room for thinking. I would hope so.

GJ: *Would you address what influence, if any, Dewey's ideas and ideals may have had in the social justice movement?*

ECL: Would you explain your view of the social justice movement?

GJ: *Well, from my perspective, the social justice movement involves those who advocate toward equity and equality—and, in the schools, seek to promote access to equal opportunity. That is how I personally think about it.*

ECL: Right. I think Dewey, for those people who know his ideas and know his philosophy, has a very prominent place in what you claim is the social justice movement; he deeply cared about equality, he deeply believed in interaction of people from different backgrounds and experiences. And, if Dewey had had more influence, if his ideas were realized in more practice, the world would be a better place.

GJ: *I could not agree more with that.*

ECL: I think everyone you are talking to will agree with that.

GJ: *Yes. What can teachers still learn from Dewey that might surprise them?*

ECL: I think Dewey is the type of writer, or philosopher, that you will have to read and read and read again. To me, many of his ideas in writing have so much in them that no matter how many times you read them, if you read them again you will find something new. It is partly because he uses words in so many nuanced ways you may miss the nuance or some the nuance the first time through. So, I think there is a great deal that Dewey offers. And I happen to be one of these people that I think is very Deweyan, who believes there is nothing as practical as a good philosophy. So, the more teachers can actually be immersed in thinking about ideas and thinking about what education really is—even though it is not a how to do it formula for what to do in the classroom tomorrow—I think his writing deeply informs how it approaches children and the subject matter to gain knowledge.

GJ: *What would you still like to know about Dewey if you were to ask Dewey or other scholars?*

ECL: That is a great question. I would like to hear how they have answered some of the questions that you have asked. I think the most interesting question, for me, about Dewey, is how can a Deweyan kind of perspective—not necessarily his ideas verbatim but the kind of approaches he leads one to—how can those actually be translated into tools, and teaching materials, and such, that can be used by teachers, in order that some of his ideas can actually become more adequately represented in practice.

GJ: *Two more questions. One is, if you were at a dinner party and Dewey were there, what would you ask Dewey, and, next, what would you tell him about yourself?*

ECL: I would first hand him a glass of scotch. That is a very interesting question, it is not easy to answer. I guess I would ask him which of his ideas would he think are most important today. Which are most important and which are most likely to have an impact on practice. Because I think he certainly believed in the truth or the wisdom or the values of ideas in practice. What would I tell him about myself? I guess I would tell him I learned a lot from him, and I continue to learn a lot. I do not know what I would tell him. I would want to hear what he would have to say much more that what I would have to say.

GJ: *How would you summarize the legacy of John Dewey?*

ECL: I think Dewey was tremendously important in the breadth of his thinking; his ideas about psychology and the practice of education; his ideas about democracy; and his thinking about the linkages between those. To me, it is a comprehensiveness. It is not a system, but it is the fact that he joins up so many different problems, issues, and topics that are dealt with separately—that is what I find most interesting I think. And I think many people do.

GJ: *Well, I would totally agree with that.*

ECL: I am glad that we agree about so much. Now, is this going to be a book you are doing?

GJ: *Yes. Based on the interviews; it will be in a conversational tone.*

ECL: That is great.

GJ: *I certainly appreciate your voice in the conversation.*

ECL: Thank you.

GJ: *Thanks so much.*

CHAPTER 8

Teach the Way Dewey Believed: Daniel Tanner

Prologue

Scholar Introduction

There is a multiplicity of reasons to enter into a dialogue with Daniel Tanner about his perspectives and thoughts on John Dewey's impact on education and the curriculum. Daniel Tanner is a significant and compelling voice in the discussion of these Dewey dialogues, particularly because of his well-established reputation as a leading educator throughout a prolific career as professor, lecturer, scholar, and author. Currently, he enjoys the designation of Professor Emeritus at the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, where he established and directed the doctoral program in curricular studies. He is an internationally recognized scholar in curriculum history whose books have been translated into several languages. Tanner is considered a leader in the curriculum field.

Daniel Tanner received his Ph.D. from the Ohio State University (OSU). Interestingly, OSU had earlier been the adopted educational home base of both Boyd H. Bode, a renowned educational philosopher in the stead of John Dewey, and H. Gordon Hullfish, a noted Deweyan scholar and teacher educator who was mentored by Bode. Ideas from these OSU educator alumni parallel many integral components of Tanner's research and scholarship.

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Tanner is the author of 14 books and a co-author of *History of the School Curriculum*. Together with his wife, Laurel, he co-authored the seminal book *Curriculum Development: Theory into Practice,* which is a staple in curriculum history research. Educators and scholars interested in the history of education in the USA frequently turn to this book. Readers will also find his writings in numerous leading education journals and in cross-spectrum publications such as the *Atlantic Monthly,* the *New York Times,* and the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.* His book topics run the gamut from curriculum theory to curriculum practice to the history of progressive education. Thus, his writings and his professional career have a close symmetry with John Dewey's—in the sense that both scholar's works have much in common with regard to their concern for issues of democracy in the schools. His knowledge, and acknowledgment, of John Dewey's educational philosophy led Tanner to serve a term as president of the John Dewey Society. Tanner is the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Curriculum Studies Division of the American Educational Research Association. He has lectured at leading universities in the USA and throughout the world.

Tanner commands a wide audience of followers at educational conferences. Deweyan scholars seek him out to engage in intense conversations about Dewey and his writings as well as Tanner's own work concerning curriculum history. What Daniel Tanner brings to the dialogues about John Dewey in many ways is reflected in the context and issues embedded within his recent writing: *Crusade for Democracy: Progressive Education at the Crossroads.* This book details the progressive education era and the work of the John Dewey Society in the 1930s and 1940s.

In an effort to reach beyond the pages of his writings, I met with Daniel Tanner in Philadelphia in mid-April 2014 to discuss Dewey's ideas and democratic ideals.

Dialogue Overview

Interwoven throughout this extensive dialogue are Tanner's primary thoughts about and observations of John Dewey as an educational philosopher. Tanner identifies important aspects of Deweyan ideas on teaching and learning, the fostering of democratic ideals, and comprehensive public school education.

In our conversation, Daniel Tanner describes John Dewey as being misunderstood, misinterpreted , and even misaligned. Dewey had, and continues to have, protractors and detractors in the context of education.

However, in Tanner's view, Dewey transitioned from the close of the nineteenth century into the twentieth century with novel ideas about how to meet the challenges of new issues and problems confronting a democratic society. One of these approaches centered on Dewey's methodology, detailed in his writing *How We Think,* involving issues such as reflective thinking at the intersection of education and democracy. Specifically, Dewy talked about the method of intelligence as a way to deal with the problems in a democratic society and to determine the unfinished tasks and issues citizens have to resolve. As to how citizens viewed Dewey's ideas and ideals for the curriculum in that era, Tanner bluntly states, "To a lot of people, that was dangerous." The same would hold true today.

Public Education: Maintaining the Historical Status Quo

It is remarkable how Tanner demonstrates the manner in which the end game of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century factory model emphasizing social efficiency in education continues to have relevance today. In Tanner's view, the current public education environment remains very similar to, if not the same as, the past era. Tanner argues that the factory system approach to schooling has been carried forward to the twenty-first century. He contends that the privileged citizens in this nation have long received a very Deweyan education for college preparation, while the general population today is told that college and career readiness requires what Tanner describes as the nineteenth- and twentieth-century factory directive for "workers who could read, who could write, who could communicate, follow instructions, follow directions, but not form unsettling ideas."

Curriculum Restructure and Change

In addressing curriculum issues—that is, what should be taught to all students—Dewey believed, as Tanner explains, that the core curriculum should deal "with the kinds of problems that we all share regardless of function, status, or situation in a free society." For instance, Tanner suggests social studies as a subject, and the social implications of the sciences are all part of a Deweyan core curriculum.

However, although Dewey advocated for a curriculum that would deal with social issues and problems, Tanner explains that there are always parents who find it disturbing when their children disagree with them on political issues. Tanner indicates that, historically, parents as well as employers have lobbied for separate schools for worker training. At the same time, Tanner points out that the concept of teaching the fundamentals, commonly known as the Back to Basics movement,

is inexpensive to promote and produce in terms of economic costs. The same cannot be said regarding the costs for providing laboratories and industrial arts shops in public schools.

Tanner elaborates on Dewey's idea that the educational process and the curriculum structure and function need to align closely with learning in democratic communities. He bluntly points out that *Democracy and Education* is Dewey's curriculum textbook. Tanner states that very few educational philosophers or their students are aware that they are using a curriculum book when they engage with *Democracy and Education*. Because the structure of curriculum is extensive, Dewey's book has entire sections on major fields of study, including social studies. Tanner's important caveat with regard to *Democracy and Education* is that Dewey actually presented an integrated concept emphasizing how what are often seen as separate and distinct fields of studies relate. Thus, one of Tanner's major points in our discussion is that instead of today's essentialist core curriculum containing the basics for the general student population, a Deweyan concept would use the *Democracy and Education* model, demonstrating how the various fields connect and also link the needs of society and the needs of the learner as well as the expectations for democracy.

Occupations Within Dewey's Curriculum

Tanner zeros in on Dewey's reference to *occupations* as a key example of a Deweyan term that in Tanner's opinion has been misinterpreted over time. One reason for this misinterpretation is, Tanner believes, that Dewey's ideas concerning the role of occupations in the curriculum represented a position significantly different from that of his contemporaries. Tanner points out that Dewey believed in vocational training in conjunction with Dewey's idea of addressing occupations in the curriculum—but only under the concept of one comprehensive school that all students attend, no matter their future career interests. In Tanner's view, courses designed specifically for aspiring scientists, for instance, mirror Dewey's definition of a more specialized education within the comprehensive school.

Tanner identifies music or music composition, for example, as a part of the core curriculum, as did Dewey. Both performing and writing music are occupations. Yet Tanner points out that these subjects are often being curtailed or even removed from the twenty-first-century core curriculum. This observation leads into a discussion on the rise of

essentialism, which Tanner believes was fallout from the factory system and the identified need for efficient workers in the early part of the twentieth century, which has carried forward into today's educational policy. In addition, parents and employers have lobbied throughout history for separate schools for worker training. Thus, today, we find not just the interpretation but the literal definition of a core curriculum that, in reality, deviates from Dewey's philosophy.

Education: A Humanitarian Perspective

An unexpected Tanner observation is his idea that private schools adopted Dewey's humanitarian approach so that their students could receive more hands-on learning and experience from teachers who are more receptive to innovative ideas, as opposed to the more regimented teaching observed historically in traditional public schools. He highlights his observation by indicating that private schools adopted Dewey's ideas, but with the notable exceptions of examining and analyzing problems in society as well as excluding vocational education, because the latter was not deemed necessary by the privileged for college-bound students. The difference between what Tanner believes was, and remains, the humanitarian treatment of privileged students and the manner in which the vast number of public school students across this nation are treated in the schools that Tanner describes as "inhumane."

Rethinking School Capacity

Another interesting perspective is Tanner's reconceptualization of the capacity of schools in the twenty-first century. Tanner indicates that today, school capacity is measured simply by the number of seats students occupy. With this in mind as the major factor in considering the concept of school capacity in the context of contemporary public education, Tanner indicates that both his and Dewey's views of schooling are in direct conflict with current educational policy. Tanner believes that, in reality, school capacity should be determined by the school's ability to advocate and develop an educational opportunity for students to gain knowledge and realize personal growth. Toward this end, Tanner observes that Dewey deftly merged concepts of pragmatism with democratic ideals by advocating that schools should develop knowledgeable citizens to move society and democracy forward. Thus, Tanner identifies Dewey as a progressive. However, Dewey's progressive followers did not in fact bring about the arc of education as progress in the schools

in the manner that Dewey would have preferred, namely the idea that successful implementation of John Dewey's teaching and learning methods needs to be based on problem-solving to transform students into the enlightened citizens Dewey envisioned.

Tanner believes Dewey's approach to thinking can be transferred into today's classrooms; however, he includes the caveat that a prerequisite is the recognition that the "thinking source is totaled in the total body: the mind, the feelings, the emotion, and being able to move around." He punctuates his position by interjecting classic detailed teaching and learning examples. For instance, he provides a very Deweyan-like curriculum example assigning a project to a fifth- or sixth-grade class to make a lamp. Each step in the project brought in new multifaceted learning opportunities and involved student collaboration. Dewey's laboratory school used this type of project-based curriculum. Such projects inspire confidence and develop student interest and motivation. Tanner concludes that this approach results in ways of knowing and in-depth understandings that he defines as collateral learning. According to Tanner, collateral learning surprises teachers with its power to motivate and inform students. Tanner's various teaching examples demonstrate that all students and people continue to learn in the proper setting.

Impact of Media

Without specifically referring to the widespread impact of social media on education, Tanner links the influence of politics in the media and advertising to student learning. He implies that media—of many types—supply statistical presentations and comparisons that are "clearly mathematics united with social study," which relates directly to the application of Dewey's position on teaching applied, not traditional, mathematics in the twenty-first century.

Technology-Driven Student Testing

According to Tanner, "you make progress by solving problems." With this adage in mind, he indicates that the currently ongoing "testing mania" exemplifies the conclusion that "technology drives the institution of schooling." In reality, Tanner posits that the nature of tests is to question their own validity; that is, Tanner questions whether decisions based on test scores are going to be sound.

In this context, he asks, "how do you quantify the imagination?" He further points out the importance of collaboration among students and teachers, which, in his opinion, is not supported by the current

testing and related curriculum structures. With the scripted curriculum that teaches to the test, Tanner indicates that teachers are virtually precluded from departing from the standardized lessons provided to them. In Tanner's experience, teaching and learning today focus too heavily on standardized student testing. Although, as Tanner points out, Common Core standards purport to prepare students for future careers, in Tanner's opinion, the curriculum is void of any practical applications to job skills. For instance, he shares that the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) discovered that its engineering students had problems constructing end products. MIT's successful proactive solution was the introduction of hands-on industrial arts classes that were made available on a volunteer basis. Tanner's philosophical observation of contemporary schools in the high-stakes testing era involves inadequate preparation because it does not include asking: "Here is a table of data. What's the problem in the table?"

Epilogue

Tanner believes democracy is based on what you want in the way of what is best for yourself and your own children. However, contrary to the belief of many twenty-first-century American citizens, he does not end his argument at this juncture. Rather, he believes you should want the same for other people's children as well. In relation to his position, Tanner indicates that Dewey believed in this same premise concerning providing educational opportunities to all children equally, which expands the important role that democracy should play in the schools. Accordingly, in Tanner's opinion, Dewey saw the key to opportunity in a democracy as an educational opportunity, and he believed this idea specifically functions when knowledge is put into wide circulation and brings together all people's children in the process.

Dewey wedded his ideas and ideals to the method of intelligence. Thus, thinking hypothetically while maintaining awareness of the consequences becomes necessary in a free society to allow democracy to thrive. Dewey uses the terms *democracy* and *education* broadly. Social power and insight reach beyond the pragmatic, but the pragmatic test is the value of the consequences. No matter what you speculate, it all boils down to results and the value of the results. Tanner reminds us that Dewey believed that you have to use the test of a free society—independent thinking—in a socially responsible way and that the term *socially responsible* means democratic citizenship. That is, being well informed and being

able to think with the method of intelligence allows a person to evaluate all sides of an argument, idea, or action.

Tanner particularly takes issue with Dewey's critics who accused Dewey of adopting a simplified approach to teaching and learning, especially in the form of the phrase "learning by doing." Tanner indicates that Dewey never exactly said that. Tanner sides with Dewey by indicating that both believe there is a lot of doing without learning in education. Tanner specifies that schools need to bring together the concepts of learning and doing. In that way, he believes, Dewey's thought was instrumental to the importance of considering the consequences of actions as well as understanding their potential outcomes.

Finally, Tanner reveals his ideas about Dewey from Dewey's answer to a query from his philosophy colleagues. They asked, "Why did you go into education?" Dewey simply replied, according to Tanner, "because education is the whole theory of philosophy," and Dewey's experimental and experiential philosophy "wedded the social structure and function of democracy to a namely American democracy." This unleashed the key to educational opportunity, resulting in widely circulated knowledge that has had the effect of "bringing together all the children of all the people." For Tanner, this is the essence of Dewey's brand of education, which, if adopted and applied in today's classroom, would significantly benefit educators and students alike.

Author note: All quotations in the Prologue and Epilogue are from the Daniel Tanner dialogue transcript.

Daniel Tanner Dialogue

TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH DANIEL TANNER

Philadelphia, PA, April 2014 (Edited)

GREGG JORGENSEN (GJ): *Do you think John Dewey was underrated or misunderstood in any way in the twentieth century?*

DANIEL TANNER (DT): Well, he was not misunderstood. His ideas were distorted by not only enemies but disciples, greatly distorted in a whole variety of ways. For example, he was accused of saying "learning by doing," and he never exactly said that. He said there is a lot of doing

without learning. You have got to bring the two together. In that way, he was instrumental in terms of considering what the consequences of what you are doing and do you understand what the prospects are. Can you say to yourself: "If I do this, what are the consequences going to be"—the method of intelligence. A big problem was distortion from both his enemies—and he had plenty of them—and his disciples.

GJ: *Any ideas on why he had so many enemies?*

DT: On the one hand, he was talking about a process of education and the structure and function of the curriculum being in harmony with the nature of the learner and with democratic society. In that sense, he united those functions—the structures and functions of education. For example, this method totally called for restructuring the curriculum. So, you read *Democracy and Education*—which incidentally was written as a textbook—and very few people see it as a textbook. But the first edition of *Democracy and Education* published by Macmillan calls it a textbook and it's right there in the book itself. Then a lot of people in philosophy use the book and they do not seem to be aware—the same with their students—that they are really reading a curriculum book. The organization of the curriculum is a broad field. Dewey has a whole section on social studies and a whole section on each of the major broad fields of the curriculum. When you read it that way, he is not talking about separate subjects, he is talking about an integrated concept and how these fields relate together—like science, the social consequences of science—so it's important to see him that way. What I am getting at is this is a call for total restructuring of the structure and function of the curriculum and the school.

The twentieth century really inherited the system of the nineteenth century with basic education for the masses and a liberal education for the privileged. Under the factory system, they now wanted workers who could read, who could write, who could communicate, follow instructions, follow directions, but not form unsettling ideas. The idea of the curriculum then for basic education was very much being skilled in the fundamentals. However, Dewey talked about the method of intelligence dealing with the problems of a democratic society and what are the unfinished tasks and problems we have to solve. To a lot of people that was dangerous. Although he talked about the method of intelligence, which is hypothetical thinking, we have not arrived there yet in the curriculum. With our external high-stakes testing they are not asking the students: "Here is a table of data. What's the problem in the table? Formulate two hypotheses to solve the problem." That would be Deweyan. We are a long way from that even at

the college level—although we get it a little bit at the college level. It depends on your curriculum. Now we have the idea of core standards, but the core curriculum to the Deweyan experimentalist was very different from what you think of the core today. The core today is essentialist. You have the basics for the masses. In the Deweyan concept, the core would be how he expressed it in *Democracy and Education*: How the curriculum meshes together, interrelates in terms of the nature and needs of the learner, and the prospects for democracy. So, it requires a totally different structure of our curriculum, and that's not the old "subject by subject" structure. Now, if you think of the curriculum in the Deweyan sense, you have a core which might be like what the Harvard Report [Report of the Harvard Committee (1945), *General Education in a Free Society*] said placing all the educational elements in the palm of the hand—all the areas for the students—students' special interests and the vocational for the adolescent. Every normal child in adolescence is thinking about occupations. Dewey wrote a lot about occupations. That does not mean the child is going to be slotted, but it [occupations] has meaning for them—thus, you have specialized education. We can think of the secondary school as a beginning of some specialization. If an adolescent is thinking about becoming a scientist, you can take the science courses in the curriculum, and more science—advanced science. But in the core [curriculum], the idea was that it would be a core dealing with the kinds of problems that we all share regardless of function, status, or situation in a free society. That's a big difference.

Actually, there are all kinds of problems with that—how to get that instituted. Then you have enrichment education, which would be the arts. As an example, music: every child should have a musical instrument and that should be available to them, and we go on and on. We consider special interests besides specialization. Special interests would be something we develop, a hobby. And very often you find that some layperson is more accomplished than anybody else with that hobby. That could be in music or music composition, it could be in the arts, it could be in building model airplanes, whatever it is. It could be in the industrial arts. It requires a totally different curriculum and design. Sometimes I show my students some pictures and I ask them, "which would you prefer to own: an authentic New Jersey colonial house or a Frank Lloyd Wright house?" All of them almost always say an authentic New Jersey colonial house. So, we go across the river and we look at an authentic New Jersey colonial house: no insulation; no indoor plumbing; there is an outhouse, so try going to an outhouse in the winter time; and so on. The same is true of the structure and function of the curriculum. With the authentic New Jersey colonial house, you

have very tiny windows because windows make a house very cold and drafty and there was no insulation. Regarding what things were like in colonial times—we do not realize, and instead we romanticize. Dewey was treading on very dangerous ground.

GJ: *Could you tell us a little bit about the rise of essentialism?*

DT: Well, it came out of the factory system where the—I am not saying this from a standpoint of political bias, like a socialist standpoint—but it is pretty well-recognized. Take *Education and the Cult of Efficiency*, [Raymond E.] Callahan's book, for instance. They needed workers in the factories in the invention of the assembly line and other things who could be efficient workers. So, when you took the curriculum and you dealt with the problems that we have in society, that gets off the mark and that gets disturbing. To some parents, it's disturbing when a child, an adolescent comes home and starts disagreeing with the parents on a political issue. It is very, very disturbing to them. The other thing is Back to Basics; the fundamentals are very cheap. You do not need laboratories—you do not even need industrial arts shops. You would think the employers would want that and they did, however, they wanted it at separate schools.

What Dewey championed was yes, let's have vocational education, but let us have it in the structure of an inclusive school, a comprehensive school. You have the future physician, lawyer, businessman, whatever, with the future plumber, electrician, whatever may be. One of my alumni's boys is in the vocations. Another case had a family member who went into cooking and then he left that after a while—he went to a leading restaurant and worked in the kitchen—and after that he went to law school. I asked him why did he switch to law school. He said that working in the kitchen was much too hard. Law is much easier. But the point is you have everybody mixed together. If you have this common core where you have mixed ability groups, what does the teacher do when you have mixed ability groups? Well, you have in your mind if the student tries and works hard, they are going to come out okay. They may not get an A, but you want them mixing together because they will get a passing grade. When they go into specialization—if it is specializing in, let's say, literature or mathematics or science—then they would branch off. There was an article in the New York Times recently on how much a plumber earns, and it is six-figures. Then there is no limit, he can go into contracting. And for an electrician, it is much more. But having these people together learning and growing up—and they are going to be switching fields all the time. If you go in one direction then you change your mind, that's okay, you go in another direction. The CRSE [Commission

on the Reorganization of Secondary Education] report actually says that; there should be no tracking. Yet if you look at the critics of it, they say it tracks the school. It does not—it wasn't designed to track the school. It specifically said no tracking. And yet, the critics caricatured it as a system of tracking. And that is a disservice to the historic record. There it is in print, very clearly: no tracking in the comprehensive school.

GJ: *Do you think Dewey was underrated* or *misunderstood in the twenty-first century?*

DT: Absolutely, I could say in answer to the first question. As to misunderstood, that was how he was distorted by his disciples. The most humanitarian aspects of Dewey's ideas were adopted by the private schools serving the privileged—they wanted the children to be treated humanely, which was not the case in the traditional school. They saw to it that their own children got a humane education—a lot of hands-on learning; nice, kind teachers. Whereas the traditional school, we could stereotype it with strict teachers who were regimental. The bolted down rows of chairs and seats—that could be a stereotype, too. But the point is that a lot of Dewey's ideas were adopted by private schools who served privileged children, but they left out the idea of studying the problems with democracy. They left out vocational education because it meant they wanted all the children to go to college, to the universities. So, that was the situation where Dewey got badly distorted. To be a school for all the children of all the people—the comprehensive school—they dropped that. The privilegists looked at the school being a humanitarian institution for their own children. As for other people's children, it did not matter. Dewey says in his writing—about other people's children—that democracy is based on what you want in the way of the best for yourself and your own children, but you should want the same for other people's children. He says that any other approach is narrow, and unlovely—if acted upon, destroys a democracy. I think I partially answered your question.

GJ: *In reality, do you think Dewey ever actually influenced the American curriculum?*

DT: He greatly influenced it. Instead of having just the basic and basic skills, we moved into a broad field curriculum—even social studies, that's a broad field. And how does it intersect with the total curriculum? What are the social consequences of science, and the method of science? What were the social consequences of Darwinian evolution, which incidentally is still omitted in some of our textbooks because it

is not acceptable in parts of the United States—yet it is a ruling premise for all research in the life sciences, even in astronomy—you name it. But it is also a concept about social organization; the evolution of humanity in terms of civilization. We are still in the case of making wars and fighting like barbarians, only we are more efficient at it and we are using technology largely in a way that has backfired on us and we are subordinate to technology in many ways.

GJ: *Do you have any more examples you'd like to share?*

DT: I think—it is sort of like Laurel [Tanner] said that she misses her dad who would say: "I get up today and I have to look at the newspaper to see which side we are supposed to be on, politically, in the world." And I think if we learned to look at things that way then we learn how to become in control rather than under control, whether it is mass media, such as television—you take the marvelous, incredible invention of television. It was supposed to totally revolutionize education; it has never happened. It is largely used as a medium for indoctrinating you to buy what you do not need. It takes the place of the heart, the home, even. The same applies to the computer in many ways. It can be destructive of socialization. Humans are social creatures, and socialization is the most powerful force in humanity, really the most powerful force. Because through socialization you can exchange ideas, which even in the bull session in college is really important. It can deal with politics; it can deal with policy at the college and so on.

GJ: *Does Dewey's philosophy of education still have a role to play in twenty-first-century classrooms? If so, how do you see it happening?*

DT: Well, we look at the macro level: Dewey united the philosophy of pragmatism, or experimentalism, with the democratic prospects. As I mentioned before, this meant that the function of the schools should be the enlightened citizen: to build an enlightened citizenry, to build on the idea of progress—like someone who wrote, "education or everything else for that matter is not progressive unless it helps us make progress," and that was a problem. A lot of Dewey's followers said they were progressives, but they were not making progress. You make progress by solving problems, and that goes for the individual as well as society itself. You take for example—I may give a political example: the Soviets were involved with Afghanistan, which is a bordering nation, and then they gave up on Afghanistan. But now we [United States] moved in, and now we are stuck. We have one of the longest wars in our history, and what's going to happen at the end? The end is going to be the Afghanis will be moving to the United States as new

immigrants, so we are going to have—I'm not saying that's bad, but I am saying that is an indirect way of bringing in a new wave of immigrants. I do not know what else we got out of the war in Afghanistan. It is another example where the war there may seem far away to us but it affects every man, woman, and child in the United States. And these are the leaders that we have. Take President Obama—in many ways his prescriptions for the schools are no different from what preceded him under the Republican administration of Bush and Bush, and in some ways, it is much worse because of the testing mania. The tests again are a good example of how technology drives the institution of schooling. The achievement tests and the aptitude tests have very, very low validity. If you make a decision based on a score on one of those tests, you are going to be wrong most of the time. You are trying to quantify human intelligence. It cannot really be quantified—how do you quantify the imagination? The power to think hypothetically?—but you can help by teaching children how to predict and how to test their predictions and how to base their predictions on the best available evidence so your ideas have to stand up to the best available evidence. It requires a totally different curriculum and one that requires collaboration—learning through collaboration—rather than just—we measure school capacity by seats, number of seats.

GJ: *Do you think Dewey's approach to teaching and learning can be implemented in the classroom? If so, what would have to happen to approaches to teaching and learning?*

DT: Yes, I think it certainly can, and it has been in many cases. But the problem is you need—I was mentioning measuring school capacity by the number of seats, and children are not made to think with their bottoms. The thinking source is totaled in the total body: the mind, the feelings, the emotions, and being able to move around. The curriculum in that sense is when children are constructing things, let's say in a shop class. As a matter of fact, back in 1930s and 1940s, a standard project in elementary school—usually fifth or sixth grade—was making a lamp. Typically, the base of the lamp was a perfect circle so they had to deal with circumference. And the vertical part of the lamp was a perfect half-circle, which meant it had to match—the diameter of the half-circle had to match the circumference end to end. And then they had to drill the diameter of the base to the diameter of the vertical part. And then they would work with wood, metals, and electricity, so they were dealing with the three basic media for the industrial arts: wood, metals, and electricity. And they had to wire the lamp. Picking the lamp—the wood for the lamp—you had to decide are you going to use the grain or are you going to paint the lamp?

If you are going to use the grain you have to pick the kind of wood that would be most attractive—so you now have to know something about different woods and the qualities, and something about trees and their grains and the wood. Then you stain the wood. What kind of stain are you going to use? If you are going to paint it, then that does not matter—you can paint it—but then you have to think of the artistic design. If you want a lamp in the kitchen, it is going to look differently than if you want a lamp in your study, in your bedroom or whatever. But it means you are working with power machinery, so that is carefully supervised. I went through that myself in the sixth grade and I loved it. It meant working, collaborating with other students. You learn a principle—by the way, we were dealing with radius, diameter, circumference, and we did not know we were doing algebra, but we were doing it and we knew exactly what we were doing. We had to allow for margin of error; that is a pretty sophisticated concept. You did not want to cut the wood—if you made a mistake it meant your diameter and your circumference has changed in the lamp—so you could not make a mistake. You had to allow so you could sand down the edges and make the circle as perfectly as possible. Some of the kids wound up making a mistake, including myself. Looking at the lamp, nobody else could notice that mistake, but you knew you made the mistake. You saw that mistake like a pimple on your nose when you were an adolescent, yet we were very proud. For example, my brother kept a kind of family museum room, and my lamp was there. So, it was kind of a triumph of construction. Another personal example: I was in a shop class in junior high school. It was print shop. In those days, you had the old printing machines with the printer's ink. I loved the smell of the printer's ink. It was wonderful. We learned about what kind of type you were going to choose—if you are going to do a little book of poetry, what type are you going to use? And the history of the type, you go back—are you going to be modern, are you going to look traditional, or whatever. So, you have what Dewey called "collateral learning." Collateral learning is more powerful—very much so—than target learning because it deals with your motivation and your interests, and that will drive the target learning. I was always interested in publishing. When I published—I am not bragging, I am saying—when I published my first book, I insisted on having approval of the design of the book. And they put it in the contract—my first publisher did that. He put it right in the contract so I could look it over and approve of it. In that case, there is the paper you use; there is a history to paper and the binding. Originally, they were cloth-bound. There was a time when our publisher—our first publisher, Macmillan—gave every author a first copy that was a leather-bound

book—but they were not binding books in leather, they were cloth. Now there is no cloth, it's all paper or synthetics, synthetic composition. But I am saying you develop an interest—that was in junior high school—that you would not have otherwise. Now how do they get into a print shop class? That is where I was put because my family moved and I could not get into a Latin class, and that was the luckiest thing that ever happened to me. But I was mixed in with classes of students who were not going on to college. They were not academic students, but they knew what they were doing. I could ask them for help and they could help me in the work in shop class. Some were a little older than I, so that was good, because the older boys were helping to teach me. In the print class, we rotated—each of us had a chance to run the supply center, and so students had to come with a requisition. We gave them supplies, and, if they asked for something that was not on the project, we had to reject it. We had to evaluate what they were doing. It gave us some authority, but not arbitrary authority, it was reasonable authority. It was great to have that experience. You cannot get that in a traditional academic class, a math class for example.

Now another way that I think Dewey was influential—internationally, too—that like a great mathematician—a purist mathematician—he even said that we should teach applied mathematics in school, not just the traditional mathematics. For example, like Alfred North Whitehead. He said we should throw out all the math in school—this is from a theoretical mathematician—and we should have one mathematics and that is social statistics, and teach social statistics. Well, just think: there you have statistics—mathematics united with social study—because look at how we are influenced statistically by politicians, by advertisers. Four out of ten people say that they prefer so-and-so; well, four out of ten could be two out of five. These are some examples. But today with the curriculum pretty well scripted and directed and geared to the test—the test driving it—how can a teacher depart from the standard approach and the standard set for you? We do see the professional teacher and the artistic teacher—so I'm not talking romantically—but as a professional you should be able to make decisions that fit your philosophy of education and also your way of working. Not everybody can do work in the same way, with different personalities and different styles. I have seen kids who love a teacher and other kids do not like the same teacher; it's human nature. But we do learn collaterally how to get along with different teachers. The child does not expect every teacher to be the same. They know they will like some better than others and that's the way we adjust to different

personalities. But the collateral learning is very important, and we forget that. That is Deweyan; he wrote a lot about collateral learning.

GJ: *What can teachers still learn from Dewey that might surprise them?*

DT: Well, I don't know. The question seems to be that it would be presented to them, rather than examining possibilities and then formulating their own approach. But I think one surprise would be collateral learning—the power that it has in motivating the children. Very often, there will be an adolescent in middle school level who is a discipline problem. One way of combating that, which works very well, is to examine—he may be disruptive of other students in the class because he is being held back; he is a little older, and that is a big problem with discipline. If you give that student certain responsibilities—like the teacher says on the side, "I need some help in organizing these materials would you give me a hand?"—then, right away they are just very co-operative—he just cannot wait to do that. So, that is a big surprise to see how a student can turn around almost on a dime being given special responsibility, which to him is recognition, and every human being needs some recognition. If his only recognition is that he is the oldest boy in the class and the biggest one in the class, and he has been left back, it is going to be destructive—he is going to be destructive. It is amazing to see how young adolescents and children—older children–will turn around right away given that kind of responsibility. That is just one illustration. But again, the power of human needs—the idea of older children and adolescents being able to think hypothetically—we don't capitalize on that. Because at the adolescent stage, you [the student] learn that you know everything, you have an answer for everything. But if you are thinking hypothetically, you have to stop, and you have to think about your thinking and you do not realize you don't know everything. But you have an opportunity then to go on learning, which is the most powerful lesson in education, the power to go on learning.

GJ: *How would you summarize Dewey: As a change agent? As a champion of the underprivileged?*

DT: I think it's like James Conant, president of Harvard said about Dewey. He said, like the Austro-Hungarian Empire, if it had not been created, John Dewey would have existed by being put together, being made, just like the Austro-Hungarian Empire. What Conant was really getting at, and I did not quote him exactly right, was that in the American experience we needed someone who could wed democracy with science, scientific advancement, and with the kind of society

that we want. The key to that for Dewey was education. When his fellow philosophers asked him, "Why did you go into education?" he said because education is the whole theory of philosophy. He said it just becomes speculative unless you are going to deal with problems in philosophy where you formulate hypotheses for the human experience to move toward, and seeking solutions, then philosophy becomes valuable. Now, a student today could go to a first-rate university—I have spoken to Princeton graduates who have majored in philosophy, Duke University graduates who have majored in philosophy and they never studied Dewey. And yet he is the—I am not romanticizing—but he is the spokesman for the American experience. Dewey, [Charles Sanders] Peirce, and others developed a philosophy of pragmatism, and Dewey orchestrated it into a philosophy—experimental philosophy—which wedded the social structure and function of democracy to a namely American democracy. He saw the key to that was educational opportunity, and putting knowledge into wide circulation, and bringing together all the children of all the people.

GJ: *If you were to ask other scholars, what aspects about Dewey would you like to know from their point of view?*

DT: Well it would depend on who the scholar was. If they were a Dewey scholar, it would be quite different from, let's say, another scholar. That would be quite interesting, to go to a scholar from another philosophy, let's take existentialism, or whatever. But in reading history—but, again, I am not a historian—it was always curious to me during the occupation of France why the existentialists were not seen as a threat to Adolf Hitler—how he let them continue. The experimentalists had to flee right away, had to get out fast, and many of them came to the United States. So, I think there is a question that kind of bothered me. I think one of the problems with the existentialists is they were removed from reality, so probably the Nazis thought they were inconsequential, they are not dangerous, whereas the experimentalists are questioning by nature, by nature of their philosophy.

GJ: *Among Dewey scholars, would there be anything that you'd like to know that if you had a chance to speak to—*

DT: Well, I think I would ask a couple of questions that you have asked to see how they would respond. I think your questions were really right on the ball.

GJ: *Thank you. Could you tell me about, maybe just broadly, the idea of social efficiency in the era of Dewey and the power it seemed to have?*

DT: To the experimentalists, social efficiency meant that you could think critically, hypothetically, you could solve problems, and that this power—this social power and insight—would be, to education, transmitted to the rising generation for social efficiency, social direction, independent thinking, but also democratic collaboration, investigation, and working together to attack problems, and also the ability to think independently and to use that independent thinking in a socially responsible way. Let's say you disagree with a particular trend. Well, let it be known, and why. And that could be developed right in the classroom. For example, the school might well be set up with seminar rooms and seminar courses, and we do not do enough of that even in higher education because of expense but it certainly is needed with middle school and adolescent students. This would be another way of reconstructing the school. And also, places to work. The classroom newspaper in the elementary school, the—of course, you have the school newspaper, but that is only available to a very select few—but you could have the whole classroom in the fifth grade producing their own newspaper. They could, for example, examine what are the problems of our school, what will you do about these problems to improve the conditions. Well, maybe the lunch program. It might be something else to work on constructively, be very important. I know of one case where the number one criticism was the lunch program and what the kids wanted were more—they wanted a salad bar, believe it or not.

GJ: *I am surprised!*

DT: Yes, believe it or not. So, you get a lot of constructive things from children, it is amazing. And you can expand their taste.

GJ: *So what do you think it was about the idea of social efficiency that is still hanging on?*

DT: Well, it is hanging on with the testing. For example, you have the Common Core standards and they talk about being ready for employment—what do they call it, work skills or whatever, employment skills—but the kids have no opportunity for hands-on work. A few years ago, MIT found that their students couldn't make anything. It's an engineering school. So, they instituted hands-on engineering and science—but they instituted voluntary classes between semesters dealing with the industrial arts, the kind of courses that used to be taken in the junior high school. And the university kids came voluntarily—gave up vacation time to work in those classes. Now, some of their projects involved building—let's say, more efficient—let's say, a solar powered automobile. But having that kind of hands-on experience. Many cases

they built—I see documentaries on it—but they build war machines, little games where they can destroy the other person's machine. And those machines would get together in a pit and they would clash like fighting dogs. That's not very good, but that was their thinking. It makes us stop for thought: is there a better, more constructive way of education than just teaching how to create these little war machines. And the idea is to completely destroy and disable the other machine. I was horrified watching it, and then you think, well, at least it was just machines fighting. If we had that in real life, it wouldn't be so bad. Although you wonder what would happen to the losing society—well, I suppose they'd become slaves of the victors. So, we would be going back—we would be going back in civilization; we would bring back slavery.

GJ: *Would you talk about Dewey and the idea of pragmatism? What does pragmatism mean to you?*

DT: Well, that may be a stereotype, a stereotypical concept, but basically it boils down to simply the test of any idea resides in the consequences and the consequences indicate the value of a particular action. What somebody put in action, what are the results? But that is an oversimplification because Dewey wedded that to the method of intelligence and thinking hypothetically as being so necessary in a free society—having that power. So, he used the term loosely. Social power and insight, which goes beyond pragmatic, but the pragmatic test is the value of the consequences. And no matter what you speculate it all boils down to what are the results, the value of the results. But again, you have to use the test of a free society, independent thinking, in a socially responsible way. And that the term socially responsible means democratic citizenship: being well informed, being able to think with the method of intelligence, you can evaluate all sides of an argument or an idea or an action. It is much more than just the test of the consequences, but that is critical.

GJ: *Thank you.*

DT: Thank you.

Postdialogue Author Note

Several weeks after my interview, on April 18, 2014, Daniel Tanner sent an e-mail with further thoughts and comments. His carefully crafted words are a guiding light for gaining an understanding of the curriculum as it is in twenty-first-century education:

> With regard to the interview, I may not have answered your questions adequately regarding social control and social efficiency. As you know the term "social efficiency" was used by Dewey and his fellow experimentalists as synonymous with educational equity/opportunity by means of creating an inclusive as opposed to a selective educational system through the comprehensive high school. The concept of "social control" was used by Dewey and his fellow experimentalists as educating the rising generation to gain the powers of responsible self-direction and social responsibility in the classroom and school through cooperation, collaboration and consultation with peers and the teacher in a democratic environment. Unfortunately, Krug and later the radical school blamers of the 1960s chose to pervert this concept. (See the chapter on Social Control in Dewey's *Experience and Education*.) Kliebard, who worked under Krug, tended to mirror Krug's key ideas and views on the American high school. Unfortunately, Krug and Kliebard, and later the school blamers of the 1960s, chose to portray the comprehensive high school as a vehicle for tracking, when, in fact it expressly opposed tracking and showed how the comprehensive structure would provide options for a comprehensive curriculum without tracking. These kinds of distortions and perversions provide fodder for the school blamers and bring the study of the foundations of education into academic disrepute and irrelevance—not to mention the damage wrought on the public schools by the media and tax conservatives.
>
> … I got carried away, but I believe the historic record explains why we are where we are today.
>
> All best wishes,
>
> Dan

CHAPTER 9

Philosopher and Deweyan: Judith M. Green

Prologue

Scholar Introduction

From her Midwest roots in Michigan and Minnesota, where she earned her both master's degree and PhD in philosophy at the University of Minnesota, Judith Green joined the faculty of Seattle University after an initial appointment at Eckerd College in Florida. She moved from the Far West back to the East Coast to begin her long-standing academic position at Fordham University. In addition to serving Fordham as professor of philosophy, she is also the co-director of Women's Studies. Included in her courses at Fordham are graduate seminars with the themes of John Dewey's philosophy, American pragmatism, and democracy. Green is a founding co-convener of the New York Pragmatist Forum and a national committee member of the American Philosophical Association. Green's book publications include *Deep Democracy: Community, Diversity, and Transformation* and *Pragmatism and Social Hope: Deepening Democracy in Global Contexts.*

Judith Green agreed to meet with me in New York just as the 2015 fall semester was starting. She arrived at the restaurant meeting location fresh from teaching her first class for the semester and enthusiastic about her students and being back in her active teaching mode. Her enthusiasm carries over into our dialogue about John Dewey, philosophy, and democratic ideals.

C.G. Jorgensen, *Discovering John Dewey in the Twenty-First Century*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-58950-7_9

Dialogue Overview

Judith Green considers John Dewey as a quintessential thinker, perhaps the most famous of his contemporaries. Green includes William James, Jane Addams, George Herbert Mead, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Alain Locke as members of Dewey's reflective thinking community. In her opinion, Dewey's ideas populate multiple disciplines. She expresses, "Whether you are talking about education, or economics, politics, the arts, religion, city planning, you name it, Dewey's ideas still resonate." Green especially insists that if one is looking for wisdom, Dewey's ideas carry forward into today's societies. She believes that "his impact is still being felt in many disciplines, obviously in education but increasingly in political science, and in philosophy, and in the study of cultures, and in the arts." She reiterates that, essentially, Dewey has emerged again providing a model of inquiry thinking that needs to be developed in the schools and in society.

Reflective Thinking as a Process

In discussing Dewey's theory of reflective thinking more specifically, Green's advice is for educators and citizens to basically use the "same method with whatever issue you are dealing with." For instance, as a starting point, Green advises, "Dewey says, so draw on history." She continues, emphasizing that we need at times to particularly reflect: "when things do not go as routine, or as prescribed structures would seem to indicate, that reflection is not just a pleasure but a necessity." Green counsels us to examine the manner in which people handled a problem in the past or to draw on biographies by asking "how did the person live, etc.?" and she adds that we should look to science—natural or social science—for a perspective on what was, or what may be, going on. In regard to reflective thinking theory, she asks, in particular, what values are involved, and then, what are the possible alternative solutions or actions to take? It is important, in her opinion, to re-evaluate solutions midstream, which, Green advises, is Dewey's idea from his 1932 revised *Ethics*, which suggests a technique to test and determine whether your original conclusions and solutions are as effective as projected. Most significant for Green in considering Dewey's views on the reflective process is not simply to repeat what is not working; that is, she emphasizes that Dewey believed it is important to make revisions whenever an adjustment is needed. To sum up Dewey's role in helping us utilize reflective thinking, Green states that reflection is "not just as a single phase of inquiry, but… a characteristic

of the whole inquiry process." In turn, we discuss that these ideas both continue and expand with new twenty-first-century possibilities for potentially more well-rounded, inquiry-driven reflective thinking. Reflective thinking inquiry today is impacted by more access to others with different backgrounds. That is, in Green's view, pluralism enters into the process through the connection with the Internet and social media.

Community Members and Social Justice

Drawing upon Green's teaching on American pragmatism, I ask about her views on what pragmatism is in reality. Green's extended response is that for Dewey, it was "a way of understanding and transforming felt life problems in the world, using an approach to inquiry that actually is likely to achieve good results, not only for the handful of us who are privileged enough to be able to organize these sorts of gatherings where you might invite members of the community in, but for all of those who are affected by and have something to offer."

Essentially, Green determines that through Dewey's ethical and practical approach to issues and problem-solving, he does indeed reside at the core of social justice. Green believes that Dewey discussed the values of liberty, equality, and community, and she expands on how Dewey's ideas become intertwined and serve as a link to social justice issues. For instance, Dewey suggests ideas on how schools should be organized to accommodate and reflect different community adjustments that need to be made to assist the diverse individuals coming into the schools. For Green, Dewey clearly understood that schooling is not a one-size-fits-all enterprise. Rather, Green, in reflecting, determines that, in Dewey's view, social justice "is not only open to all of the individuals that are now here presently but is open to a different way of doing things in the future that I think is really exciting."

Judith Green shares, together with Dewey, a significantly expansive definition of social efficiency, which is to basically optimize or maximize good outcomes, making use of all types of different individual skills. Or, in other words, Green indicates that social efficiency "is essentially social and efficient." She believes that Dewey was opposed to any type of control approach or to an emphasis on limiting budgets.

Tradition and Society

Following up on her view of Dewey's thoughts on social efficiency, Green borrows from a student of Dewey, John Herman Randall, the label "traditionalist" as applicable to Dewey. At first blush, this may appear to

some as a slightly skewed assessment. After all, Dewey opposed a number of aspects of what were believed to be traditional notions of education—and in many respects still are deemed traditional. Nor was Dewey considered a conservative, in the manner in which that term is often defined today. However, it is clear that Green's interpretation draws on the idea that Dewey understood and valued earlier, historical tradition in many fields outside of philosophy and education. This allowed Dewey to view and reflect on vastly different cultural and societal traditions from the past as positive contributions to critical thinking approaches. Accordingly, Green construes this idea as Dewey's model to reconstruct the inherited gifts of the past and to draw on the past for the benefit of the future.

Legacy of Words

When I ask in particular what Green would still want to know about Dewey, music and religion are injected into our dialogue. Green strongly expresses the interesting point that she would like to know what type of music he listened to. However, on a more challenging note, Green would also want to explore how Dewey's work in religion may or may not inspire involvement in religious activities. She states, "I think we could have a lot of fun talking about religion."

This leads our discussion to her views on Dewey's legacy. Green does not hesitate to respond in a robust manner. She clearly asserts that Dewey deftly brings pursuit of wisdom together with critical thinking across disciplines "in ways that effectively address or empower us to address the real problems of the twenty-first century." According to Green, Dewey's is a legacy of words generously enhanced with enduring values that continues to have renewed meaning for each generation. Judith Green's enthusiasm for John Dewey's contributions to the spectrum of diverse disciplines across the curriculum and to the ways of mentoring ongoing efforts toward democratic ideals never wanes during our dialogue. As I left the restaurant, the walk toward the subway gave way to reflective thoughts.

Epilogue

My interview with Judith Green represents what many might find as an unexpected revelation—her strong belief that John Dewey is just as influential today as he may have been in the first half of his career. Indeed, Green indicates that Dewey's ideas and writings may even be more of a contribution in guiding today's educators and citizens in addressing increasingly complex global issues than they were during his era.

Green is solidly established as a philosopher in a traditional Catholic education environment. Given that perspective, I appreciate her candid reference to Dewey and social justice concerns as she shares, "If it were possible to canonize someone who was not a Catholic and who was not necessarily atheist, I think we would call him St. John Dewey." In this regard, Green emphasizes that Dewey consistently advocated inclusion, acceptance, and mutual problem-solving and regarded school as a microcosm of the community as a whole. She states that Dewey's ideas and ideals "offer something of enduring value that at the same time is a fresh significance to each generation that comes along." With this idea in mind, she clearly recognizes that John Dewey's educational philosophy lives on in the twenty-first century. Indeed, Green suggests that the interconnectedness of Dewey's message translates in meaningful ways across boundaries as diverse as the whole of human experience and one's spirit itself. Dewey's ideas continue to touch many in real and profound ways.

Author note: All quotations in the Prologue and Epilogue are from the Judith Green dialogue transcript.

Judith Green Dialogue

TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH JUDITH GREEN

New York, NY, September 2015 (Edited)

GREGG JORGENSEN (GJ): *We are going to be talking about John Dewey for readers who may have just a passing acquaintance with him. What would you say to those who really do not know much about John Dewey?*

JUDITH GREEN (JG): Dewey is one of those people who touched so many worlds and at the same time is most practical and wise. I think he is one of the quintessential American thinkers, partly because he considered some of our persisting problems as well as our characteristics as a people. Our times still respond to the kinds of analysis and transformative strategies that Dewey suggested. Whether you are talking about education, or economics, politics, the arts, religion, city planning, you name it, Dewey's ideas still resonate. It's accessible, it's wise, and, let me add, it's fun.

GJ: *Do you believe that Dewey's philosophy still has a role in the twenty-first century? And, if so, why?*

JG: Yes. Part of what Dewey's work does is to show us that we cannot think in siloed or compartmentalized boxes; we have to think many things together. We are living in a time of climate change crisis and economic crisis having to do not only with bad choices of national actors and institutions but with the realities of global economic systems. At the same time, Dewey has a sense that speaks to us as contemporary people of how to think about real problems that we encounter, and to find strategies that we and other caring people can actually feel good about exploring. He brings us out of our isolation, as individual citizens, as individual thinkers, as individual people who are troubled by these problems and says that the answer is to work together as a community and to share in these experiences to figure out together through organized method of inquiry what is going on. And in a sensible sort of way to bring in experts to the extent they can help us to deliberate about how we could and should act together in ways that will make a difference. Part of what I think is so valuable about Dewey is that his ideas show us how to move from a feeling of being just depressed about the problems of our time to feeling empowered to actually find ways to act with other people who care, and who think, to make the world better. And to actually feel like even if we do not solve all these problems during our time, we will have done something worth leaving behind.

GJ: *Do you believe Dewey was underrated in any way?*

JG: It is hard to underrate somebody who was one of the most famous thinkers in the world in his time. I mean from really when he was a very young man until his death this was a guy who was Professor Dewey or Dr. Dewey to a whole lot of people. I do not think you could say he was underrated. His impact is still being felt in many disciplines, obviously in education but increasingly in political science, and in philosophy, and in the study of cultures, and in the arts. People who are interested in literature and other arts are still reading *Art Is Experience* as one of the key books in the field. But it is true that there was what people call a period of eclipse, where some people thought: oh, what a well-meaning man, whose ideas where just a little too fuzzy and vague. We went through a period when something more like logic and math was thought to be excellent thinking even if it lacked wisdom. Given that, we kind of got over that phase because the problems got worse rather than better with that approach. We are back to looking for wisdom again, and so consequently the kind of approach that Dewey and other great thinkers with whom he thought—William James, Jane Addams, George

Herbert Mead, W. E. B. Du Bois, Alan Locke. We could go on with who were the members of this community that worked together but these folks pursued wisdom, thought about practical issues and problems, and thought it is not up to me as an individual thinker to solve all of the problems in the world. If we are going to solve them, we are going to do it together. And we are going to listen as much as we are going to talk. I think that is why these days Dewey has emerged from the eclipse and has become a model of the kind of thinking that a lot of us believe is just what we need now.

GJ: *How did Dewey deal with the concept of social efficiency?*

JG: Well, that's kind of fun. On the one hand costs are real. Not only costs in terms of the standard economic cost of dollars and time, but human costs: suffering, misery—these are the real examples of cost structures of experience. If your goal is to maximize or optimize the good outcomes, in terms of everything from happiness to health to peace to social inclusion of the kind that actually makes good use of the talents of all kinds of different people, then such an expansive definition of efficiency is essentially social. Because, after all, we are social beings, our lives are interconnected and in that sense Dewey is all over social efficiency. But if you mean something like low budget command and control approaches, Dewey is totally opposed to that notion of things. And, in a number of works, explicitly criticized them as contradictory, not only in the very construction of the methods, but contradictory of the goals of these methods and the outcomes that one can achieve in the world filled with persons living within and operating within the constraints of natural environments.

GJ: *What is pragmatism from Dewey's point of view?*

JG: I think the core of Dewey's ideas on pragmatism focuses on a method of inquiry. Now I know that for Charles Sanders Peirce it was a way to solve metaphysical problems and for William James it was a way of thinking about whole persons all together getting away from all of the divisions between psychology and between individuals and communities. I feel that Dewey inherited their ideas. His focus really was on how shall we inquire together as social beings. Consequently the kinds of things that he says about education, politics, economics, urban planning, how to organize churches that actually do some sort of good in this world, the arts—any of these subjects are ones in which we can expect certainty in which the world is shifting and changing, in which we are motivated by problems in our lives as experience, and in which the process of addressing these

real felt difficulties, these real costs in our lives and those of other persons with whom we sympathetically respond have to be analyzed before they can be transformed. At the same time, where the method of inquiry is not armchair, it is empirical, and, we have to have some facts and have some sense of what is going on. And at the same time where all of those who are stakeholders, as we would now say, in the situation are entitled to participate and at the same time offer something. There is a whole epistemic aspect of this method of inquiry that compliments the inclusive democratic aspect and in the end, is judged by whether the result of our efforts together, using this method of inquiry, are felt in our experience individually and collectively as relieving the problem that actuated us in the first place. One way to think about what pragmatism really is, is for Dewey and for a lot of us contemporary theologians, a way of understanding and transforming felt life problems in the world, using an approach to inquiry that actually is likely to achieve good results, not only for the handful of us who are privileged enough to be able to organize these sorts of gatherings where you might invite members of the community in but for all of those who are affected by and have something to offer. Today, that is what I think pragmatism means.

GJ: *Do you think Dewey's approach to reflective thinking can be implemented in the schools, and if so, how?*

JG: It is so important. One of my favorite places, although there are so many places that talk about what reflecting is and how to do it, is from [Dewey's] Chap. 10 in the 1932 revised *Ethics.* He was talking about the reflective methods in ethics there, but it is the same method with whatever issue you are dealing with. What he is saying there, is because we encounter problems that in important ways are without precedent, that we would have to reflect. If life was just the same thing again and again, we can act from routine. We would reflect very little and, in fact, just go on in habitual ways. Habits being valuable, you know, good things. But it is when things do not go as we want them to, as we hoped them to, that we must reflect—even though reflecting can be a joy or a discipline in its own right. But the thing is reflection means that something has stopped us in our tracks. It can be all sorts of things. It can be something anomalous in our environment, maybe something less beautiful than we want it, or beautiful in a new way that surprises us, or something that seems dangerous or damaging to something that matters, or, it might be that there are kids who are being left behind or that there are parents that are refusing to send their kids to get [educationally] tested—like 20% of the New York state parents did with the last state examination. It is

when things do not go as routine, or as prescribed structures would seem to indicate, that reflection is not just a pleasure but a necessity. So, then, how to do this? Dewey says, so draw on history. He is a great historian, so think about it, are there earlier occasions that have some comparisons to this? How did people in other times and places handle similar things? Also, consider biography, how did individual people in their lives, as far as we can tell, handle these kinds of questions: With whom did they work? With whom did they try? What worked? What did they do when it did not work? Then also draw on the best of sciences, natural and social sciences, to give yourself a better sense and your inquiry group a better sense of what may be going on. Once you feel you have started to get a handle on what the problem is then you need to actually talk about what values are at stake in this situation. What kinds of things might we do that reflect the best lessons from the past and the values that matter to us, and, what are some alternative courses of action that we can have? Then on a small scale, we can experiment with those actions and pay attention to their consequences. One of the short works from 1939 that Dewey wrote that I think is really complimentary to the whole line of thinking from the 1932 essay, is the theory of valuation. In which he is talking about re-evaluate midstream to see if whether the way you framed your problem and the strategies you sought will be effective in doing what you hoped they would. If not, revise and see whether that is what to do for the next phase of the problem situation. Do not just keep repeating. This kind of reflective thinking is both individual and collaborative, and we can be bringing that into our schools. Teaching kids both to reflect from themselves and maybe use writing as an idea prompt. Writing of all kinds, whether it be works of poetry, works of history, interviewing family members, imagining themselves as friends and companions of Benjamin Franklin, whether it be talking together about what we would need to know in order to find out what is going on. That will so motivate kids to want to learn more about natural sciences and social sciences that might help them; and, after that, ecology that would help them understand these things. Then you would be in the position to work on some basic principles and some small-scale experiments from which they could learn something. And, then they could reflect some more. Reflection, not just as a single phase of inquiry, but as a characteristic of the whole inquiry process. I think this is something that we could be teaching in schools that would motivate so many of the subject areas and tie them together—it would always be problem specific and always in the end would be individual and collaborative. That is what I think reflective inquiry might be like if we applied it in the schools.

GJ: *Thank you.*

JG: Maybe it would be the case that kids would be limited by the homogeneity of their classroom groups. In the USA, it is so often the case for kids who go to a particular school to find people from similar religious, socioeconomic status, racial, ethnic, you name it similar backgrounds. This is still the case. So, the part of what is cool about the twenty-first century is the possibility of kids connecting with kids in other places and in other classrooms using the Internet and social media. And, becoming co-experimenters with other people who are coming from very different backgrounds. They would learn so much. Whatever biases might have approached their way of framing questions would tend to get rubbed off by that pluralism. Last, but not least, any implicit biases that they might be absorbing just by the narrowness of their geopolitical and economic location would tend to be rubbed off just by having friends in other classrooms and in other places. We are different!

GJ: *What role does Dewey's ideas and ideals play in the social justice movement, if any?*

JG: Well, if it were possible to canonize someone who was not a Catholic and who was not necessarily atheist, I think we would call him St. John Dewey. I mean, he has expansive boundaries. Social justice, I think, is at the heart of the whole project. This is part of why whenever you spin out with questions of science you are always spinning back with questions like, what can we learn from this that will help us to be better, more balanced, more self-controlled. more reflective, more inclusive, human beings, including in our roles as thinkers? If you are thinking about questions of law, well Dewey not only wrote about law but things he wrote about in other contexts, have direct variant of how we should imagine what it is to live democratically. To live—there is a lovely essay, short essay, in which he is talking about liberty, equality and community and then talking about how intertwined these values are, and if we actually understand any of these values, then we ultimately would know what they link because of justice. My goodness! If any of us were to memorize that essay as presented as a speech today people would cheer and march behind our banner because it is wise and it is true. If he is talking about questions of how to organize schools, it is how to organize schools in ways that not only embrace all of the different communities who come together in our schools, but also how do we recognize all of the different persons who come into our schools, instead of trying to make it be a one-size-fits-all printing press with the blueprint of our

particular nation state and way of life on it. There is a kind of matter of social justice here that is not only open to all of the individuals that are now here presently but is open to a different way of doing things in the future that I think is really exciting. In part, because any of us who have worked hard in social justice movements over the years, when we tell the truth about our experience we would have to tell you: I often had no idea what I was doing and whether this would work. In so far as anyone who thinks you should be most certain about what you are doing, most certain about the costs, certain about the outcome, and fully in control of whether this way of preceding is clearly better than any of the alternatives, then this would stymie others from acting. But Dewey's way of thinking suggests there is no certainty to be had about anything that matters. We must but try, and at the same time learn from situations, from experiences of the past, act reflectively, and act in real conversation with others taking account of those who are affected or will be affected by whatever way we do, as best we can. I think this is social justice to the core. It is an ethical vision, that is also a very practical vision that is in rooted in the process of ongoing education of the actors as well as those people on whom they would attempt to try out their best ideas.

GJ: *Can you think of anything that teachers today would be surprised to learn about John Dewey?*

JG: Let's see. One of the things they might be surprised by… I am trying to think of one of his students who wrote both the first essay and the volume on Dewey and the library of living philosophers: John Herman Randall, who called Dewey the great traditionalist. What he meant was that John Dewey really knew and appreciated diverse earlier traditions, not only in philosophy, education and other fields, but also religious and cultural traditions. He took this very seriously. This is why he got on so well in China, for example. But it is also why, when you actually pay attention, he is really thinking with Plato, Aristotle, and all of these people whose sensibilities in addition to their particular philosophies would seem so different from Dewey's. But I think Randall's right. It shows us ways in which neither our thinking, nor our lives, nor our experimental models are as radically free floating from inheritance of the past, as many of us who are committed to change in education might think that we are or should be. Instead, I think it gives us a model of, to use Dewey's own language, reconstructing that inheritance and doing it in a way that strangely enough, William James would call conservative—not meaning by some kind of "right wing" thing. That obviously is not

an accurate description of Dewey. But rather, we take account of as much of the experience that others have had as possible instead of arrogantly assuming we can start with somebody's kids or some grown-ups who have decided to be grad students, or law students, or medical students, and do just whatever seems like a good idea at the time. So, that way of rounding, fresh approaches, and a really thoughtful reflection on our inheritance from the past is part of what that great traditionalist brings. If you do not read this in Dewey, you miss something important.

GJ: *If you were going to be at a dinner party with John Dewey, what would you like him to know and what would you tell him about yourself?*

JG: I would like to know what kind of music he listens to. I just have this sense that he is another person who just loves music. It does not come through his writings as often as William James's references to music do. More often he is talking about the visual arts, painting in particular. But that is partly because he was involved in that whole [Albert] Barnes Foundation adventure kind of figuring out what to do with paintings. But I have this sense that he was alive to music as well. I would want to know what kind of music he was listening to. And, I would want him to know what kind of music I love. I would also like to talk with him about religion; and, how I, as a person who values his contributions to education, and loves what he did in a common faith, for instance. And, I find this fully compatible with the kind of liberatory pragmatic Catholicism of a feminist spin; and, I am just kind of figuring that he would be like, well cool! But it would be really fun to tell him about how some of his ideas, that some people take to be just sort of a more polite way of expressing a pooh-poohing to religious adventures of all times, have inspired some of us who work on education, social justice, and adventures related to those he worked on. How his work on religion has, in fact, inspired us to be religiously involved and active, but in ways that are kind of far from the dogma of the time in which Dewey was challenging people for being too willing to give away this life for some unknowable adventure in the future. I think we could have a lot of fun talking about religion.

GJ: *If you had the opportunity to talk with other Dewey scholars, are there any questions you would like to ask?*

JG: I would really like to know how people who are working in the social sciences are doing interdisciplinary collaboration and what kind of obstacles they are incurring in that work. And what kind of resources they are finding in Dewey's work to help them open doors

that would make it possible to have less siloed conversations, more collaborative work across the disciplines that could really spill over into classroom adventures of an interdisciplinary kind. I am teaching this new course in philosophy of economics, and I tell them from the beginning it is really a course in political economy. It is interdisciplinary from the beginning. I do not see any other way to do a good job with any of the relevant disciplines. I suspect that a lot of us who are finding Dewey's ideas worth knowing would be of the same notion. That we really have to take up those ideas from experience in nature about—well one hopes one could be an interdisciplinary liaison officer—but, hard work, right? So, how are people finding openings, what strategies are they pursuing, and what lurks in Dewey's works are they finding helpful to invite in other people who may either feel that philosophy is too difficult, or, that once they emerge outside their particular disciplinary field, that they somehow are acting badly instead of acting well.

GJ: *How would you summarize Dewey's legacy?*

JG: I think he truly brings together the pursuit of wisdom with careful thinking across and within disciplines in ways that effectively address or empower us to address real problems of the twenty-first century. In this way, his legacy offers the best that philosophy can hope to do, that is to say to offer something of enduring value that at the same time is a fresh significance to each generation that comes along.

GJ: *Thank you.*

JG: Well, that was fun. Good questions.

CHAPTER 10

Reason and Rhetorical Questions: Walter Feinberg

Prologue

Scholar Introduction

The overarching thesis of Walter Feinberg's academic career, research, and publications is an education for democratic citizenship. After earning his Ph.D. in philosophy at Boston University, where he was an National Defense Education Act (NDEA) Fellow in Philosophy and a Human Relations Fellow, he taught at Oakland University in Michigan. Subsequently, Feinberg joined the faculty of the University of Illinois—Urbana as a professor of philosophy of education. Feinberg is now Professor Emeritus Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership at the University of Illinois in Urbana and Chicago.

Walter Feinberg has received a number of awards and honors, including serving as the Benton Scholar for the University of Chicago, as president of the American Educational Studies Association, and as president of the Philosophy of Education Society. Feinberg has reached a substantial international audience as an invited speaker at meetings and special conferences such as the fiftieth anniversary meeting of the Japanese Educational Studies Association. Feinberg's first book, *Reason and Rhetoric: The Intellectual Foundations of Twentieth Century Liberal Educational Policy,* has been followed by numerous articles and books, which include *Affirmative Action, Oxford Handbook of Practical Ethics,* and *For Goodness Sake: Religious Schools and Education for Democratic Citizenry.*

C.G. Jorgensen, *Discovering John Dewey in the Twenty-First Century*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-58950-7_10

Certainly, this academic experience base is a fitting platform on which to begin our dialogue. We met in Chicago at the 2015 American Educational Research Association conference and walked to a quiet eatery to discuss Feinberg's ideas about the educational philosophy of John Dewey.

Dialogue Overview

At the outset, our discussion takes a look at John Dewey over the span of both the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Feinberg's view of Dewey for the first half of the twentieth century is that he was generally well known as a philosopher and intellectual, and more to the point, "politically he was somewhat of a modern liberal … opposed to the sort of dog-eat-dog of classical liberalism." He views Dewey as an activist in several different ways. For instance, Feinberg points out that Dewey was a founder of both the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the American Association of University Professors. Feinberg states that Dewey is "known as an educator, a philosopher, a political theorist, an activist."

Educational Vision

However, in turning to the twenty-first century, Feinberg notes that Dewey's philosophy is so broad that his ideas on education are no longer dominant but are still part of the American educational rhetoric. He believes that remnants of Dewey's political thought "can be found in the democratic socialist movements in Europe." And, of note, Feinberg indicates that Dewey's "aesthetics are still interestingly relevant." This led to a side comment concerning Albert Barnes, a wealthy industrialist with an interest in art. According to Feinberg, Dewey apparently collaborated with him, as "they had an educational vision about how art should be taught … a vision in which art is much more connected to the everyday life of things."

Reverting back to the first half of the twentieth century, Feinberg does believe that Dewey's personal pinnacle was during that time period. After that, Dewey, in Feinberg's opinion, was underestimated, most likely because "he certainly was not in the mainstream of the analytic movement." As a result, I bring in the question about whether John Dewey was influential in education. Feinberg takes the stance that just the term *influential* implies or "creates the great man image." His answer

essentially became a no. At the same time, Feinberg believes Dewey was influenced by others, such as Ella Flagg Young and other women teachers at the laboratory school; his wife, Alice; and Jane Addams, among others. And Feinberg includes in this group Colonel Francis Parker, who, according to Feinberg, is considered one of the founders of progressive education. However, Dewey, "because of his name, he certainly had an influence" on education. Feinberg wraps up this thought with an interesting and different observation of John Dewey: "I do not know whether the ideas in education that he has founded were all that original … but his book *Democracy and Education* is clearly a classic."

Dewey and Pedagogy

With Dewey's seminal book, *Democracy and Education*, introduced into the conversation, Feinberg emphatically observes that "making that connection between education and democracy is a critical thing." It is not just pedagogy or teaching techniques, as Feinberg explains, but Dewey "really tried to make a statement that if you want a democracy, then you have to do something about education that forms it in a way that propels students into democratic ways of life." In Feinberg's opinion, Dewey was genuine and open-minded about his view of children and their inherent wisdom. He states that for Dewey, "if you did want a democracy, you have to work with the pedagogy and the delivery system, the way children are treated in the classroom." Given this example of Dewey's thoughts, Feinberg asserts that one gap in Dewey's ideas is that he was "a little blind to the fact of segregation." He cites Dewey's research and a report on Indianapolis schools, stating, "He did not comment that these schools, as progressive as they were, were targeting children to work in the steel mills."

Social Efficiency Versus Pragmatism

One pervasive movement during Dewey's career is the early 1900 industrialists' adoption of the concept of social efficiency. Feinberg believes that Dewey had a broad, more encompassing view of social efficiency than many of his colleagues; and Dewey criticized the Taylorism of the twentieth century. More to the point, Feinberg states, "It was not that he was against efficiency … but the narrow conception of efficiency was somebody tells you what they want, then somebody else figures out the best and least costly way for you to perform that one, then you as the worker perform it."

"Pragmatist" is a label frequently attributed to John Dewey, and Feinberg extends it as the overarching theme of Dewey's philosophy. According to Feinberg, Dewey's view of pragmatism is "that the ideas are instruments to be evaluated by their capacity to serve a given purpose." Feinberg offers that Dewey's form of pragmatism is not necessarily in the philosophy department. Rather, Dewey's ideas are kept alive in education departments. And, Feinberg adds, "in the last decade or two, interestingly, there has been a real resurgence of Deweyan pragmatism."

Social Justice Views

In terms of today's social justice issues, Feinberg views Dewey as a solid supporter of labor unions. He states that for the most part, Dewey saw "social justice at the time in terms of working class issues, much less in terms of race." Feinberg introduces his idea that you might consider Dewey as an early feminist and expresses, "I do not think he saw so much in terms of gender as social class." However, Feinberg outlines that in looking at Dewey's philosophy as a whole, "you have to evaluate the ends in terms of the means that you are taking to achievement—that has social implications as well."

Reflecting on the Right Questions

Next, I ask his opinion about the likelihood of implementing Dewey's reflective thinking ideas in today's curriculum. He asserts that the outlook for schools—and especially the curriculum designs—needs to develop flexibility and recognize that the purpose of school is not just to get a job. As an alternative to a curriculum that focuses on job creation, Feinberg suggests, "You ask kids the right questions, and you get kids in conversation with one another … thinking about whatever the subject may be, then you can get more reflective thinking from them."

Important Questions Still to Be Answered

Given the breadth of Feinberg's academic career, I inquire about what he may still want to know about Dewey from other scholars. He reverts to Dewey during World War I and Dewey's participation in a study of the Polish community with his colleague, Albert Barnes. He views their collaborative report to the War Department as expressing a right-wing tone and tenor. Thus, Feinberg wants to know today what Dewey would think about the report now. And he would like to see more clarity from Dewey on some philosophical concepts, such as did Dewey

really overcome dualisms? If Feinberg had the opportunity, he would ask Dewey a number of strategic questions. Namely, he would ask Dewey to unlock the mystery of Dewey's dissertation—where is it and how did he change after it was written? And how would Dewey apply his principle of "no absolutes" to his own philosophy? And what about the conflict between scholars on pragmatism? And what would Dewey think then—in terms of the general thinking of Dewey's day—of the liberation movements of today? It is clear that Feinberg would more than welcome what is now an impossible encounter with Dewey, because he had one more important follow-up question. Feinberg would specifically ask Dewey, "Why was he quiet about it then [meaning social conflicts of race, feminism, etc.], and what would he think about his quietude now?"

If Dewey's answers to these questions could be known, it is possible that Feinberg's assessment of Dewey's legacy as "I wish, for the most part, [it] had been larger" would become more positive and upbeat. Ultimately, Feinberg believes that Dewey's voice in educational philosophy is still here. This became a good point on which to conclude our dialogue about John Dewey.

Epilogue

The interview with Walter Feinberg was fast paced and intense. He did not hesitate to identify what he views as Dewey's shortfalls and shortcomings. In reality, his criticisms of Dewey are modest. Feinberg clearly recognizes that Dewey was misunderstood in many aspects and by numerous types of people. At the same time, Feinberg offers the opinion that Dewey was affected by a definitive turn in philosophy of education to analytical philosophy, into which Dewey did not venture.

In retrospect, Feinberg makes it clear that in whatever manner Dewey gained his notable reputation, he believes that Dewey's connection between education and democracy was made in a concrete, meaningful, and significant way. In that sense, Dewey's *Democracy and Education* was both a wake-up call and a true reality check for public education. Feinberg does not argue that Dewey focused on an idealized society or utopian order. Rather, Feinberg suggests that the principles of a democratic society that are set forth in *Democracy and Education* provide the rationale by which democracy can be modeled in the schools. For Feinberg, therefore, that effort alone places Dewey on the map, so to speak, as a noted personality even today—but it is not the sole reason

Dewey's ideas and ideals continue to resonate in the twenty-first century. Another major reason we turn to Dewey today can be seen in what Feinberg describes as the "flavor of Deweyism" that he appreciates. In support of this posture, Feinberg references the phrase "teamwork, decision making, how to do it better" that he finds in Japanese manufacturing. It is what we also see in public schools—especially in the format of what is known as the Middle School Concept, as well as in strategies emphasized in educational leadership programs. The ability to work effectively in teams; to become involved in collaborative decision making; and to join students, parents, administrators, stakeholders, and communities in "how to do it better" in order to address issues and problems is highly promoted across the board both in professional life and in the schools.

Author note: All quotations in the Prologue and Epilogue are from the Walter Feinberg dialogue transcript.

Walter Feinberg Dialogue

TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH WALTER FEINBERG

Chicago, IL, April 2015 (Edited)

GREGG JORGENSEN (GJ): *I am going to be addressing readers who have a passing acquaintance with John Dewey, or not know him at all. What would you say about John Dewey himself for this audience?*

WALTER FEINBERG (WF): I would say that Dewey for the first half of the twentieth century was the premier public intellectual in the United States and one of the most well known philosophers and educators, and in education, he was known primarily for his influence on the progressive education movement. And politically he was somewhat of a modern liberal who was opposed to the sort of dog-eat-dog implications of classical liberalism. He felt that more cooperative forms of production would be of benefit to workers and citizens alike. He was very active in a number of different ways. He was one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; he was one of the founders of the American Association of University Professors—may have been the first president, but I am not sure. He was, I believe, President of the American Psychological Association at one time, but you might want to check my facts on that. He was known as an educator, a philosopher, a political theorist, an activist—is that enough?

GJ: *Yes, thank you. Do you believe that John Dewey's philosophy still has a role to play in the twenty-first century, and if so, how do you see it happening?*

WF: It is hard to say because his philosophy was so broad. He wrote on everything from art to education to a sort of metaphysics to value theory or axiology to aesthetics. When you say "his philosophy," it is very hard to pinpoint exactly what. Certainly his ideas on education, while not at all the dominant discourse about education, is part of the rhetoric still. Progressive educational ideas are still engaged in discussions. His political thought may be a little bit outdated, but I think remnants of it can be found in the democratic socialist movements in Europe, I do not think it is completely gone; although, this country has become so sort of right wing that anything that looks halfway socialist and halfway democratic gets suspect by many people. His aesthetics are still interestingly relevant.

He was a collaborator with a very wealthy industrialist and art collector named Albert Barnes. Barnes had collected the most extensive works of postimpressionists anywhere in the world. He has more Rembrandts than are in Paris, to give you some sense of it. So, he established his foundation, mostly for teaching art. He died in the fifties and there has been some court battles over his foundation [the Barnes Foundation]. Recently they were settled and the City of Philadelphia built a new building that stores his collection. And so his artwork—Barnes's artwork—is still there. They had an educational vision about how art should be taught that he and Dewey shared. It was a vision in which art is much more connected to the everyday life of things. And some of the movements of art today have that kind of flavor to it, so there may be an influence there.

He also tried to be a global citizen, and insofar as there are certainly the issues surrounding climate change and the issues over Fallujah and the like—there certainly is a need for global citizenship. And so you could see that, too. In terms of Dewey as sort of a straight philosopher, it is interesting because he had his heyday probably from 1900 to 1945 or [19]50. Then he and pragmatism—which was the name of the philosophy he was associated with—went into a significant decline and took a backseat to analytic British philosophy, existential continental philosophy, and really was kind of kept alive maybe you would say in departments of education but not in straight philosophy departments. In the last decade or two, interestingly, there has been a real resurgence of Deweyan pragmatism with Richard Rorty and Hilary Putnam and Richard Bernstein, a whole group of them—and then also in aesthetics and everywhere. So in a sense, Dewey has roared back—or at least pragmatism has

roared back—little bit of a mousy kind of roar, but nevertheless they have established a renewed presence.

GJ: *Do you think Dewey was underrated in any way in the twentieth century?*

WF: In the first half, no; in the second half, yes.

GJ: *Could you expand on why you think he was underrated in the second half?*

WF: Well, I think other movements took hold. Dewey did have a philosophy of science, but I think he was not considered to be quite in the mainstream of where philosophy was going at the time. Some of philosophy was seen much more as an analytical science at that point rather than a kind of commentator or analysis of how science fit into a larger human project. Some people would say he was not doing first-rate technical work in philosophy. I am not sure of that; I have mixed feelings about it. But he certainly was not in the mainstream of the analytic movement.

GJ: *Do you believe that Dewey ever influenced the American curriculum?*

WF: Influence is a hard thing to say because it sort of creates this great man image, one person coming in, putting his stamp on the thing, going out with—forever his trace of … And I do not think that is exactly how it works. He was influenced by a number of people, some women. Ella Flagg Young at the lab school, his wife, Alice, Jane Addams, to name some of the women; Colonel [Francis] Parker who was attributed to be the founder of progressive education. Parker—and other people. So, he [Dewey] also was a kind of a critic of progressivism at some point when he felt it went too far and the child interest mode.

I think because of his name, he certainly had an influence. I do not know whether the ideas in education that he has founded were all that original or were not around, but his book *Democracy and Education* is clearly a classic. It clearly crystallized many of the ideas that were present at the time. In that sense I think yes, he did influence. And the other thing is making that connection between education and democracy is a critical thing because it is easy to think of education as just the technique and pedagogy as just the way of delivering something, but he really tried to make a statement that if you want a democracy, then you have to do something about education that forms it in a way that propels students into democratic ways of life. And that, I think, was Dewey. Parker—Colonel [Francis]

Parker—I think his emphasis was on these beautiful little children; let their interests grow and they will flourish. A lot of the progressivists focused on their sort of romanticized image of child, which I think, for the most part, had some credibility—especially given the way children were treated at the time—but it also went way overboard in terms of romanticizing the wisdom of the child. I think Dewey was very realistic about that, and did see that if you did want a democracy, you have to work with the pedagogy and the delivery system, the way children are treated in the classroom.

On the other hand, he had some faults, too. When he reported on schools in Indianapolis, I think it was, he reported on an all-black school. He never mentioned it was all black. He seemed at that time to be a little blind to the fact of segregation. When he reported on schools in Gary, Indiana, he did not comment that these schools, as progressive as they were, were targeting children to work in the steel mills. So there were gaps, but all of us have gaps.

GJ: *How did Dewey deal with the concept of social efficiency?*

WF: For the most part, there was a social efficiency movement, Taylorism. I think, for the most part, he thought that they had a very narrow conception of efficiency. It was not that he was against efficiency, but the narrow conception of efficiency was somebody tells you what they want, then somebody else figures out the best and least costly way for you to perform that one, then you as the worker perform it. You, as the worker, have no say in what it is that you ought to be making or how you should be making it. I think he was a pretty strong critic of that kind of thing.

If you take, as another example, the Japanese auto industry or Japanese industry, they sort of have adopted a little more of the Deweyan way of doing things. Not that you can just do anything you want, but teamwork, decision making, how to do it better—that is all a part of their way of structuring industry; it is much more influenced by the [W. Edwards] Deming concept of industry, an American who, again, went to Japan after the war. But, still, that has a flavor of Deweyanism to it.

GJ: *What is pragmatism from Dewey's point of view?*

WF: It has been defined by a lot of people; I am not sure how he would—but I am sure he does basically say, that the ideas are instruments to be evaluated by their capacity to serve a given purpose. I guess that is a short answer to it.

GJ: *Do you think Dewey's approach to reflective thinking can be implemented in today's curriculum, and if so, what would have to happen?*

WF: I do not think it would be that hard. What would have to happen is to stop telling kids that the reason they are in school is only to get jobs, that the way we that we can tell progress is by standardized testing them, and by testing them frequently and often, and by the E. D. Hirsch idea that somehow you have to tell students, thrill students, test students. If you have that, you do not have any time for reflection or thinking. If you loosen up a little bit, you ask kids the right questions, and you get kids in conversation with one another about thinking about art or thinking about whatever the subject may be, then you can get more reflective thinking from them.

GJ: *Could you address what roles Dewey's ideas and ideals may have had in social justice?*

WF: Well, he did a number of things. I think he was a strong advocate of unions. Mostly, he saw social justice at the time in terms of working class issues, much less in terms of race, and even though you might say he was an early feminist—and he was—I do not think he saw so much in terms of gender as social class. In putting aside what might be thought to be other avenues of social justice—race, social class, ethnicity, sexual orientation; all the things that have sort of come into the open now—I think he certainly was an advocate of greater worker participation and greater participation in the fruits of labor. I am sure he would have advocated for something like social security, some kind of safety net. I mean he was a good friend with Jane Addams, so there you can see some of the social justice issues coming out. But then his whole philosophy where you have to evaluate the ends in terms of the means that you are taking to achievement—that has social justice implications as well.

GJ: *What can teachers still learn from Dewey that might surprise them?*

WF: They have to know what they know … maybe we could come back to that?

GJ: *Certainly. What would you still like to know about Dewey if you were to ask other Dewey scholars?*

WF: I would like to know … his ideas took a kind of weird turn for a brief period of time around the First World War where—I have written about this—where he got involved with [Albert] Barnes in a study of the Polish community and really wrote a right-wing oriented summary … surprising. It was a report that went confidentially

to the War Department; it really questioned the loyalty of Polish Americans. It seemed really odd; although, I have argued in detail that it is not that much in tension to some of his thoughts. But I would like to know, in retrospect, what he would think of that if he were to look at it now. Well, I guess that would be the one thing. There are other little philosophical things such as I am never convinced that his overcoming dualisms actually overcame them, or did he just sort of say that he overcame them and then put them together, and so … maybe I would like a little more clarity on that.

GJ: *This is kind of related, perhaps, but if you were at a dinner party and Dewey was there, what would you ask Dewey, and what would you tell Dewey about yourself?*

WF: What I would ask him … I would ask him where is his dissertation, because nobody has been able to find it, and what did he say and how did he change?

GJ: *Yes*

WF: I guess one thing I would ask him is, given that he is a philosopher of change and argues that there are no absolutes, how would he apply those principles to his own philosophy? That would be one. And then another would be that there is really a conflict among scholars of pragmatism. For instance, if you take Rorty on the one side, that there is no external reality and so forth. Then if you take, I don't know, somebody … maybe [Hilary] Putnam on the other side, ultimately there is a kind of reality against which ideas get tested. I think Dewey would take the latter point, but let me put it differently. In postmodern theory, there is a big deal made about multiple descriptions, multiple ways of describing something. What would Dewey think about that, and is there ever a wrong way of describing something?

What would I tell him about myself? That I really enjoyed his work over the years, that I have been in the Deweyan spirit by criticizing Dewey as well as appropriating him and that I can understand some of the reasons for some of the things that he did that I am critical of, but still I might have done the same thing, and that would be it. I guess I would ask him, too, what he would think then of the liberation movements that are now. Not to put himself in our shoes, but in his shoes, so that nobody ever spoke out about homosexuality at the time, of course, so that is a liberation movement. Or even African Americans, I do not know if he ever spoke out against lynching. I never heard that. Or made a peep about the Sacco-Vanzetti affair, or some of the other—well, women, I think he did. But, why was he quiet about it then, and what would he think about his quietude now?

GJ: *How would you summarize the legacy of John Dewey?*

WF: I wish it, for the most part, had been larger. I mean, there is certainly the right-wing turn in this country is bothersome, and certainly it is in education. I guess that it is nice to have a voice that has a balance to it; even if that balance is not as robust as perhaps I would like to have it; it is still there and it is still as a marker for many people who feel that we are going too far in the wrong direction. Again, some of the anticommunism, some of it led to a sort of bizarre kind of—among his followers—change in them during the Vietnam War. Like Sidney Hook—a Deweyan Marxist—became a vehement supporter of the Vietnam War. And a number of them did. I think [George] Counts may have. So, what the hell is going on? And how would he speak to those people? Maybe he would have supported it, too, but I would like to know how he would have spoken to those people who were his friends and his supporters, and yet, in my way of thinking, took a very bad decision at a certain point in time

GJ: *Thank you*

CHAPTER 11

A Historian Focused on Democracy: Robert B. Westbrook

Prologue

Scholar Introduction

Researchers and readers seeking to gather information about John Dewey often turn to Robert Westbrook's *John Dewey and American Democracy* as the first step in their learning process. His intellectual biography of John Dewey has its roots in Westbrook's educational journey from Yale University to Stanford University, where he earned his Ph.D. His road as a historian who has also written about philosophy spans the nation from the West Coast back to the East Coast, specifically to Rochester, New York. A well-established career at the University of Rochester has led to his present position as the Joseph F. Cunningham Professor of History. He strives to foster a commitment to considering history as a broad-spectrum embracing intellectual and cultural history. Also included among Westbrook's book publications are *Why We Fought: Forging American Obligations in World War II* and *Democratic Hope: Pragmatism and the Politics of Truth.*

I made arrangements to meet Robert Westbrook at a café close to his home, not far from the University of Rochester, just before the Thanksgiving holiday in 2014. We exchanged greetings and settled down to discuss one of his intensely researched topics, John Dewey.

C.G. Jorgensen, *Discovering John Dewey in the Twenty-First Century*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-58950-7_11

Dialogue Overview

Westbrook essentially forms a template for our dialogue by using the thesis of his book *John Dewey and American Democracy.* According to Westbrook, the focus of this book is "that the key to understanding all of Dewey's thought is to understand his democratic convictions." Dewey is also featured in Westbrook's *Democratic Hope: Pragmatism and the Politics of Truth,* which attempts to reach an understanding regarding pragmatism that encompasses the political implications in adhering to the concept of truths. It involves the key idea of "whether there are inherent democratic implications" within the concept of pragmatism.

Dewey and Democracy

Dewey's argument for understanding how and in what way democracy should be developed fell short of the mark, according to Westbrook. He laments that Dewey "never made it as full or as clear as he might have." However, he does acknowledge that "on the whole, the implications of [Dewey's] epistemological position, with its commitment to fallibility and to deliberation and to a consideration of all the available alternatives, has democratic political implications."

Our discussion reviews Westbrook's path to developing his interpretation of political implications for education. Westbrook states that during the 1968–1972 time frame, he was invested in a type of critical American history that materialized "out of the New Left in the 1960s." He describes how he came to believe that Dewey was complicit in helping to foster a growing, but perhaps anemic, view of democracy. At this point, Westbrook acknowledges that once confronted with Dewey, he changed his opinion. He states, "Then I read Dewey and I decided this was all wrong." This decision led Westbrook to write about Dewey as an adversary to the so-called New Left and to individuals like Walter Lippmann. At this point, Westbrook launched a hunt to track down Dewey's works, microfilm by microfilm. This research effort became his dissertation, which, in turn, became an expanded and widely read book. Westbrook shares that the focus of his dissertation was too narrow because Dewey viewed and wrote about democracy in a more extensive manner that reaches beyond one-dimensional thinking. He states, "It [the dissertation] was focused strictly on what could conventionally be called Dewey's social and political thought." And so, Westbrook's book manuscript grew exponentially to more than one thousand pages in its discussion of Dewey's voluminous and intense body of work.

Westbrook then conveys his view on Dewey's ideas of experience. Using the expansive term of human experience, Westbrook details that while Dewey was quiet and soft-spoken, "his ideas, on the other hand, generated enormous excitement and controversy." He explains that Dewey, over his 90 years, engaged with a massively wide range of ideas and concerns; indeed, "he touched virtually every aspect of human experience."

Philosophy for Today and for the Future

In discussing whether Dewey still has a role to play in the twenty-first century, Westbrook tailors his view to "what dimension of [Dewey's] philosophy… you are talking about." He believes what he terms Dewey's "pragmatic naturalism" is what will continue in the twenty-first century—perhaps due to a revival in pragmatism in many disciplines. His rationale for this reasoning is mainly "because it challenges and subverts various epistemological and metaphysical views that have reached a dead end and offers a way out." Westbrook takes the position that Dewey has much to offer, not only through the multitude of issues he addressed in his writings, but also through questions he left for others to answer, "particularly about how do we practically foster a more robust democratic way of life, whether it be politics or education or social life generally."

Westbrook emphatically believes that Dewey was underrated and not considered part of mainstream thought, particularly in the latter half of his career. And, importantly according to Westbrook, it has not been until current times that Dewey has been given recognition once again. For instance, Westbrook shares that he made the case for his theory that even though Dewey is considered "one of the most significant American liberal intellectuals of the twentieth century," in reality, the liberals of his time never "understood his insistence that liberalism has to be robustly democratic in the way that it needs to be genuinely liberal," as espoused by Dewey.

Westbrook admits that "there are sometimes fierce conflicts among neo-pragmatists, myself included, about what Dewey really meant." He believes that neo-pragmatists are a diverse group and explains that many were trained as analytic philosophers. Thus, this group applies types of analytic skills and tools not displayed by Dewey and others. As a group, they are compelled to "take account of what has happened." Westbrook states that Dewey was a pragmatist, but not in terms of relativism and certainty. For example, Westbrook points out that to read Dewey's "*Art as Experience* as pragmatist notions seems to be a mistake."

Experimentation in Lieu of Curriculum

In Westbrook's opinion, Dewey influenced the American curriculum from a distance. Westbrook believes that the reformers of Dewey's time who did impact curriculum lifted Deweyan ideas and reformatted them without his foundational rationale, thus enabling the Progressive Movement. He believes the impact of Dewey is through the teachers over time who read Dewey and use Dewey in their classrooms. Westbrook recognizes Dewey today when he goes into these particular classrooms. Citing the example of his observation of his wife teaching her kindergarten class, he states, "The thing I think was most Deweyan was she would teach—it was a kind of integrated curriculum where she would have a subject which tended to be a natural phenomenon—whales, planets, so forth—and she would teach reading—not only science but reading and math via these particular nature study projects."

Social Efficiency Ideas

Regarding the concept of social efficiency, Westbrook believes that historians should adapt an understanding that the meanings of words can change over time; that is, there should not be a presumption that later decades will retain the same definition. In particular, he points out that in the 1905–1910 time frame, two prominent terms were in use—*social efficiency* and *social control*—and he shares that the meaning of each term and its implication were much more expansive than we find in today's understanding. In reality, as Westbrook observes, Dewey avoided using the term *social efficiency*; Westbrook states, "He was quite uncomfortable with it and would say something in effect like 'social efficiency for what, or towards what end?' It's a modest virtue, it's a secondary virtue, it's a mediating virtue; you want to be efficient in the way you go about whatever it is you intend to do, but the real question is, what do you intend to do?"

As to the current student testing driven by today's efficiency experts, Westbrook believes Dewey "would be profoundly hostile to the preeminence of tests in contemporary American curricula." This leads us to discuss the current testing formats versus Deweyan reflective thinking ideas. Westbrook returns to his examples of teachers using Deweyan practices in their classrooms. In his opinion, they adopt Dewey's preferred method of teaching to oppose the administrative policies for testing students. In his view, teachers who apply reflective thinking

theory "create a classroom that is in effect a kind of deliberative democracy and foster skills in their students which are conducive to that." In Westbrook's view, the development and mentoring of reflective thinking skills create a "wholly instrumental understanding of what education should be about. It should be preparing our students for the global economy."

A Question that Remains Unanswered

We come then to my concluding question for Westbrook: If he were at a dinner party with John Dewey, what would he tell him about himself? His reaction made it clear to me that the fact that Dewey lived to age 92—and created an incredible portfolio of vibrant and invaluable educational theory—remains astonishing to Westbrook. Thus, in turn, he would ask Dewey, "Could you give me some advice? Where does your energy come from?" Many educators, perhaps an infinite number, would like to hear Dewey's answer to Westbrook's question.

Epilogue

It is not surprising that the dialogue with Robert Westbrook reflects and revisits his intensely researched background on John Dewey and his writings. Westbrook steadfastly believes that Dewey's thoughts and ideas can be readily viewed as a positive force in American education. Throughout the interview, I had the notion that Westbrook felt like he was discussing an old colleague from his past—but, at the same time, a colleague who remains influential in the present time.

To my point, Westbrook reveals that he would enjoy the opportunity to personally tell Dewey "that in many ways my life would not be what it is or what it had been if he [Dewey] had not lived and worked as he did." In my particular case, as I progressed from being a student to becoming a scholar who has been deeply influenced by Dewey's ideas and ideals at every step along the way, I relate closely to Westbrook's comments. Indeed, many voices in this volume share similar views, especially about the way in which Dewey continues to speak closely to students, teachers, and scholars alike—as a colleague and almost as a confidant who constantly reminds us about issues of justice in democratic spaces and offers the opportunity to deliberate on what can be, and needs to be, considered in education.

Author note: All quotations in the Prologue and Epilogue are from the Robert B. Westbrook dialogue transcript.

Robert B. Westbrook Dialogue

TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT B. WESTBROOK

Rochester, NY, November 2014

GREGG JORGENSEN (GJ): *In addressing readers who may have a passing acquaintance with John Dewey or not know him at all, what would you say about Dewey himself?*

ROBERT WESTBROOK (RW): Well, the first thing I would say is that it is difficult to encapsulate a career of such extraordinary length and diversity. I guess as far as Dewey the man is concerned, he was generally soft-spoken, plain-spoken—everyone who studied with him agrees on that—but his ideas, on the other hand, generated enormous excitement and controversy, and he ranged across such a wide spectrum of concerns that he engaged [in] over the course of his ninety-odd years a whole range of people—not just other thinkers or certainly other philosophers, but people from all walks of life: teachers, labor leaders, politicians, and so forth. The impression I would try to convey to someone who did not know much about Dewey was how much there is to know and how probably there is some concern in their lives upon which he had something to say that they would find worth reading, if not everything he had to say. But he touched virtually every aspect of human experience… part of the reason he appeals, I think. My book, *John Dewey and Democracy,* is an intellectual biography of Dewey from beginning to end. It had a thesis. Biographies do not always have apparent theses; however, its thesis was that the key to understanding all of Dewey's thought is to understand his democratic convictions. Not only his thought but to understand his democratic convictions and ideas in ways he sought to explore various contexts and apply them in practice.

GJ: *Do you believe that John Dewey's philosophy still has a role to play in the twenty-first century, and if so, how do you see it happening?*

RW: Again, it depends on what dimension of that [Dewey's] philosophy you are talking about. Certainly, in his more—I guess what I could say, technical—what my family used to call "the deep doo-doo"—there has been a considerable revival of interest in a variety of disciplines in pragmatism and in his pragmatic naturalism, and I

think that will continue to be an important philosophical impulse at work in the twenty-first century, principally because it challenges and subverts various epistemological and metaphysical views that have reached a dead end and offers a way out. Sometimes simply by changing the questions that have been asked before will result in a resolution. What I have been most interested in, though, is social and political thinking. I think Deweyan impulses are very much endangered in the twenty-first century, both in education, and more broadly, democracy as a way of life, as he put it, is in peril. I suppose insofar as people mount a challenge to that, or resistance to that, he will prove to be a valuable resource. That is how I have thought of much of my work, as trying to provide people with something of that resource insofar as the convictions are deeply democratic. Dewey has a lot to offer both by way of the questions he addressed, but often as much by the questions he left unanswered, particularly about how do we practically foster a more robust democratic way of life, whether it be politics or education or social life generally.

GJ: *Do you have an interpretation of what Dewey means?*

RW: Well, part of the difficulty I have with Dewey—and I have said this many, many times—is that again and again at the moment at which one hopes for something concrete—it is not programmatic and concrete—he comes up short. It has been left largely to others influenced by the spirit of his thinking to try to figure out some of the practical ways in which a more Deweyan society might be built. I mean, in a way, one can learn more in that regard from the implications of some of his practical aspects from books and articles. But there are quite a few people that have tried to figure that out. Generally speaking, it means decentralization, it means maybe for the purposes of engendering more widespread participation by ordinary people. You take that as an overall goal. Then when you confront a particular problem, you will address yourself not just to the substance of the particular problem, but also to the means by which you hope the process will be addressed. For example, take a current hot-button issue: if you are interested in immigration reform, you will research not only about what sort of policies should be implemented, but how we should go about determining those policies and figuring out a way so that the people most directly affected by the policy, as well as those that are indirectly affected by the policy, have the opportunity to engage in deliberation and discussion of those issues and not leave it simply to experts. Whatever one thinks about the substance of say, Barack

Obama's executive order on immigration, to use yesterday's news—which I think is of considerable merit—one would be troubled by the fact that the policy is a consequence of an executive order by one powerful president.

GJ: *Do you think that Dewey was underrated in any way in the twentieth century?*

RW: Yes. Underrated? Yes, especially after 1935. There was a period between about 1935 and 1980 in which he was not taken seriously at all as a philosopher. That has changed, but among philosophers he was not taken as seriously in that period. I do not think his educational thinking was ever fully understood, or in that sense taken seriously, by educational reformers—although you can find individuals and experiments and so forth in which clearly he was taken seriously. Misunderstanding—that is in some measures his own fault. As I have said, his prose can be foggy and abstract in the way it lends itself to misunderstanding. I have made the case that American liberalism—for which he is widely seen as one of the most significant American liberal intellectuals in the twentieth century—that American liberals never took seriously or even understood his insistence that liberalism has to be robustly democratic in the way that it needs to be genuinely liberal. My own view is that it is really not possible to say he was a marginal figure, but he was certainly a figure that stood against much of the grit of twentieth-century life and thought. Consequently, I do not think he was given his due until very recently. There are sometimes fierce conflicts among neo-pragmatists, myself included, about what Dewey really meant, what his implication is.

GJ: *Would you expand on that idea?*

RW: I am thinking in particular about the arguments that Richard Rorty and I had over the last 30 years about the centrality of Dewey's democratic convictions and the degree to which they are generally radical and foresee a much more thoroughly adversarial politics than Rorty was willing to count. I also side with—well, another important debate among neo-pragmatists is the degree to which Dewey's more technical epistemological pragmatism itself has or has not have democratic implications; that is, whether Dewey had an epistemological argument for democracy. My view is that you can derive one from his work. He never made it as full or as clear as he might have, and it is not an argument in which one can draw logically necessary deductions, but that, on the whole, the implications of his epistemological position, with its commitment to fallibility and to deliberation

and to a consideration of all the available alternatives, has democratic political implications. Now that is a position that others like Rorty or Richard Posner reject, but I just think they are wrong.

GJ: *In reality, do you believe that Dewey ever influenced the American curriculum?*

RW: Yes, but this I do not know a great deal about—I think he did so at a certain remove, so that you can take important curricular ideas and you can see how reformers who did have a considerable impact on the curriculum, people like William Kilpatrick, his colleague at Columbia, or the whole so-called progressive education movement. You can see what it is in Dewey they are trading on with—in many ways, they would take notions of his which were carefully qualified and remove the qualifications and run with them. The result was something that Dewey himself often found distressing. On the other hand, I have met over the years dozens of teachers, including most notably my wife, who themselves as individuals have read and thought about Dewey's educational philosophy and tried to apply it in their classrooms. When I go to these classrooms, I recognize Dewey. So who knows? I mean, there is the level of formal curricular policies and programs, and, then there is what individual teachers do in the classroom and my sense is that within every school system you will find at least one Deweyan teacher.

GJ: *So your wife is a teacher?*

RW: She was a kindergarten teacher. The heart of her curriculum was nature study, and she was very taken with Dewey and tried to create a kind of community of observation—natural observation and experimentation—within her classroom that seemed to be something he would be advocating toward.

GJ: *Can you think of any examples of that?*

RW: It has been a while, let me think. As I said, we live three miles south of here and it's rural countryside. We have seven acres; we have a pond, a rock wall, and such. Every year, she would bring her students out to our house for a long morning of walking around the property looking at snakes and toads and habitats and so forth, collecting information. Then they would go back to school, and they would talk about what they discovered, what it's implications were, that kind of thing. She would do a lot with natural processes like plant growth and such. They would plant things and let them grow and take measurements and she would teach. The thing I think was

most Deweyan was she would teach—it was a kind of integrated curriculum where she would have a subject which tended to be a natural phenomenon—whales, planets, so forth—and she would teach reading—not only science but reading and math via these particular nature study projects. So she would integrate the teaching of mathematics with whatever the central nature study project was. Reading—she would go to the library and scour the library for the books that were related and read those and so forth.

She has a lot of appreciative students, now college graduates or more, that come back and say how lucky they thought they were. She was a great teacher. Later, she was a teacher mentor in a program that the School of Education at Rochester had—it was called Science Star. It was an effort to try to integrate science studies more fully into elementary school curriculum. I think Dewey would have liked all of that.

GJ: *Did she read Dewey too?*

RW: Yes, she had. She had a great philosophy of education teacher at Southern Connecticut University where she finally got her degree; wonderful course. I kind of read along a bit. They read quite a bit of Dewey. And then she read—that was when I was working on my dissertation and book—she is my go-to reader when I write.

GJ: *Would you talk about the research process that you went through?*

RW: To write *John Dewey and American Democracy*? There is actually an article you might be interested in called—I think it is titled "Doing Dewey"—that was published in the *Transactions of the Charles Peirce Society* in the early 1990s. I describe all this there more fully, but when I came to graduate school in 1972—I have to contextualize this—I went to college from 1968–1972, and at that time, what many colleges had on offer was not only liberal arts education but also political education. When I got to graduate school, I was very much invested in the kind of critical American history that had emerged out of the New Left in the 1960s. My principal advisor, Barton Bernstein, was a leading figure in this. I wanted to study—and I had also taken interest as an undergraduate in the story of the way in which American liberal politics and political thought had become petty and had fostered an increasingly thin and even anemic conception of democracy. I wanted to write about that, and I was led to believe, principally by historians—New Left historians of education—that Dewey was a principal culprit in this. I had read all this history of education and was prepared to write a dissertation in

which he [Dewey] served as the kind of thought of this desiccating democratic values in American liberalism. Then I read Dewey and I decided this was all wrong; in fact, that is precisely what he set himself against. I decided that I would write about Dewey, but I would write about him in that context and offer him up as this kind of adversarial figure against people like Walter Lippmann. That is what I did. At that time, the collective works were just beginning to come out. So most of the Dewey—at least the Dewey I read for the first time—most of it I had to hunt down book by book, microfilm by microfilm. Crumbling issues of the *New Republic* and so forth. Certainly with my dissertation, I do not know that archival research was necessary for it, but I thought it would be illuminating. I got a grant from the Dewey Center, and I spent several weeks there. The great thing about the Dewey Center is that not only are Dewey's papers at Southern Illinois, but the Dewey Center, in the course of its editorial project, has constructed a secondary archive of Dewey manuscript material that is in other collections, so you do not have to go to Columbia, you do not have to go to Chicago. It is all collected and copied. I found that material really intriguing. But the dissertation I wrote was quite different from the book that eventually resulted. It was much shorter. Most dissertations are much longer than the books that result; mine was much shorter, and it was focused strictly on what could conventionally be called Dewey's social and political thought. And between the time I finished that—in 1988—and over the next 10 years, I decided the problem with the dissertation, which I knew was not quite right, was that it was too narrowly focused because democracy for Dewey was a much more expansive term. I came to believe that one could explain or understand not just books like *Democracy and Education* or *The Public and Its Problems* as expressions of his democratic convictions, but you could understand books like *Experience and Nature* or *The Quest for Certainty* or *Art as Experience* as manifestation of the same impulse. So what I did over the course of the eighties was decidedly expand my manuscript of some three hundred odd pages to one of over one thousand pages by talking about that deep doo-doo stuff and devoting more attention to the earlier period, which I had not done before. Then, I went back to the Dewey Center. By then, the volumes of the collected works were coming out pretty regularly, which made it easier. By the time I finished, I was able to cite and quote pretty strictly from the collected works, which is one of the great—I think—monuments of the twentieth century in American scholarly enterprise and affection. That is how I went about it.

GJ: *That is a great research adventure*

RW: I had trouble finding a publisher. Then Rorty came out, said Dewey was one of the three greatest philosophers of the twentieth century, and all the buzz around his work, and people were knocking on my door instead of me knocking on theirs. I'll tell you a story. Early on when I took it to a publisher—this was right after Ronald Steele's biography of Walter Lippmann had come out, all those revelations about Lippmann's infidelity and so on, so—I went to meet with an editor at that one university press, and she said "This is all very interesting and so forth, but it needs some spice. Did Dewey have any love affairs?" And I said, "well, he had this one, but I do not know really what to make of it or how to fit it in." "Oh, you must do that, you must do that." That is the sort of thing I encountered initially, but then once Rorty got the whole neo-pragmatism thing going, then it was much easier, and I am eternally grateful to him—not only for that, but as a consequence, I and a number of other intellectual historians like Jim Kloppenberg, we got to participate in this sort of interdisciplinary project with philosophers and political theorists in the eighties and nineties—this neo-pragmatist project—and that was extremely rewarding.

GJ: *How would you define neo-pragmatism?*

RW: Neo-pragmatism? It is not quite new wine in old bottles, as Kloppenberg put it. Depends on who you are talking about. First of all, I would say there is significant diversity among those who call themselves neo-pragmatists. But it is neo by virtue of this sort of hiatus in reputation of pragmatism between 1935 and 1980. It's neo also in that—at least among philosophers—they feel compelled to take account of what has happened in the philosophy discipline between 1920 and 1980. So many of those important neo-pragmatist philosophers like Rorty, like Putnam, Cheryl Misak and so forth were trained as analytic philosophers. There is a kind of deployment of analytic tools and skills that you do not find in James and Dewey; also, a much greater willingness to languish as well. I guess that is how I would describe it.

GJ: *How did Dewey deal with the concept of social efficiency?*

RW: Ah, social efficiency. One thing that historians can contribute to these debates is a sense of the changing meaning of language, such that one cannot presume that what we mean by a term today is necessarily what people meant by a term in, say, 1905 or 1910. Language evolves and changes. I would say two terms that were quite prominent in 1905 or 1910—social efficiency and social control—have been the victims of a certain anachronistic use of later

understandings of those terms. I think both terms were, at that time, far broader in their meaning and implication than they came to become. Today, we would say both have implications of disciplinary practices, whereas—especially social control in that period meant simply modes of social oversight or the social ways in which societies attempt to direct themselves. In the way the progressives used it, it had no clear implication as to one way of direction as opposed to another. So for them—for Dewey, for example—the term "democratic social control" was not an oxymoron, whereas for many people later—especially these New Leftist historians of education—they regard that as an oxymoron; social control is inherently undemocratic, or social efficiency is necessarily kind of top-down engineering. Social efficiency is a little more difficult to render more broadly because the term fell into the hands of those that clearly had disciplinary intentions in using that term. Dewey rarely used the term. He was quite uncomfortable with it and would say something in effect like "social efficiency for what, or towards what end?" It's a modest virtue, it's a secondary virtue, it's a mediating virtue; you want to be efficient in the way you go about whatever it is you intend to do, but the real question is, what do you intend to do?

GJ: *Do you think Dewey's approach to reflective thinking can be implemented in today's curriculum, and if so, what would have to happen?*

RW: I think he would be profoundly hostile to the preeminence of tests in contemporary American curricula. The social studies class or the math class that is being essentially designed to prepare students for a particular test, he would find that appalling. So, when I spoke earlier about those teachers that I have encountered who seem to me to be Deweyan in their practice—and here I suppose I am thinking principally about secondary school teachers—they try to create a classroom that is in effect a kind of deliberative democracy and foster skills in their students which are conducive to that—being articulate, knowing how to make a good argument, knowing the relationship between evidence and argument, how to make inferences, that kind of thing—that kind of reflective thought, I guess that is how we think, as Dewey would put it—how we think at our best. That seems to me to be a mode of teaching that requires a great deal of patience and is in many ways less interested in the answer than in the way of answering. In the last 20 years, I have not spent that much time in classrooms, so I do not know what actually goes on there. I do not want to speak out of turn, but it seems to me that way of teaching cuts against the whole—not only testing, and this applies to higher education as well—of the wholly instrumental understanding of what education should be about. It

should be preparing our students for the global economy. I think, like Dewey, we should prepare our students for a democratic culture in politics which does not exist in the hope that they will do something about bringing it into existence in the instances where we have failed. But that is not what an administrator wants to hear.

GJ: *How would you define pragmatism?*

RW: My mother asked me this about every time we talked about him. "What is this? I don't really understand this part?" First of all, I am of the view that it is important not to have too expansive a view of what pragmatism is so that not everything—not every element of the thought of those who are pragmatists is part and parcel of his or her pragmatism. Yes, Dewey was a pragmatist, but not in regard to everything. We should confine pragmatism to essentially the epistemological questions about knowledge meaning true and to talk about a pragmatist's view. For instance, to read something like *Art as Experience* as pragmatist notions seems to be a mistake. So, I like Hilary Putnam's definition of pragmatism as fallibilism, which means avoiding what he believes is something like "the lure of metaphysics" by which he means a kind of absolutist quest for certainty and relativism that is neither skeptical nor absolutist, but fallibilistic. And it is a way of thinking about the world that says we do not have to be certain to be confident in our capacity as human beings to be able to reach if not certain, then at least relatively stable truths, and that's enough. My *Politics of Truth* book—*Democratic Hope*—is about this understanding of pragmatism, and what the political implications of holding to that conception of truth are, and this whole question of whether there are inherent democratic implications, which I argue there are if you make a few assumptions here and there.

GJ: *If you were at a dinner party with John Dewey, what would you tell him about yourself?*

RW: What would I tell him about myself? I would say something like, "I do not know how you made it to ninety-two; I am struggling along at sixty-four! Could you give me some advice? Where does your energy come from? Can you offer me any recommendations in that regard?" I think if I wasn't too shy, I would want to tell him that in many ways my life would not be what it is or what it had been if he [Dewey] had not lived and worked as he did, for which I am, on the whole, grateful

GJ: *Thank you very much.*

RW: Sure.

CHAPTER 12

A Guide to Authentic Pedagogy: Fred Newmann

Prologue

Scholar Introduction

Fred Newmann began his career in education as a high school history and social studies teacher. He became discontented with the customary curriculum and instructional methods in place during the 1960s. His dissatisfaction led him to pursue and complete his doctoral studies at Harvard. This higher education graduate student experience guided his research and development of social studies and civic education curriculum, higher-order thinking in high school curriculum, the restructuring of public schools—elementary, middle, and high school—and notable new approaches to student assessment, among many other endeavors. He joined the Curriculum and Instruction faculty in the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where he is now Emeritus Professor.

At Wisconsin, Newmann taught graduate courses in curriculum and instruction and in student assessment, and he directed national centers on Effective Secondary Schools and on the Organization and Restructuring of Schools (K–12). This latter effort resulted in his initial research on authentic intellectual work that was used in researching public school reform in Chicago. Newmann is recognized nationally and internationally as a leader in curriculum, teaching, and school reform. He has numerous articles and book publications, which include

C.G. Jorgensen, *Discovering John Dewey in the Twenty-First Century*,
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"Beyond Common Sense in Educational Restructuring: The Issues of Content and Linkage"; *Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools: Activities and Accomplishments, 1990–1996, Final Report*; and *An Exchange of Views on "Semantics, Psychometrics, and Assessment Reform": A Close Look at "Authentic" Assessments*, together with Ron Brandt and Grant Wiggins. After retiring from the University of Wisconsin–Madison, he actively participated in developing the methodology for professional development backed by the Center for Authentic Intellectual Work.

At Newmann's suggestion, we met at a café in Madison, Wisconsin, and located a corner table to have lunch during the interview. After catching up on his current endeavors, the dialogue with Newmann took quite a different turn as we began our discussion about John Dewey in the context of authentic assessment.

Dialogue Overview

The conversation starts on the topic of educational standards as a prelude to a discussion of John Dewey's ideas for teaching and learning. Newmann comments that the term *No Child Left Behind* was coined out of the Children's Defense Fund in the 1980s. In regard to the current Common Core standards, he advises, "Philosophically, I am not opposed at all to a common core of national standards." However, in Newmann's opinion, this educational program needs to use the right standards to facilitate critical thinking—not just a list of content facts to be addressed in a set time frame.

Inquiry and Critical Thinking

Newmann believes that the problem with public school education in America is that it is not centralized, that is, "you cannot have equality of opportunity if you have thousands of different school boards." Then, Newmann explains that when you factor in the various states, the plethora of universities and other teacher education programs, and the multiple testing companies "each with their own educational agenda for the kids of this country," what you have is a disjointed system in stages of disarray. His philosophical commitment is "I would never support any kind of an education system that would violate the standards of inquiry and critical thinking that we are talking about." At the same time, if Newmann researches and deems educational standards implemented in

the schools as suitable and proper, he believes the entire nation would be served, and the teachers and students would be better off.

Intellectual Demands for Authentic Pedagogy

As to what standards would be suitable to Newmann, this discussion leads the dialogue to authentic pedagogy. As a case in point, he discusses a project in Iowa that he and his colleagues were invited to participate in because it was born out of Newmann's and his colleagues' research involving the national centers he directed. He explains, in part, "authentic pedagogy material looks not just at practices of teaching but what the intellectual demands are that teachers make on the kids and are they asking kids to think critically." The national center teams that worked through their research on grade levels—any level—in any subject, determined that "those kids who have teachers who make these kinds of intellectual demands, their kids far outperformed on both standardized tests and on authentic tests." The project, of course, involved the Iowa Common Core, which Newmann states is "pretty reasonable" in combining reflective thinking with a comprehensive understanding of the subject content. He uses this idea to indicate that, in his opinion, there is not a conflict in connecting critical inquiry with the new Common Core. While Newmann considers that he is somewhat removed from the conversation with regard to the new education policy and practices of the Common Core, he believes that the social studies curriculum should include more about participation as a thoughtful citizen in addressing an issue that would enhance that particular subject.

As for authentic pedagogy in the face of the educational policy under both No Child Left Behind and Common Core, with its emphasis on testing, Newmann believes there is room to build it in. His work in Iowa conducting authentic pedagogy professional development for teachers forms the basis for his positive outlook. At the same time, however, "it is a very labor-intensive in-service professional development program" to initiate and sustain. The underlying issue, as with many other educational initiatives, is sufficient resources for teacher development. And, indirectly, an example of not having the right resources is Newmann's Iowa Project, which lost state support as the result of a change in the state superintendent of schools after more than four successful years for the project.

Our conversation moved on to authentic pedagogy in the twenty-first century in general. Does authentic pedagogy reflect Dewey and have a

place in the curriculum, specifically in social studies? Newman's resounding answer: "Absolutely." In fact, "We know it is possible." We circled back to his belief in teacher professional development. In Newmann's experience, "they have never had professional development that has been this rewarding." This is also true for the school administrators who train with the teachers. And this becomes key to achieving acceptance of the concept of authentic pedagogy.

Dewey in the Twenty-First Century

The time comes to discuss John Dewey, educational philosopher, even though Newmann jokingly takes the position that he really does not know much about Dewey. In actuality, Newmann strongly believes that Dewey has a role to play in twenty-first-century education. When I ask for some details, Newmann honestly states, "Philosophically, I am very sympathetic with Dewey; however, I do not feel competent to answer what the promise is given the current educational environment." However, is there a Dewey connection to Newmann's authentic pedagogy instruction? Newmann believes that a significant part of his authentic instruction is "what we call 'value beyond the school.'" That is, the critical inquiry involved in authentic pedagogy needs to include "value beyond simply showing the teacher I am doing what you are asking me to do."

Politics and Citizen Involvement

I switch the discussion to social studies and today's political dilemmas. Newmann shares that he has not been in the classroom for quite some time, so he reveals that "I would not know what to do as a social studies teacher today." Apparently, the quandary behind the nature of current politics involves the factor of the focus on a political party on gaining and keeping potential power as combined with the influence of money. According to Newmann, the latter, the money impact, is "so persuasive that we do not have a system of democracy, we have an extortion system." Newmann points out that during his efforts to promote and build citizen involvement in school curriculum and in improving education, this particular problematic influence was not present. But over the decades since the 1970s, the corporate and donor money power has continued to increase, culminating in the Supreme Court's 2010 *Citizens United* decision. And, to further exacerbate the issue, according to Newmann, "even the media itself fails to provide the kind of information that an educated citizen would want."

Pedagogy and Policy

However, revisiting the various aspects of authentic pedagogy, I pursue whether the Common Core educational policy, despite its claims to incorporate critical analysis, is actually, in practice, driven by the ongoing penchant for bubble sheet testing. The fundamental question becomes, can Common Core be replaced with Newmann's authentic assessment form of testing? He responds, "The question is how expensive is it to develop a standard scoring system like we use, which basically relied on teachers." Newmann continues by explaining his form of assessment: "The variants of student achievement are really explained by the nature of the task itself, so if the questions on the test are really authentic, the odds are the kids will perform."

Pedagogy and Assessment

A corollary consideration in this discussion becomes the value of assessment. In speaking about authentic assessment, Newmann believes that "a large part of the value is not just in what happens in terms of better, more valid measures of student achievement, but in the professional community it builds among the teachers because the discussion and collaboration has to happen in order to create reliable scores." In reflecting on student knowledge gains, Newmann concludes, "I think the only way in looking at student gains is you have to have a pretest, you have to have a posttest, and you have to control for a variety of other factors."

Nevertheless, when it comes to assessments, the design of the authentic assessment testing is critical, in Newmann's opinion. He explains that the testing scheme could score student work in the fall and again in the spring, allowing for a look into the difference in individual student performance. Newmann admits that "there is a huge problem in the design, but you could still look at scores because you would not necessarily give the kids the same task in the fall that you gave them in the spring. Whereas with the standardized test, you likely are to give very similar items in the fall and spring." The core problem for authentic assessment is that it is both expensive and labor intensive. The latter factor relates directly to the teachers. Newmann points out, "They have to have time during the week to meet with students and score their assignments, score student work, score instruction, all that."

We briefly discuss others in the field who are continuing to study and research methods for implementing authentic assessment in the schools. Our discussion concludes that there is much work to be done in this area.

Epilogue

The dialogue with Fred Newmann, as it evolves, does not appear to be all about Dewey—who Dewey was or is for educational philosophy, nor about Dewey's role in the twenty-first century. Or is it? I assert that Newmann's dialogue is inherently imbedded with Dewey's ideas and ideals for students and teachers. It is, albeit indirectly, about the underlying principles of Dewey's *Democracy and Education*, his reflective thinking, and his democratic ideals for education.

In essence, I contend that Fred Newmann's authentic pedagogy and authentic assessment theory have Dewey written all over them. His authentic pedagogy begets critical thinking, which begets reflective thinking, which represents Dewey's aspirations for educating all children. At the same time, Newmann's authentic assessment is all about Dewey's faith in teachers and teachers' innate abilities, given the opportunity in the schools—to create a democratic classroom environment in which the students, as future community citizens, can thrive.

Author note: All quotations in the Prologue and Epilogue are from the Fred Newmann dialogue transcript.

Fred Newmann Dialogue

TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH FRED NEWMANN

Madison, WI, August 2013 (Edited)

GREGG JORGENSEN (GJ): *I would like to ask you about John Dewey even though you have told me you really do not know that much about him.*

FRED NEWMANN (FN): I still don't know anything more about him.

GJ: *Do you believe his philosophy still has a role to play in the twenty-first century?*

FN: Absolutely.

GJ: *How do you see it happening?*

FN: So much depends on what the current political culture of the schools is, and since I am retired, I have not stayed in the field. Philosophically, I am very sympathetic with Dewey; however, I do not feel competent to answer what the promise is given the current educational environment.

GJ: *Would you comment on any aspect of John Dewey's philosophy that particularly resonated with you, or on your work?*

FN: In our own work on authentic instruction, the connection of systematic academic work to issues beyond the schools is a central part of our philosophy. One of the criteria of authentic instruction on which we test and score is what we call "value beyond the school"—the other two being instruction and knowledge, discipline inquiry—the kind of intellectual inquiry that kids are doing has to have some meaning or value beyond simply showing the teacher I am doing what you are asking me to do. And that meaning could be personal meaning, could be aesthetic meaning, or could be of utilitarian value.

GJ: *From the perspective of your work on authentic pedagogy, would John Dewey's ideas and ideals be relevant in the era of No Child Left Behind and Common Core?*

FN: The phrase No Child Left Behind was originally a phrase of the Children's Defense Fund back in the eighties. That organization served the needs of low-income, disadvantaged kids with social services and family needs and those related issues. And that was appropriated by the Bush administration to sell the programs. As far as Common Core, I have not looked at the latest documents, but my sense is that it all depends what the core is. Philosophically, I am not opposed at all to a common core of national standards. They have to be the right standards; the right standards in terms of ones that would promote—in our field, social studies—critical thinking and civic participation and would not simply be a laundry list of pieces of factual content that had to be delivered on a particular schedule. I do think that one of the problems—possibly a central problem—of American education—is lack of centralization. We are such a chaotic political system—political educational system—that you cannot have equality of opportunity if you have thousands of different school boards, fifty different states, *x* number of different publishers, *x* number of university and teacher education institutions, *x* number of testing companies, *x* number of foundations, each with their own educational agenda for the kids of this country. It is a nonsensical system that is just an artifact of probably the American Revolution against centralized power. And, this country has just a totally irrational paranoia about centralized power, as far as I am concerned. If you look at other industrialized countries, you can see that you can, in fact, have a much more centralized education system and still have a democratic—a reasonably democratic—society. So, those—even the progressives, who will react against the Common Core and any national standards—I think are part of this paranoia against

centralized power. I would never support any kind of an education system that would violate the standards of inquiry and critical thinking that we are talking about, but from a philosophical point of view there is no contradiction. If the standards are appropriate, it would serve our whole nation and our kids and the teachers a lot better. I am not sure that really answers your question, because I am not that familiar with the details of the Common Core. Now, we have been involved. Our authentic pedagogy project in Iowa, is focused on teaching in general that came out of our research in the national centers that I ran. The authentic pedagogy material looks not just at practices of teaching but what the intellectual demands are that teachers make on the kids and are they asking kids to think critically, are they asking kids to show deep understanding instead of complex understanding of the subject, and are they asking kids to connect their academic understandings to some real issues beyond school—three basic ideas. And we find that at any subject at any grade level—we have good research on this—those kids who have teachers who make these kinds of intellectual demands, their kids far outperformed on both standardized tests and on authentic tests—the kids of those teachers outperformed kids of teachers who score low on these standards consistently, all grade levels, all subjects. The Iowa Core is pretty reasonable on a combination of reflective thinking and deep understanding with basic content—you have to have basic content, I am not denying that at all. I am just mentioning this to suggest there is no inherent conflict between Common Core and the kind of inquiry that we need.

GJ: *If you were to design your own Common Core in social studies, what kind of things would you be looking for?*

FN: I have not thought about it for a while. I would have to think more about the fundamental concepts of democracy and the constitution; and I would possibly have more in there about the nature of real politics in society and the dilemmas that that arise. I would have some material in there on the persisting issues of a thoughtful citizen who wants to participate. But I really have not thought carefully about that.

GJ: *Do you think your work on authentic assessment is still in play in the classrooms or has it been largely ignored in the era of accountability?*

FN: I think so, but I have been retired since 2001 so I have not kept track of what is really happening in the schools. My only contact with schools has been primarily through our work in Iowa which is professional development for authentic pedagogy; and I have not been

directly in those schools—I have been working with the coaches who have been in the schools. We did an evaluation of the program, which had a lot of case studies, and all I can say is that these teachers—and the program has worked with well over two thousand teachers and maybe three hundred schools throughout Iowa—they are able to do it! Not everybody, and there are varying degrees of success, but it did have the support of a lot of infrastructure—the State Department and many of the local educational agencies were providing coaches and supporting that work in the program. So, they were in schools and were coaching the teachers on how to create authentic pedagogy. So, it can be done, but it is a very labor-intensive in-service professional development program, and that is probably the major stumbling block for anyone who is in favor of this—the major argument against it is: "Where are we going to get the resources given the other demands to do the professional development?"

GJ: *How did the project get initiated in Iowa?*

FN: Some people in the department called me up in 2007, and we were just amazed at how much they understood this theory and how much they had read. We met with them and we were amazed at how much money they were willing to commit to this over the long haul, but the long haul only lasted about four and a half years because the new state superintendent came in and now it is going to be off the boards. But many of the school districts who have been involved are going to be doing this on their own without state support.

GJ: *Can your understanding of authentic assessment still find a home in the twenty-first century social studies classrooms from a Deweyan perspective?*

FN: Absolutely—if you find ways to do this in-service training that relies largely on teacher-collegial meetings where they examine student work, they examine their daily tasks, they look at their instruction, and they actually learn how to score their instructions, their assessments or their tasks—the daily tasks that they give kids and the student work. They learn how to score it based on our categories of authentic intellectual work. We have scoring manuals available through the project and we have done a lot of teacher coaching over the years. We know it is possible; it is just a question of making it enough of a priority to have a professional development focus. The teachers uniformly report they have never had professional development that has been this rewarding. The teachers just loved this project and so did the administrators once they learned about the program—the administrators get trained with the teachers, too. You have to bring everybody together. It takes a lot of work, a lot of resources.

GJ: *Could the type of authentic pedagogy you and your colleagues have developed replace the current educational policy form of testing in the schools?*

FN: I do not know. So much depends on the economic conditions. As I understand it, years ago, even the college boards started rating essays, and still do, I guess, so that it can cast systematically for more critical analysis, there is no doubt about that. The question is how expensive is it to really develop a standard scoring system like we use, which basically relied on teachers. We did not have any national norms or anything like that. I think the problem with the testing system is they do want to have the testing movement and they do want to have national norms. So, to be honest, I do not think our approach, even though it makes a lot of sense to do it, I think it would be very hard to get organizations to buy into this system of scoring. Given that the variants of student achievement are really explained by the nature of the task itself, so if the questions on the test are really authentic, the odds are the kids will perform. You are still going to get a lot of variation, and that variation hopefully is due to the quality of the teaching that they received. But I think it would be a very ambitious and expensive project to try and implement into a school system. Part of the value of the assessment really has to do with when you have teachers in the local schools or teams of teachers doing the scoring for their students. A large part of the value is not just in what happens in terms of better, more valid measures of student achievement, but in the professional community it builds among the teachers because the discussion and collaboration has to happen in order to create reliable scores.

GJ: *What you are doing in Iowa—if you initiate it in local areas for instance within a middle school concept, would be there be hope for authentic assessment under those circumstances?*

FN: Yes. The evaluation we experienced in Iowa suggests that it is a huge help to the schools and the teachers' morale—their sense of professional development, all of that. And that occurs not just in middle schools but high schools, too.

GJ: *Would you clarify your work with student-gained knowledge?*

FN: Well, that is already done in the value-added kinds of assessment that was started in Tennessee years ago, where they tested kids at the beginning of the year and they tested kids at the end of the year and they related the increase in achievement; they call it value-added assessment. And they broke it down in terms of which teachers

added the most value, so there's a system in place for doing that. The question is, what kind of testing are you going to do to get to measure it?

Because I have not kept up with literature, I do not know where that value-added assessment is now in terms of how wide-spread it is, and I know there has been a huge controversy because there have been proposals to enact individual teachers' value-added assessments to merit pay, and that has created all kinds of issues, of course. So, but I think the only way in looking at student gains is you have to have a pretest, you have to have a posttest, and you have to control for a variety of other factors. So, if you were to score all of the student work in the fall according to the criteria and then have other samples, and then in the spring look at the difference in the performance of the kids and that would be the change score, if you could design it well enough to do that. And there is a huge problem in the design, but you could still look at scores because you would not necessarily give the kids the same task in the fall that you gave them in the spring. Whereas with the standardized test, you likely are to give very similar items in the fall and spring. The question remains as to whether you could do that on a national scale.

GJ: *How would this affect professional development?*

FN: The question is, can our system of approach to professional development be scaled up so that you can have it all over the country or in every school? And if is too expensive; people will not do it. It is too labor intensive to require schools to implement something like this; to find the kind of external coaching that is necessary to do it, and fund all that and provide the release time for the teachers to meet during the week and go to mid-year institutes and all the components that are focused on this particular initiative. Now, I do think that if somehow, somebody became convinced that this was really worthwhile and they decided, "Okay, we're putting all our professional development money that's available in the district into the authentic intellectual work program"—then you could do it. But there are all these competing demands for what kinds of professional development that teachers have. And I am hoping that in the future we will be able to have more accurate estimates of how costly it really is. You could see just from the structure of the program where teachers attend the two-day institute for their initial training, and they have coaches visit their school three times a year to work with them—whether the school's working on assessment tasks, or instruction, or scoring student work, or whatever it is—and they

have to have time during the week to meet with students and score their assignments, score student work, score instruction, all that. So, you can see that in many schools, there are just too many competing demands for teachers' time to allow this depth of focus on one thing.

GJ: *Dewey spoke of issues and problems of vital interest to society. Would you explain your ideas about the dilemma of modern politics and how that might be discussed in the classroom?*

FN: I would not know what to do as a social studies teacher today because since we did our work on public controversy and social action, the nature of politics in this country has changed in two fundamental ways. First of all, you have one political party who for over 30 years has developed an agenda to make sure that there is only one goal for that party, which is to attain power and keep power by defeating whoever else is in power. And that was not true when we thought about politics years ago. And the second thing is that the influence of money, especially reinforced by the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision, is so persuasive that we do not have a system of democracy, we have an extortion system. A recent book by John Nichols calls it *Dollarocracy*, where if you as a candidate are considering a vote for something that is opposed to the economic purpose of any major corporation, you can ensure that you will have one of these groups target you for defeat in the next election. And they will pour—they can pour millions of dollars, undisclosed—Congress will not pass even a disclosure rule much less limits on it—undisclosed to defeat you. So, you are held hostage by the economics of politics, and that was not true when I was working on the citizen participation and public interest curriculum. But since the 1970s, it has become increasingly more true and then finally in 2010 the *Citizens United* decision, that really escalated it all. And the polarization caused primarily by the Republican Party combined with the money makes it difficult to argue that we have anything like the kind of democracy we thought was in place—a system of consent of the governed and the governed would make their decisions based on rational analysis and evidence of what they would read in the media and so on. Now even the media itself fails to provide the kind of information that an educated citizen would want.

GJ: *Thank you.*

FN: My pleasure. Thank you.

CHAPTER 13

Footprints from Chicago to New York City: David Hansen

Prologue

Scholar Introduction

David Hansen is a twenty-first-century educational philosopher. As such, it may not be mere coincidence that his educational career milestones trace the footsteps of John Dewey. Hansen started his journey by earning his bachelor of arts degree in the history of ideas at the University of Chicago and then detoured to Stanford University for a master of arts in political economy, only to migrate back to the University of Chicago for his Ph.D. in education. He remained in Chicago to teach at the University of Illinois, Chicago. But in 2001, Hansen accepted an appointment to Teachers College, Columbia University, as John Dewey had done many, many decades earlier. He currently serves as the John L. and Sue Ann Weinberg Professor in Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Education and as director of the Program in Philosophy and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Drawing on Dewey's educational thinking, as well as on the thinking of Plato and others, Hansen has concentrated on educational philosophy, teacher education, and teaching practices encompassing critical thinking and inquiry. He served as president of the John Dewey Society and as president of the Philosophy of Education Society. Hansen's publications include *John Dewey and Our Educational Prospect: A Critical*

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Engagement with Dewey's Democracy and Education and *Exploring the Moral Heart of Teaching: Toward a Teacher's Creed*.

David Hansen suggested that we meet in his office at Teachers College, Columbia University. So, on a Monday evening in early December 2014, I walked from the subway stop to the main entrance of Teachers College and stepped into the darkened hallways once walked by John Dewey himself. There a bronze of John Dewey reminds one of the deep philosophical roots he planted at the college. I wondered if the students studying and conversing in meeting areas ever felt the influence of Dewey's past presence and his critical thinking—I am sure they must. Then I reached David's office, and after greetings, we settled into begin our dialogue about John Dewey.

Dialogue Overview

In several of my interviews for this book, scholars shared conversationally their personal stories of discovering Dewey—and often about their first Dewey reading that was a source of understanding and made sense of the process of education, opening their eyes to the world of possibility. David Hansen, coming from a different direction, shares that he is curious to have the following questions answered by his colleagues: How did they view Dewey at first reading? What is their favorite Dewey writing? And, more to the point, he would ask colleagues whether they drifted away from Dewey during their careers. If so, did they return, and why? Without a doubt, Hansen himself has not strayed too far from Dewey—then or now.

Walk the Talk

Hansen regards Dewey as a profoundly respected scholar—a believer in the tenets of an ethical, moral life. He considers Dewey's philosophy of life and education as dynamic. In fact, in terms of Dewey's care and concern for students as well as the respect he gave to teaching and learning, as exemplified by the manner in which he conducted his own life, Hansen views Dewey as legendary. In short, Hansen sees Dewey as a "bona fide really good guy, very good human being, and someone who seems to have walked the talk that he had in his books and his articles and his lectures."

Dewey and Experience

In many different contexts, Hansen appreciates that Dewey spoke and wrote about experience; that is, Dewey viewed multiple considerations of experience as meaningful to students and future citizens. Hansen speaks

about human experience as Dewey's basis for the continuity of community life, of the human race, and about how Dewey made his ideas and ideals relevant not just for his own time but for posterity. This prompted Hansen to state, "I think he wrote as much for the future as for the present—for his present, which would have been the first half of the twentieth century."

Social Efficiency Movement

During the early twentieth century, Dewey became embroiled in the social efficiency movement driven by the industrialists of his era. But Dewey did not regard the need for social efficiency as purely scientific management, according to Hansen. Instead, Hansen points out that Dewey approached social efficiency as moral substance. From Hansen's viewpoint, Dewey "does a nice job of moralizing the concept of social efficiency, not in a moralistic sense but showing us that we have to make sure we characterize the concept and bring it up to life in overtly ethical ways, in very conscience ways." This alternate view of the concept of social efficiency as service to others as well as encompassing aspects of social control is often lost in modern discussions involving Dewey's use of that term and helps in situating Dewey in the context of the era.

At that same time, Dewey's dilemma also involved a historical question and controversy about what was termed *vocational education*. Dewey publicly debated his position on vocational education as equal education for all. Regarding this controversy, Hansen states, "There's so many great, powerful, consequential tensions in American educational history, and this is one of them." Dewey's disdain for the factory model of schooling, which deemed teachers as essentially technicians presenting training techniques—not educating to prepare future citizens—was grounded in his long-standing faith in teachers. Hansen expresses it as respect for teachers.

Reflective Thinking Teaching

As a matter of fact, paraphrasing Dewey, Hansen would advise teachers that they might be surprised to learn "you are where we [as teachers] should be, beginning our educational theorizing. What you are trying to do to your students, what you together are trying to accomplish, that's what we need to have as the springboard in our dialogue, in our inquiry." In other words, Hansen believes that teachers are following Deweyan ideas and ideals each day in the classroom, without realizing it.

As an educator, Hansen observes that he has watched and listened to classroom teachers using reflective thinking ideas and processes articulated by Dewey with their students. In short, he believes reflective

thinking as defined by Dewey remains viable in teaching and learning. He also believes that through collaboration, teachers can renew and regenerate reflective thinking practices in the classroom. Because of the variety of ways Dewey has influenced classroom conduct as well as the way in which teachers make sense of their own lives and work, Hansen succinctly states, "I think Dewey still speaks to teachers."

A Voice for Social Justice

On the issue of social justice, Hansen reflects on his own days as a doctoral student and a beginning teacher. He discusses debating curriculum—more specifically, democratic education, pluralist education, and multicultural education. And in these debates, he states, "I drew myself upon Dewey." He observes that Dewey "saw injustice everywhere; I think that really afflicted him." And Hansen says that Dewey "still does have very valuable things to say to all of us who might have concerns about a just social order and how education can contribute to bringing about a just social order, social and economic order." He strongly believes that Dewey recognized the need for a chorus of diversified voices on social justice. Indeed, the long-debated question "what knowledge is of most worth?" alone underscores Hansen's appreciation of both Dewey's belief in democracy and his approach toward addressing issues and problems that are of vital interest to society. For instance, how are the voices of those silenced to be heard in the classroom? How are the voices of the underrepresented to be given access in discussions that are now privileged in the schools? How can the experiences of those marginalized for a host of gender-related as well as social, cultural, political, economic, and linguistic reasons be given access in the curriculum and their contributions be made worthy of discussion? As a solution, it appears that Hansen would encourage teachers to turn to Dewey.

The Language of Education

As with several of the other scholars in this book, Hansen looks to *Experience and Education* as significant and clarifying to his understanding of Dewey's philosophy. Perhaps an interesting corollary is Dewey's *Art as Experience*. According to Hansen, art and poetry are integral to Dewey's ideas and hope for the world. Hansen expresses in very Deweyan fashion that art, poetry, and literature are vital to living, to forming humanity. According to Hansen, these "provide the natural language of education, the natural language of educating."

Hansen's challenging question for Dewey, if he had the opportunity to ask, would be, "how can we bring a better balance into education, including humanities, social sciences?" Based on Hansen's challenge query, my question to all of us today is, how can we make this happen to Dewey's satisfaction and to the benefit of our democratic society?

Epilogue

Reviewing my conversation with David Hansen causes me to reflect on his positive outlook for an enduring John Dewey in education. Throughout our dialogue, Hansen returns to his thoughts about teachers today. It is clear that Hansen respects teachers and believes that they are implementing Dewey's reflective thinking practices in their classrooms. At one point, he states, "When teachers can talk systematically about their practice, they can rejuvenate each other and renew each other."

Hansen is firm in his belief that the past presence of Dewey in education and in the hallways of his university transcends into this twenty-first century. He believes Dewey's footprints made an indelible mark on teaching and learning. The challenge is keeping Dewey firmly in the present. Hansen wonders how educators will keep Dewey at the forefront. Hansen's answer is, "It's definitely on the ground, it's definitely bottom up, and I stay hopeful."

And so it is up to teachers. It is up to us to ensure Dewey a prominent role in twenty-first-century education. After all, David Hansen, like Dewey, embraces faith in teachers.

Author note: All quotations in the Prologue and Epilogue are from the David Hansen dialogue transcript.

David Hansen Dialogue

TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH DAVID HANSEN

New York, NY, December 2014 (Edited)

GREGG JORGENSEN (GJ): *I'm going to be addressing readers who may have a passing acquaintance with John Dewey or not know him at all, and what would you say about Dewey himself?*

DAVID HANSEN (DH): Dewey the person? Is that—oh, wow. Well, I would say his life is very interesting. I mean, he—one of the things that's amazing about Dewey is that he writes all this very powerful philosophical work, especially on education, so he's a great scholar for many, many good reasons, profoundly respected by scholars who take the time to study him. What's so interesting about him though is that he was—he seems to have been a bona fide really good guy, very good human being, and someone who seems to have walked the talk that he had in his books and his articles and his lectures, especially thinking of all the things he says about the nature of the moral life, how impregnated our lives are with the moral, and he himself seems to have led that kind of richly ethical and moral life where he sought to cultivate himself as a human being—not just "I write a lot of books" but cultivate himself as a human being and to educate himself continuously in his life as a human being, and also to be of service to other human beings; again, not just a writer of books but caring about the kinds of people who might read his books. So he's pretty legendary in terms of his many conversations with students, colleagues—so many people expressing their debt to him, how indebted they are to him for his advice, his concern, his care. You look at a biography like Jay Martin's and others, you'd see not only that he was a good person but he had a complicated life and people often—some commentators or critics often say, "Well, Dewey has no sense of the tragic"—you may have heard that, Gregg, in various texts—well, Dewey's own life really belies that. He lost members of his family, several children, but he lost many friends, he lost—I mean, he lived so long that he was witness to many deaths of many people he cared for. He saw injustice everywhere; I think that really afflicted him. I think he often felt afflicted—that old, biblical term. So those are some of the things I would want to say to people who may not have read much of Dewey or wonder about who he is, what he's about. That he's a person who led an extraordinarily rich life, and that rich life spills onto his pages, the pages of his books.

GJ: *Thank you. Do you believe that John Dewey's philosophy still has a role to play in the twenty-first century and if so, how do you see it happening?*

DH: That's another big question. I certainly do think it has a role to play in our time. I think it will always have a role to play so long as human beings care about things that we call justice, equity, freedom, creativity, meaningful lives. As long as human beings care about those things, then I think Dewey's writing, his philosophy will always be permanent, because I see it as an unusually dynamic philosophy of life and of education. It's unusually dynamic, it's—again, he really tried to think— I think he wrote as much for the future as for the present—for his present, which would have been the first half of the twentieth century. I think he really did see history as a—he

saw it as a continuous course of human experience. I think he saw all of it as one; it's all linked together in some way. And the very famous words on his gravestone in Vermont about tradition, inheritances, and passing things on to the next generation. I think just as his concept of growth is about the continuity of a human being's life or growth is the continuity of a community's life, I think he had a vision of the continuity of the human species, the human race. And because he writes in that spirit and there's that kind of ethos in his writing, I think human beings will always find his thinking interesting and pertinent. Certainly not complete; people will always look at other philosophers and other thinkers, and certainly Dewey would strongly encourage that because our thinking is always changing in light of circumstances, needs, hopes. Nonetheless, while future generations do read themselves and their own people that they create, spokespersons and thinkers, I think he's got a long life ahead of him, his writing. Now, there's another part of your question, Gregg?

GJ: *Does his philosophy still have a role to play in the twenty-first century and if so, how do you see it happening?*

DH: The second part was how do you see it happening. My first answer was I think in not just the twenty-first century but beyond. It's hard to imagine too far ahead, but I would say beyond. How do you see it happening? That's a difficult one because—as you mentioned before we started our conversation—Dewey's *Democracy and Education* is not taught as often as it used to be in schools of education, colleges of education. As you know, colleges of education have seen change over the last generation or so, as we've seen in the university system as a whole, of a diminishment of humanities, a diminishment of normative thinking, normative inquiry, normative questioning; many more engineering mentalities, technocratic mentalities, instrumental mentalities—not Dewey's notion of instrumentalism, just instrumental, that nothing is valuable in and of itself, just a means to more accumulation. So, the circumstances are very difficult for bringing to life ideas and arguments such as those of Dewey; it's hard to bring any philosopher's ideas alive today. But, nonetheless, I think life on the ground teaches us something and your project itself—I can think of many other people, colleagues, very interested in Dewey's work and writing on Dewey's work and lecturing on it, teaching on it—John Dewey Society, the Center at Carbondale, John Dewey societies elsewhere in the world—you know, we have a lot of students in our program that are quite interested in Dewey; they have or will write on his work. And our graduates are using Dewey in their teacher

education classes, curriculum classes, and their school administrator preparation classes. So how do you do it? How do you keep it going? It's definitely on the ground, it's definitely bottom up, and I stay hopeful. Education in this country as we all know has been a history of fads and fashions and ups and downs, radical swings and policy—so the current, what people call neoliberal dispensation, I don't know how permanent that is. I certainly hope it isn't, otherwise, it's not just Dewey that we're going to lose.

GJ: *True enough. Thank you. Do you think Dewey was underrated in any way in the twentieth century?*

DH: Oh, was Dewey underrated … that's interesting … well, I think sort of a familiar story is how in philosophy he certainly was not just underrated but completely neglected for several decades when analytic philosophy ruled the roost in the discipline of philosophy. So not just underrated but just, ignored. That is changed the last several decades, which is one of the reasons that I feel hopeful that work on Dewey will continue. In another sense of underrated, no, I don't—if anything—I don't think it's been overrated, I wouldn't say that. It's certainly been misunderstood quite a bit. That's another familiar tale about especially those of us in Dewey studies. Very, very misunderstood, and of course, he got very frustrated with that himself and writes *Experience and Education* as a direct response to his frustrations. No, I don't think it's been underrated. I think in the early decades of the twentieth century—in the twenties and thirties—he really was a public intellectual and he was widely read. All of his articles in the New Republic, and his op-eds, and letters, and speeches and the thirty-seven volumes are filled with lectures and talks and public-oriented expressions of his thought, of his concern. So he was really esteemed in a very bona fide way and I think teachers today who have an opportunity to read him in a careful way, who are supported in an opportunity to read him in a careful way either through their own auspices or through people from the university supporting that process, I think teachers today as in the last hundred years—I think Dewey still speaks to teachers. He, I think—this is part of my answer to your first question about the kind of person he was—I think he was immensely respectful of teachers. His respect for teachers is a kind of model that is severely lacking in educational policy today, where as we all know there's a massive societal disrespect right now for teachers, which starts at the top—Arne Duncan and Barack Obama, our president whom I admire in many ways—it goes down from there. These people don't

talk intelligently about teachers and teaching. I don't know why they don't, especially someone like Obama who's a beautifully educated man and I think his vision would certainly be one of respect of teachers, but his policies and Duncan's policies and discourse—it's a real impoverished language and sorely in need of the kind of public intellectual voice that Dewey had in his time. He really respected teachers. And so I think he speaks to teachers still; I don't think he's ever been underrated by those in education who matter most, and that's the people on the ground.

GJ: *Thank you. If only more on the ground knew of him! I think that's a real issue. I think so many—even grad students might read a chapter or two here and there but your practicing teachers in their education classes …*

DH: It's so difficult. Like we were saying earlier with the standardization movement and accountability, and teacher education programs are just stocked with these requirements of three hours of this and two credits of that and one credit of this. It's all part of the current engineering machinery. It's not—there's no interest in preparing educators, there's an interest in getting a whole bunch of cheap functionaries, unfortunately.

GJ: *Right. In reality, do you believe that Dewey ever influenced the American curriculum?*

DH: Well … I feel like deferring to you on that, Gregg, because you have written very well about that in the context of social studies, and I would want to defer to Herb Kliebard and Mike Apple and other colleagues who've written cogently about Dewey in the curriculum. I do think from reading the work of your good self and others, I think he has had an effect. How comprehensive that has been, or long-lasting it's been, or how rooted his effect has been—these seem to be matters of continual debate and conjecture and analysis. But it's—I think it's—I definitely think it's had an effect on curriculum, just as I think it's had an effect on pedagogy. I think it's had an effect on the organization of schools; certainly it did in the first half of the twentieth century. I think it still does today, maybe more indirectly than directly. I can think of a number of schools where there are administrators and/or teachers who do know Dewey quite well and are consciously working in that spirit. But it's certainly not the case that the imprint is perhaps as visible today as it may have been in earlier decades of the twentieth century, or the first half of the twentieth century, roughly. So again, that's a very—just a general response.

GJ: *How did Dewey deal with the concept of social efficiency?*

DH: Well, I think in—for example—*Democracy and Education*, he deals with the concept very, very well. I think he shows that social efficiency is a very, very important concept; it's a very important set of words. I mean, we do want efficiency. We have a lot of very good and important things to do as a people and as a society. There are many, many important things to always be doing; not just maintenance, which is a tremendous labor in itself, but improvement and progression, to use his words. There's always so much to do that efficiency is a critical criterion of our work, of our ways of working, and the things that we do. And I think he's right about that; I mean, I think that's a truth. I think social efficiency is—putting the two words together is very important. Each of us needs to do our part; each of us needs to try to play our role, whatever it may be, in contributing to the whole efficiently and in a social spirit, with concern for the whole. I like what he does with it because he—you might say he moralizes it. Just as he talks about the need to psychologize ideas—the logical, those things from the logical and the psychological—he does a nice job of moralizing the concept social efficiency, not in a moralistic sense but showing us that we have to make sure we characterize that concept and bring it to life in overtly ethical ways, in very conscious ways. I think one of the penultimate expressions in *Democracy and Education* is where he talks about social efficiency as fundamentally the cultivation of sympathy, of intelligent sympathy for, as he puts it, all that unites human beings—all that they have in common and a—how does he put it—a rebellion against what unnecessarily divides them, with an accent on what is unnecessarily dividing them, since there's always subdivisions. So I think there and elsewhere he gives a really nice sort of moral accent or substance, a moral substance, to the concept social efficiency. He makes it something that we can inhabit.

GJ: *Why do you think social efficiency got—I would call it co-opted—into the scientific management, factory model, when I believe like you do that he really started off with that idea. How did all that—that term even, social efficiency—turn out to be …?*

DH: What a big historical question, and all the histories of curriculum and school structure and pedagogy comes into play. I think of Larry Cuban's *How Teachers Taught* and how versions of social efficiency really became mechanistic and really weighed down on teachers. And the factory model of the school and the teachers as laborers with no vestment in the work, no sense of meaningful meaning of the work—or not allowed to realize the meaning of the

work—no say in the structure of the work. That a Frederick Taylor type model, emblematic as it is of the core of capitalism—that's a pretty powerful force and that force took hold of a mechanistic version of social efficiency and we see the consequences today. That's been—there's so many great, powerful, consequential tensions in American educational history, and this is one of them. The question you've raised is whose definition of social efficiency is going to rule the day? And Dewey's version is not ruling the day today. Social efficiency is now basically an economic concept, not an educational concept or a civic concept.

GJ: *Do you think Dewey's approach to reflective thinking can be implemented in today's curriculum and if so, what would have to happen?*

DH: I think it can be, Gregg, because if you think of the Common Core, it's the general structure of aims and purposes and goals as they're laid out. Here in New York State and New York City, they don't determine the curriculum. They are goals and aims that teachers need to realize, need to bring to bear in their work, but teachers have considerable leeway—at least in many cases in the public system—to create curriculum, to have substantive input into some of the texts that are used, some of the meanings that are used, some of the activities that are used; a lot of the pedagogy, teachers still have some control over. And so reflective thinking, as Dewey conceives it, can still be realized in classrooms. Teachers do need to be more artful today, which is one of the real tensions because, as we were talking earlier, the teacher education requirements now are so extensive—it's a squeezing out of reflective time in teacher education itself—so there's great tensions here. And, what I was saying earlier about the stranglehold of a narrow version of social efficiency, the ways teachers are assessed today is still very problematic with the testing playing its role and this sort of—sometimes narrow rubrics rather than a real experiential kind of assessment, formative assessment. It's hard for teachers, and we shouldn't downplay that today. But still, there is—there are I think meaningful substantial degrees of freedom and they're there for a teacher to seize hold of. I've witnessed it personally. The last couple of years I was in a project working with sixteen public school teachers here in New York City from eight different public schools, and—they're under the public school structure and requirements and systems and the like—and to a person, I can say that I have definitely witnessed reflective thinking in their classrooms … significantly, because that's what they engaged in themselves; they were reflective thinkers themselves and they have a sense of what

that means, even if they have not studied Dewey. So again it's on the ground; I think things can happen. But one of the outcomes of that project was how important it is for teachers to be talking today amongst themselves, and that's another—it's very hard to have that time. But when teachers can talk systematically about their practice, they really can rejuvenate each other and renew each other and give each other great, great insight into the degrees of freedom they still enjoy despite the constraints of the current structure. I think there are people at the state level—state levels, district level, superintendent level, district level—I mean, there are really good-hearted men and women all over the country who really believe in education, and they would believe in what we would—à la Dewey would call reflective thinking—and they would support that. And I think they're trying to do things, given the sort of national pressure, the federal pressure—I think they're trying to do things that make that possible for the teachers in their districts or regions or states, not just at the school level. School level's where it happens and classrooms are where it happens, so that people on the ground there are of course the most crucial players in the game, but from what I've seen, it's not a uniformly kind of educational wasteland, to use a stark term. It's not a uniform wasteland. Uniformly challenging, it seems, and challenging in degrees it hasn't always been and with intensities that have not always been there. Challenges are, we might say, distinctively challenging compared to earlier kinds of pressures. But there remain grounds for hope.

GJ: *Could you address what roles Dewey's ideas and ideals might have had in the social justice context?*

DH: That's a good question. I think in a broad sense, maybe beginning roughly in the 1980s, taking off in a big way in 1990s with the emergence of multicultural education and the so-called culture wars and canon wars and the like. And in the very, very messy and initially very tumultuous process—I think it was a very difficult, challenging process for many faculty in the eighties and nineties. I think Dewey's voice was drawn upon in a whole variety of ways. There were sort of extreme ends of some voices saying "We don't need to be reading anything before 1985 or 1990, and we especially do not need to be reading anyone except ourselves." That was one extreme. The other extreme may be those who say, "Well, Dewey's got everything. He's said it already about social justice, so what are you guys talking about?" The problem is, of course, Dewey did not say everything there is to say about social justice. I think perhaps in a way he anticipated what we saw emerge in the 1980s and

1990s. I do not think it would've been a surprise to him, and I think in a way he would have taken great delight in it. I mean, that is responsiveness to our times: the needs, the concerns, the injustices, the aspirations, the ideals of our times. So I don't think he himself would have had any fundamental quarrel with the reality of the debate. I think he would have strongly objected to both those extremes I mentioned. I think he would reject the idea that he had the last word on social justice, or indeed the last word on anything. But I do think, when I think of being a doctoral student back then and an assistant professor—I myself participated in those debates about the curriculum and multicultural education and pluralist education, democratic education, and I drew myself on Dewey. I do think he did at that time and still does have very valuable things to say to all of us who might have concerns about a just social order and how education can contribute to bringing about a just social order, social and economic order. His criticisms of capitalism and what we today call neoliberalism are really powerful and very poetic and evocative and still very, very germane. But, again, as I was saying, I think he would be the first to say that he has contributions to make to social justice today, but we need a big chorus of voices. And I think he would be thrilled to see the tremendous diversity of voices across the country in schools of education and in other academic domains. We have tried to link up social inquiry with genuine societal needs and hopes and ideas.

GJ: *What can teachers still learn from Dewey that might surprise them?*

DH: What might surprise them? Well, it might surprise teachers to come upon a philosopher of education who believes that all inquiry into education, including philosophical inquiry, should start with what teachers themselves are doing and are trying to do. I think some teachers would be surprised by reading someone who would say to them, "You are where we should be beginning our educational theorizing. What you are trying to do to with your students, what you together are trying to accomplish, that's what we need to have as the springboard in our dialogue, in our inquiry." And given the kind of zeitgeist today, with the lack of respect for teachers at times manipulating and controlling their worlds, I think some would be not only surprised but possibly amazed to see a leading educational thinker saying, "Let's start on the ground rather than in the conceptions of some group of politicians, policymakers, or professors."

GJ: *How would you summarize the legacy of John Dewey?*

DH: I cannot summarize the legacy of John Dewey because it's—he's still on the move. As I mentioned in one of my earlier responses, I think his thought is still very timely, I think his thought is still very contemporary; I don't think legacy is the right word. That connotes too much of, "well, it was back then; it's kind of over" and now we're in the spirit of maybe quasi-nostalgia or whatever, so, what is the legacy? I never think of Dewey's legacy. I think of Dewey as a contemporary. What is a contemporary? Or who is a contemporary? It's a person in whose voice you recognize something of yourself. It's a person in whose voice you hear or feel a provocation into thinking. It's a person in whose voice you see a deep concern, a concern that matters, for things that matter. And that means although Dewey died in 1952, his thought is contemporary. He's right here in the room right now. And I would say Plato is, too. I would say Aristotle is; I would say Kant is; I would say Michel du Montaigne is; Hannah Arendt is. These are contemporaries; their thought is not dead, it's vibrant.

GJ: *What would you like to know about Dewey if you were to ask other Dewey scholars? What would you still like to know?*

DH: If you and I had other colleagues here in the room right now, if all the people that you're talking to, if we were all together, I would like to ask each of them—I'd love to ask each of them when they first read Dewey; what their first reaction was to Dewey; how their response to Dewey has evolved over their career; in what ways has he been helpful over their career; in what ways did they move elsewhere and why did they move elsewhere; and if they moved elsewhere, have they come back to Dewey? Has he spoken again to them in certain projects or inquiries, and if so, why? I would love to know from all the colleagues you mentioned earlier that you're talking with, I would love to know what their favorite Dewey text is, which may not be an easy question to answer for any of them—I'm not sure it'd be easy for me to answer. But if each of us was really forced in a game-like way, playful way, to say you've got to choose one, I would really be interested to know what each of our colleagues—which text each of our colleagues would choose. And maybe, maybe I won't even ask them to explain why. Maybe I would ask them to draw a picture of why. Or maybe I would ask them to write a poem about why did you choose that text. Or maybe get up and do a pantomime to describe why did you choose that text. Or maybe, just say what is the feeling that that text evokes. I think I would want to hear all of that before I ask them to give an account, explain why they chose that text.

GJ: *If you were to be at a dinner party and had Dewey there, what would you ask Dewey and what would you tell Dewey about yourself?*

DH: I would have to ask him, "When you look at the world, 2014, do you have hope?" I'd like to ask him that. I'd like to contemplate his answer. What would I tell him about myself? I would tell him I like the fact he likes art and poetry, and sees them as integral—or came to see them as integral—to his philosophy of life and the philosophy of education. I'd like to share that personal fact with him because I think art and poetry, fiction literature, are so central to helping us make sense of ourselves and imagine the selves we could become and the kind of communities we could bring into being. And I would—I guess I would ask him a question based on that personal sharing with him, if I can sneak in one more question.

GJ: *Of course.*

DH: He was a kind enough man that I'm sure he would let me ask another question. I would ask him, "What is your advice, Professor Dewey, on how to balance the arts and humanities so that the work of educational research, and the work of teacher education, is rooted firmly and fully in the humanities—and the arts; the arts and humanities—and that's not to downplay the social sciences, but it is to downplay the priority of the social sciences. They are too dominant and it's too one-sided, the research, zeitgeist. And I think the humanities—the arts and humanities—are the natural, provide the natural language of education, the natural language of educating. It's the natural language of every single teacher that I can think—I think I ever met. Every school teacher, I think, that I've ever met, including science teachers who of course are great believers in science, but the bottom line is, they're teaching young people—children and adolescents—and they want to make a difference in their lives. And the ways they teach—I have seen science teachers at work—it's humanism in action. They would be surprised at this description—speaking of your earlier question about what would teachers be surprised by. That is the question I'd like to ask Dewey: How can we bring a better balance into education, including between the humanities and social sciences?

GJ: *Thank you very much.*

CHAPTER 14

A Teacher's Teacher for the Twenty-First Century: Christine Sleeter

Prologue

Scholar Introduction

Christine Sleeter is Professor Emerita in the College of Professional Studies at California State University, Monterey Bay. She moved to California as a founding faculty member at Monterey Bay. Sleeter completed her doctorate at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. She has also taught as a visiting professor and lecturer at several universities, including Auckland University in New Zealand, the University of Colorado–Boulder, the University of Washington–Seattle, and the Universidad Nacional de Education a Distancia in Madrid, Spain.

An extensive list of books, edited books, and articles in edited books and journals focus on Sleeter's research in teacher education, racism, racial and ethnic diversity, and intersections among race, gender, class, and disability in education. Sleeter's recent book publications include *Power, Teaching, and Teacher Education: Confronting Injustice with Critical Research and Action*; *Professional Development for Culturally Responsive and Relationship-Based Pedagogy*; and *Multicultural Education as Social Activism*. She is past vice president of Division K—Teaching and Teacher Education—of the American Educational Research Association, past president of the National Association for Multicultural Education, and a Fellow of the American Educational Research Association. Awards for Sleeter's work include the American Educational Research

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Association Social Justice Award, the American Educational Research Association Division K Legacy Award, the Chapman University Paulo Freire Education Project Social Justice Award, and the Charles DeGarmo Lecturer Award from the Society of Professors of Education.

Christine Sleeter's answer to my request for an interview resulted in making arrangements to meet at her home in the Monterey Bay area. On a morning in May 2016, we sat at the dining room table to discuss her views on John Dewey, educational philosopher.

Dialogue Overview

Instead of describing John Dewey for this book audience—indeed, for all people who may have an interest in Dewey—Christine Sleeter simply states, "Read Dewey. Because at least you will understand better what the problem is"—whether it is society's problem or one that you may be experiencing in your community. This is the manner in which Sleeter herself discovered Dewey as a student in one of Michael Apple's courses at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. There she read Dewey's *Experience and Education*. And, like others, she found the reading difficult at first. But gradually, Dewey's words began to illuminate ideas she had been formulating for several years. In her view, Dewey actualized a teaching framework that clarified to Sleeter "that is what I was trying to do; now I understand why this is not working and why that would work better." Thus, Sleeter did not encounter Dewey's philosophy until she became a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin. Then she continued to increase her understanding of Dewey as a teacher of classes in higher education.

An Educational Space for Democracy

Sleeter believes Dewey continues to play a major role in how we can make democracy work today. Indeed, Sleeter emphasizes that Dewey's philosophy reinforces school as the primary place to prepare students for democracy. Furthermore, she appears to have faith in Dewey's view that schools are the ideal place to bring in a diverse population with many different backgrounds. Sleeter shares that Dewey wrote repeatedly, in essence, about "putting together and helping them [students] to learn how to work through social problems together." In her view, this is Dewey's method of developing space, or, more appropriately, creating a place, to link reflective thinking with social processes. She declares that

"these are [Dewey's] principles that I have worked with. It really does matter."

I asked Sleeter whether Dewey was underrated as a philosophical educator. In her view, it depends on which decades are under discussion—that is, "it kind of tends to rise and fall." However, Sleeter does believe that Dewey continues to be part of the discussion on educational theory due to his philosophy of valuing what each student brings into the community classroom and his faith in teachers. And then, according to Sleeter, he couples this philosophy with his ideas about "schooling for democracy."

With this particular reflection in mind, I inquire, does Dewey play a part in ideas of social justice today? Sleeter's observation is that it depends on who has actually read Dewey. Given that today's social justice movement is akin to today's ethnic studies movement in many ways, Sleeter believes that Dewey's "work is very powerful" and does have bearing in relation to social justice. However, she points out that "but in social justice work right now, there are a lot of different authors and activists whose work you can draw on, and unless they have worked with Dewey, you may not find your way there."

A Solution for Teachers

Despite her positive views about John Dewey, Sleeter actually does not see Dewey playing a role in schools in the twenty-first century. She places the blame predominantly on the time currently spent on testing and test scores; and she laments that with the current focus on accountability, there are schools eliminating, for instance, social studies from the curriculum. In this regard, Sleeter shares thoughts from university colleagues, saying that students "are coming into the university are coming in with less historical knowledge than they did 15 years ago, [with] less capability of critical thinking than they did 15 years ago, and you can trace that back to the 'put everybody in a box' teaching that has been going on for the past 20 years." In addition, Sleeter clearly states that the current issues in education cannot be solved by changing to charter schools as an alternative. Nevertheless, she remains optimistic about a direct solution for public school teaching and learning. Her advice is a straightforward recommendation for today's educators to read Dewey's writings, which offer a teacher's solution to understanding the backdrop of students not doing well under "testing and test scores."

Educators have documented the ongoing, ever-changing face of the American curriculum. Sleeter bluntly observes that "the American

curriculum is never completely solved." In reality, this is a fair critique, because subjects and ideas to be considered in the American curriculum are consistently under debate and even argument. As to Dewey's relevance within our current twenty-first-century culture, she poses the question, "Dewey being a white male—to what extent will his ideas between the purposes of curriculum and the relationship between curriculum and democracy be picked up and used?" At the same time, given Sleeter's current focus on ethnic studies, she is preparing to exert personal effort to investigate how Dewey might become integrated into ethnic studies.

Reflective Thinking Concept in the Classroom

Related to her ethnic studies endeavors as well as to the evolving curriculum under the latest education reform, or reformatting, Sleeter firmly believes that Dewey's theory of reflective thinking is not going to be integrated into today's teaching if the curriculum is scripted. However, she is more optimistic about using Dewey's reflective thinking concept if one adopts a positive view of its possibilities within the implementation of Common Core in the schools. Sleeter discloses, "It has been teachers who have actually pointed out to me that you can look at the Common Core standards and see space for critical thinking and reflective thinking." Furthermore, "if you take that space and then connect it with Dewey's ideas about reflective thinking and about active engagement in the learning process, then I think, yes, that does become a space where Dewey would have actually a lot to say that would be currently relevant."

During her comments on critical thinking in the curriculum, Sleeter indirectly reverts to Dewey's ideas about what we term today as social justice issues and expands her thoughts. In her opinion, Dewey connects his reflective thinking theory with social development. That is, in her words, his theory "is not just reflection as an individual but reflection in relationship to the other people who are around you." She emphasizes that "his social consciousness about how reflection and learning connect with democracy is what I find really compelling."

Dewey Speaks to Teachers

When I ask Christine Sleeter what teachers today can learn about Dewey that might surprise them, she immediately turns to Dewey's *Experience and Education* for a reference point. She chooses to share that "actually it's my second copy I had because my first copy that I had written all over got lost," and she continues, "I picked it up and looked at it

where he was critiquing the traditional schooling … he is talking about exactly what you see when you go out into the schools today." Sleeter firmly believes that Dewey speaks to teachers—especially in *Experience and Education*. However, with the book's 1939 publication time frame, which teachers would regard as almost a hundred years old, she believes they would most likely ask "why would I want to read this?" Sleeter's direct response to teachers is, "Well, because it is kind of like looking into a mirror of your own reality." In Sleeter's view, "in many ways things have not changed, so, in reality, Dewey is really speaking to teachers now as much as he was back in the 1930s." With the extent of her knowledge base about Dewey and his writings, she readily acknowledges that he became a prominent voice in education, particularly with respect to democracy. In turn, she is most interested in knowing the roots of his thinking and ideas about democracy and education—"where did that come from in his own upbringing and his own experience?"

If Sleeter had the opportunity, she would definitely ask Dewey about his views regarding today's ethnic studies. She would ask how "he would interface his work with it." She believes that today's issues have much in common with issues during Dewey's era, although the societal composition and politics differ. For Sleeter, engaging in a conversation concerning ethnic studies with Dewey would become a two-way exchange where both parties could inform each other.

Trust the Learner

With succinct clarity, Sleeter's view of Dewey's legacy is that he believed in students; that is, he trusted learners. Sleeter interprets Dewey as "if you build learning experiences that are actually going to prompt education, then you have to trust the learner with that." In looking at today's educational environment as a comparison, Sleeter finds invigorating "his idea with trusting people, and he really did believe in democracy, and that democracy can work if people are prepared for it."

Following through on this final thought from our dialogue, Sleeter discusses her current planning on how to end a talk she will be delivering at an upcoming conference in the Dominican Republic. She explains that her talk "is about teachers learning to access the community based funds of knowledge that their students have, and work with them in the classroom in the role of mentors in that process." To conclude her lecture with an expansive vision for her audience, it is not surprising that Sleeter states, "I am going to draw upon John Dewey." Sleeter is compelled to share Dewey's vision and his view about "the incredibly important role

that teachers have in creating the kinds of learning experiences for kids and learning experiences in which kids can thrive." It was quite clear to me that, after reflecting on Dewey, Sleeter made the decision to put on the philosophical cloak of John Dewey and transport his teaching and learning ideas to a new audience in another country.

Epilogue

Christine Sleeter is a teacher's teacher. As an advocate of the educational philosophy of John Dewey—who acquired many descriptions over time, perhaps with the exception of teacher—Sleeter, both in the classroom and in seminars, as well as in her writings, adeptly translates Dewey's ideas for scores of teachers and educators. I find that her advocacy for social justice in education connects with Dewey's belief in an inclusive education for all children as his driving force for democratic ideals. Indeed, throughout our conversation, there was a connecting ribbon of ideas about how Dewey consistently bolsters education as the foundation of democracy. That is, for Dewey, schooling is the vehicle for strengthening the community and developing democracy.

Sleeter believes, as did Dewey, that "if you get people from very diverse walks of life in the same educational space and help them learn how to deal with controversial issues among themselves, as a democracy, we are going to be way better off." This exemplifies Christine Sleeter's synergy with John Dewey's educational philosophy and his vision for democratic ideals.

Author note: All quotations in the Prologue and Epilogue are from the Christine Sleeter dialogue transcript.

Christine Sleeter Dialogue

TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTINE SLEETER

Monterey Bay, CA, May 2016 (Edited)

GREGG JORGENSEN (GJ): *I am going to be addressing readers who may have a passing acquaintance with John Dewey, or not know him at all. What would you say about Dewey himself for this audience?*

CHRISTINE SLEETER (CS): Pick up his books and start reading. Because they speak very directly to issues that I think a lot of teachers are interested in and do not know what Dewey wrote about. I first became acquainted with Dewey—with his writing—when I had been a classroom teacher in Seattle, Washington. I started off prepared as an urban teacher, and then was a learning disabilities teacher. During in my teaching career in Wisconsin, I was teaching curriculum for whom the regular curriculum had not been designed. I started playing around with the curriculum without having a whole lot of guidance—trying to figure out how to take what my students knew from the world outside and connect it with something in my classroom in a way that got them actively engaged. I did not really know that much about what I was doing. So, when I was in Wisconsin, probably in Michael Apple's class, I read Dewey's *Experience in Education*. Reading Dewey can be cumbersome, I can grant you that. But it was like the ideas were taking things, that I was thinking about and trying to figure out how to work with for the last 6 years, and putting them into a framework of where I could go "that is what I was trying to do; now I understand why this is not working, and why that would work better." So, I think for teachers today, who are struggling with "okay we have these standards, and we have textbooks, we have tests, and all of this." And students do not seem to be doing as well as we would like, and the test scores are not going up the way they should. Read Dewey. Because at least you will understand better what the problem is.

GJ: *Do you believe that John Dewey's philosophy has a role to play in the twenty-first century, and if so, how do you see it happening?*

CS: The how do you see it happening part, I am not sure. But I think it has a huge role to play. One of the things that he talked a lot about was his strong belief in democracy. And how democracy requires that people be educated to be able to participate actively as citizens. If you just try to dump people into democratic systems without having people prepared to work with others, to negotiate, to listen to where other people are coming from, to make decisions collaboratively, it does not work very well. He wrote about the school as being a primary place to make that happen, theoretically anyway, because everybody goes to public schools. But schools would be the place—the best institution we have of taking people from diverse walks of life; putting together and helping them [students] to learn how to work through social problems together. He wrote quite a bit about that. And very passionately so. If we look at where we are today in terms of having this sort of very large, very diverse, and in many ways very polarized society, you will hear about people talking about how "we need to keep this group out and that group out, so we can make America great again." In which some people will say it means make America

white again. You know make the country more homogenous than it used to be. But, I go back to Dewey, because I think that he was absolutely right that if you get people from very diverse walks of life in the same educational space and help them learn how to deal with controversial issues among themselves, as a democracy, we are going to be way better off. In the way I have worked my own classes, and again this is more teacher credential classes and graduate classes, because I did not really encounter Dewey's ideas until I was a graduate student and then a teacher of higher-level education classes, but these are principles that I have worked with. It really does matter. I think that today the ideas are incredibly important, when we say that we are a democracy and we are not really investing in making that democracy work. Your question—I think there was a part of the question about how to make…

GJ: *Yes. If Dewey's philosophy still has a role to play in the twenty-first century, how do you see it happening?*

CS: Right now, I do not actually see it happening. I see schools so absorbed with time to waste with test scores—that some have even thrown social studies out. In a lot of schools, social studies is where the lower scores can happen; although in many schools, it is across disciplines. I think though as people begin to focus more on what test-focused teaching does not do—like we know that the test scores are not going up that well when we look at basic scores. Maybe we have been using the wrong paradigm in the last twenty to twenty-five years. But I also know from colleagues at the university level who are saying that students that are coming into the university are coming in with less historical knowledge than they did fifteen years ago, [with] less capability of critical thinking than they did fifteen years ago, and you can trace that back to the "put everybody in a box" teaching that has been going on for the past twenty years. I am hoping that when we do a critical evaluation of what students are coming out of schools with, that at least provides an opportunity to look at what we can be doing differently. I worry that the answer that we are being given is let's open up more charter schools. That is not the answer to the questions that we are facing. But I think that at least, failures of the regimen that we have been in for the past twenty years will provide an opening. At least I hope.

GJ: *Do you think that Dewey was underrated in any way in the twentieth century?*

CS: Well, it is interesting. He has been underrated because the whole idea of progressive education—it actually depends on when in the

twentieth century you are talking about—because when you talk about, like during the 1960s and 1970s and even some of the progressive work before that, Dewey's ideas become very important. So, it kind of tends to rise and fall. When I look at schooling when it gets connected to social movements—and in this country, we are going to continue to have social movements, because we have many oppressed communities in this country. So right now, a lot of the work is going into ethnic studies. But Dewey's work gets drawn upon and connects because the ideas of both valuing the experience that students bring, valuing learning as something that happens as your brain is engaged interacting with experience both from your life and whatever experience you have from the schools. Dewey was clear that, even in traditional classrooms, experiences were being offered, they just may not be educational experiences. But if you take those ideas seriously and then those ideas about schooling for democracy—people do keep drawing upon Dewey's ideas because he really did get to the heart of truths that are still recognized by other people as truths.

GJ: *Do you believe that Dewey ever really influenced the American curriculum?*

CS: Yes. Because what the American curriculum is has never been completely solved. He has influenced progressive work particularly in the social studies. Which, as I mentioned before, it comes and goes depending on what the dominant discourse is. But I view curriculum as something constantly being contested. I think right now an interesting question will be as the work in ethnic studies goes forward, Dewey being a white male—to what extent will his ideas between the purposes of curriculum and the relationship between curriculum and democracy be picked up and used? I think that they are relevant. But I think that it is up to people like me, who know something about Dewey and something about ethnic studies, to put those together. However, being in a somewhat semi-retired mode, I do not know if I may be the person to do that. But, has he influenced curriculum? Yes. But not as much as I think he would have liked.

GJ: *How did Dewey deal with the concept of social efficiency?*

CS: How did he deal with it—I am actually not sure that I know. I think that is a historical question that I am just not sure that I know.

GJ: *Any ideas about how Dewey viewed pragmatism?*

CS: I am not sure that I necessarily want to get recorded on that one either, because I really have not delved into philosophies of education deeply enough that would allow me to answer that one very well.

GJ: *Fair enough. Do you think Dewey's approach to reflective thinking could be implemented into today's curriculum, and, if so, what would have to happen?*

CS: That depends on what you mean by today's curriculum. If it is scripted curriculum, no. But if you—actually it is interesting to look at the Common Core standards, because even though I do not spend a whole lot of time—well, I actually have spent a lot of time looking at standards because I have had to work with teachers, but I tend not to be a standards-driven person—but having said that, the Common Core standards do open up more spaces for critical thinking. It has been teachers who have actually pointed out to me that you can look at the Common Core standards and see space for critical thinking and reflective thinking. If you take that space and then connect it with Dewey's ideas about reflective thinking and about active engagement in the learning process, then I think, yes, that does become a space where Dewey would have actually a lot to say that would be currently relevant. The idea of critical thinking in and of itself is interesting, because it can be interpreted in different ways; and, I would not just sort of leave it open to say that everyone is going to bring the same meaning to it. What I like about Dewey—and why I encourage people to read Dewey while they are trying to come up with what they want to do with the space for critical thinking that may be opened up within their curriculum—is his linking of reflection with social processes. It is not just reflection as an individual but reflection in relationship to the other people who are around you. And his social consciousness about how reflection and learning connect with democracy is what I find really compelling.

GJ: *Would you address what role Dewey's ideas and ideals may have had in the social justice movement?*

CS: This is interesting because I know that his work was used quite a bit in the earlier movements of like the forties, fifties, and sixties to reconstruct society and engage in social reconstructionism. In today's social justice movement, I think it sort of depends on having people who have read Dewey. It is kind of like today's ethnic studies movement. There are a lot of people whose work you can read who may or may not be drawing upon Dewey. In some of the work that Carl Grant and I have written, we have used Dewey partly because Carl teaches at the University of Wisconsin and I went there, and we were exposed to people who were working with Dewey's work. I am glad that you are doing this book because I think that Dewey's work—I don't know if I would say it is necessarily in danger of getting forgotten because the work is

very powerful—but in social justice work right now, there are a lot of different authors and activists whose work you can draw on, and unless they have worked with Dewey, you may not find your way there. I think his work actually has a lot of relevance.

GJ: *What can teachers still learn from Dewey that might surprise them?*

CS: One of the things that—like before you came, I picked up my *Experience in Education*—actually it's my second copy I had, because the first copy that I had written all over got lost. So, this is the second copy I have that does not have all of the underlining that the first one had. But I picked it up and looked at it where he was critiquing the traditional schooling. I was like, oh yes, he is talking about exactly what you see when you go out into the schools today. I think teachers would find that surprising, because it was written and published in what—1939—and they might say well this is almost one hundred years old, why would I want to read this? Well, because it is kind of like looking into a mirror of your own reality.

I think in doing that teachers might find it surprising how much things in some ways have not really changed. We hear a lot about how schools are being reformed—and I have done lectures on this. I think the one at Chapman [University] I did some of this of looking at the reform movement around World War I in relation to the discourse then in relationship to now. It is like we are drawing on ideas from the social efficiency ideas from back around [Ellwood P.] Cubberley's and [Frederick] Taylor's time. Today we just use different terminology. So, people do not realize the extent to which what we are talking about now actually has these long roots. You can juxtapose these quotations from a hundred years ago to now and it is almost the same thing. So, I think in reading Dewey, teachers would probably be surprised to see that in many ways things have not changed. In reality, Dewey is really speaking to teachers now as much as he was back in the 1930s.

GJ: *What would you still like to know about Dewey if you were to ask Dewey Scholars?*

CS: I have read a little bit of Dewey's biography, just little bits and pieces. He did start off as a teacher; and the things that he was writing about, as I gather, I did not really see them as teaching. But then I can start to look at my own teaching starting off, and see the things that I worked out later that I was only beginning to think about as a classroom teacher. Working in the classroom prompted questions that I had later. But I really would be interested in knowing how he came so passionately to think about the relationship—many of his

ideas—but especially the relationship between education and democracy. Because he really was one of the leading voices around the role of education for democracy; and where did that come from in his own upbringing and his own experience? Maybe I could go to something and maybe it has already been written about, but that is something that I get curious about.

GJ: *If you were at a dinner party and Dewey were there, what would you ask Dewey and what would you tell him about yourself?*

CS: I would ask him about how he sees the current ethnic studies movement and how he would interface his work with it. Because as near as I can tell, the people that he was primarily working with and dialoguing with were white and the demographics of the country have changed a lot and some of the power dynamics have. Many of the issues have not, but they play out differently. So, some of the theorization around ethnic studies and what it should look like in the classroom and all of the why's and wherefores—I would really enjoy having a conversation with him about that, because I think it would be kind of like a conversation that could go both ways. That the work in ethnic studies would enrich his work and his work would enrich the work in ethnic studies.

GJ: *What would you tell him about yourself?*

CS: I would have to thank him. Because when I went to Wisconsin—there is a question to what extent do people's ideals drive change or drive how you think, and to what extent do people's ideas validate and deepen thoughts that you were having already? I tend to think in terms of the latter. And, for Dewey, it was not like I picked up his work and was like golly gee I have never had these ideas, I think I will move in that direction. It was more picking up his work and saying, oh man, he is taking things that I have been thinking about and wondering about and is adding so many more layers to them. And now I can see more of where to go with this idea, and why that idea is important, and why if I was thinking about going down that path, do not even bother because it is not going to take you anywhere. So, I would really thank him for helping me understand some of my own core ideas way better.

GJ: *How would you summarize the legacy of John Dewey?*

CS: I think Dewey was—let's see, somebody who I think believed in the potential of people, in ways that many of the other education theorists have not done. His ideas about trusting the learner. If you build

learning experiences that are actually going to prompt education, then you have to trust that the learner is going to do something with that. And his idea with trusting people, and he really did believe in democracy, and that democracy can work if people are prepared for it. That is putting a great deal of trust on people; and that is a trust that in many ways I find refreshing. That is one of the reasons why I think his ideas are so powerful. It is a trust that in many cases you do not find today as widespread as I think it should be. It is his belief in the capacity of humans that I think is kind of at the core of his legacy, at least as I see it.

GJ: *And, specifically faith in teachers?*

CS: Yes, absolutely. I do not think that he would think that teachers could naively walk into a classroom and sort of do lessons, but the teachers interacting with their students and learning to build creative and educational learning environments, absolutely. I am in the process of preparing to give a talk in the Dominican Republic next month. It will be in Spanish, which I am not completely fluent in, so I am spending a lot of time with preparation. But yesterday I was trying to think of how I wanted to end the talk. I thought well—the talk is about teachers learning to access the community based funds of knowledge that their students have and work with them in the classroom in the role of mentors in that process. And some of the talk gets into a lot of specifics of what teachers can do, but I want to really end with a broader vision. I am going to draw upon John Dewey. I have a quotation in Spanish. Someone else is summarizing his work. But about his vision of society and the incredibly important role that teachers have in creating the kinds of learning experiences for kids and learning experiences in which kids can thrive, that is my closing remark.

GJ: *Thank you so much.*

CS: Yes, thank you.

CHAPTER 15

Leader of a Renewed Deweyan Philosophical Path: Jim Garrison

Prologue

Scholar Introduction

Jim Garrison continues to enjoy a well-established higher education teaching career as a professor of philosophy at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia. He also holds appointments in the Science, Technology, and Society Program; the Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought; and the Department of Philosophy. Garrison is the recipient of numerous awards, including the John Dewey Outstanding Achievement Award, the DeGarmo Award from the Society of Professors of Education, the Scholarly Achievement Award from the Institute of Oriental Philosophy, the Medal of Highest Honor from Soka University of Japan, and the Jim Merritt Award for his scholarship in the philosophy of education. He is a past president of the John Dewey Society, a past president of the Society of Professors of Education, and a past president of the Philosophy of Education Society.

Garrison is the author of numerous books and journal articles, including *John Dewey's Philosophy of Education: An Introduction and Recontextualization for Our Times*; *Dewey and Eros: Wisdom and Desire in the Art of Teaching*; and *Living as Learning: John Dewey in the 21st Century*, together with Larry Hickman and Daisaki Ikeda.

At my request for an interview at a time during his 2015 American Educational Research Association conference schedule, Garrison suggested

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an afternoon meeting. We met at his hotel and began an energetic dialogue about John Dewey's philosophy that stretched through the remainder of the afternoon.

Dialogue Overview

At the outset, Garrison paints a portrait of John Dewey as a "celebrity intellectual." He cites Dewey's level of activity in public speaking and radio interviews. But, he adds that Dewey "would never have survived the visual media because he's too shy." However, according to Garrison, even without widespread visual public recognition, Dewey could be deemed a celebrated public intellectual who never stopped trying to improve, build, and continually reconstruct his ideas.

Substantial Democrat or Thoughtful Socialist

Garrison describes Dewey as a substantial democrat as opposed to a formal democrat. That is, Dewey was not one of the people who possessed government power, nor was he one of the people who built government structure and organization. He continues by describing Dewey as a "thoughtful socialist that did not want to eliminate capitalism, he wanted capitalism to contribute to a good society." To emphasize, Garrison pronounces that it was plainly evident that Dewey disavowed communism and that his ideas were more in line with well-conceived welfare states that supported the public good. Related to this topic, Garrison reveals that the Cold War era put a "damper on curriculums that were developed out of the Deweyan tradition." However, Garrison believes that subsequent to the Cold War, Dewey gained back his status. In particular, he believes that private education has rediscovered Dewey as a good fit for an educational format that empowers students and encourages critical, creative thinking. As such, this creates an irony about where Deweyan curriculum could, as well as does, exist. However, Garrison points out that increasingly more American public school teachers are separating from the established system and making an effort to maintain their position to be creative as teachers, which is a Deweyan posture.

Social Efficiency Versus Social Justice

At this point, Garrison draws comparisons of social efficiency concepts to what he terms the social justice progressives. Regarding the policy of tracking students in the schools, Garrison bluntly expresses that

Dewey fought this idea. Ultimately, he admits that "social efficiency progressives like Bobbitt won" this conflict in educational philosophy. Garrison sees the conflict between social efficiency advocates and social justice progressives at that time as a struggle for democracy. Indeed, in Garrison's opinion, today's society employs a derivation of Bobbitt's concepts. In Garrison's words, "the great idea of the twenty-first century is refining human resources—which means you are no longer talking in moral terms about human beings—but refining human resources as interchangeable parts to the global production function … this is immoral." However, in Garrison's opinion, Dewey remains a key alternative to a Bobbitt-driven educational status quo and that democracy and education were, and remain, the vibrant Deweyan option for education. Garrison believes that this actually means Dewey is still as relevant today as he was in his time, because the task remains to "educate unique individuals."

Empirical Naturalist

Garrison believes that Dewey was immensely misunderstood. Importantly, he believes Dewey was notably misunderstood by his allies as well as his supporters. For example, Dewey was misinterpreted by many as a social efficiency progressive. However, according to Garrison, one just needs to turn to Dewey's *Democracy and Education*, which documents that Dewey strongly opposed scientific management principles underlying social efficiency positions. Garrison almost likens Dewey to being a layperson's philosopher. That is, he believes that with careful reading, almost anyone can understand Dewey. At the same time, Garrison's sentiment is that Dewey's philosophy was not highly influential during his time. One reason may be that Dewey was misunderstood by his supporters. Thus, Garrison forms the conclusion that it is often easy for even his supporters to lapse into the "tendency to form dialectical negation" when reading Dewey. The result is not understanding that often Dewey's solutions, such as the open-ended format of the Dewey school—where students were learning math and science through cooking, for instance—were progressive, without having discipline and control as the main focus.

During our dialogue, Garrison attributes several descriptive terms to Dewey, such as *empirical naturalist*, *pluralist*, and *religious humanist*, among others. Specific to empirical *naturalist*, Garrison believes this term fits better than the frequently used pragmatist label attributed to Dewey, or even Dewey's own descriptive terms for his persona.

The question becomes, which is closest among humanist, pragmatist, pluralist, or radical empiricist? Or, how does one view the empirical naturalist, John Dewey? In answering, Garrison relies on Dewey's focus on community as a tenet of pragmatism. Garrison best describes Dewey's own pragmatism—or empirical naturalist stance—as "so no matter how warranted or how entrenched or how long-enduring a truth proposition may be, it is always subject to falsification." Garrison's view provides, in essence, a blueprint for Dewey's ideas on scientific inquiry. A pragmatism core concept is conditions and consequences that Garrison readily adds to his list of topics as very important to this discussion. He also notes importantly that the idea that conditions and consequences were determinant is actually shared by most pragmatists.

Intelligent Trials

The procession of descriptive terms that Garrison applies to Dewey as a pragmatist essentially leads back to reflective thinking based on Dewey's premise of using intelligence, as Garrison expresses, to "cultivate intelligence, expand intelligence, acquire more of it for future generations." It is, in reality, all about Dewey's *How We Think*. Dewey's brand of experimentalism is not merely contained within a laboratory school. Instead, Garrison defines it in aspects of conducting a trial but, more precisely, that Dewey means "intelligent trials of things." And depending on the components or information involved in the trial or experiment, then contextualism becomes part of the analysis. For instance, Garrison points out that Dewey recognized that in the context of educational systems in different areas of the country, a system that works well for the population in Chicago may not be ideal for a rural area. Accordingly, Garrison asserts, Dewey would not agree with some of the recent educational programs, such as No Child Left Behind, because it is based on the theory that it would fit in all schools and areas. As Garrison states, "you do not have one-size-fits-all standards and especially in a pluralistically complicated nation like the United States." He reminds us that one needs to remember that Dewey strongly advocated for autonomy for teachers to make decisions and have freedom to experiment in the classroom. Thus, experimentalism was another aspect of a Deweyan concept being misunderstood.

Humanism

Turning to Dewey's brand of humanism, this concept again involves intelligence—that is, the intelligence that allows people to build their

lives as individuals. Dewey's notion of humanism encompasses community and relationships with others. Dewey believed that through the use of human intelligence, one can alter the environment one adopts. Garrison uses Martin Luther King Jr.'s civil rights activities as a prime example of Dewey's ideas in action—especially as a way to initiate change.

Garrison is careful to detail that Dewey was not a secular humanist and points out that this was another general misunderstanding over time. In reality, Dewey was a "religious humanist that thinks human nature changes in part because of the work of intelligence." Garrison does stress that Dewey's ideas on the nature of intelligence are also a component of Dewey's pragmatism. And he digresses somewhat to express, "But inside that rich notion of nature, as an evolved species, intelligence for Dewey is kind of a Darwinian function." On this point, Garrison views Dewey as a naturalist, but not in the context of reducing "Dewey's understanding of nature to Darwin."

Reflective Intelligence

Garrison observes that for Dewey, reflective intelligence is a set of cultural customs, or using another expression, the accumulated wisdom provided in concrete customs and practices. Specifically, Garrison states that, according to Dewey, "there is a cultural conservative strain there. You do not reconstruct everything at once, you use parts of your entrenched cultural customs to reconstruct other parts of your cultural customs." Then, Garrison cycles back to intelligence and pencils out the underpinnings for Dewey's reflective thinking as "it also helps to understand that intelligence is not … always a good thing, but reflective intelligence well used can improve … your individual intelligence by improving the quality of your inferences." Deftly linking reflective intelligence with what Garrison labels reflective experience, he expands the idea that as students embark into the mode of creating or encountering new experiences, the activity involves performing the Deweyan components of reflection. He explains, "In other words, the aspects of a reflective experience are not themselves reflected upon and made conscious and aware, just like the habits may not be consciously aware or the things you value unconsciously are not made aware to you."

Reflective Imagination

With yet another transition to Deweyan reflection, Garrison includes the idea of reflective imagination, which he views as the intelligence

background of the Founding Fathers—that is, the reflective imagination of a revolution, which he describes with "I have to say it was a pretty radical exercise of imagination for which all the Founding Fathers, being fairly wealthy people who were willing to risk not only their wealth but their lives." He admits a personal struggle with deciphering the original intent of, to use his term, the revolutionary founders. However, he explains that "if you really want to decode the original intent, I could make a fine argument for you that it is revolutionary and continually revisable." Then, he adds as a supporting statement, "That kind of imagination cannot be measured and the champions of the status quo obviously not only want to contain it, they do not want to awaken it." This topic expands with Garrison's characteristic inclusionary-based outlook: "I wish they would have included women and Native Americans and slaves and lots of other folks; they did not. On the other hand, their imagination created something they themselves could not contain." He sums up these thoughts with "the truth is, those founding documents continue to torment the limits of the imagination of those who founded our nation because we are far from exhausting the explosive imaginaries that they gave us."

Communicative Pluralistic Democracy

On the question of social justice movements and issues, Garrison directly states, "Dewey could have done better, but it does matter that he did speak at the inauguration of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People]; even was invited back … helped found the American Civil Liberties Union … was an honorary lifetime member of the NEA [National Education Association]." More importantly, Garrison points out that Dewey was not just a member, "he actually contributed time and energy to the founding" of each organization. He attaches Dewey's ideas and ideals to these organizations, which continue to be both operational and effectual today. In a sense, according to Garrison, Dewey's "notions of communicative pluralistic democracy live on, in which democracy is always a thing in the making." As a result, the conversation digresses into a brief overview of other regions of the world that are without a definitive democratic orientation and suggests Dewey's ideas and ideals may find relevance in those regions as well. Garrison concludes, "I think we have institutional reasons as well as abstract reasons to believe that his notions of democracy remain exceedingly viable."

Education Through Occupations and Other Experience

As to the question about what teachers today can still learn from Dewey that might surprise them, Garrison strongly believes that any teacher really connecting with students creatively can make a difference. He laments that today, with No Child Left Behind and various other educational legislative measures, "the body is not there. The emotions are not there" in the classroom community. As a comparison, Garrison paraphrases one of Dewey's works, describing, "He was looking for classroom furniture and he could not find it. And actually the business owner … suddenly goes 'Oh! You want something where the students can do something! We do not have anything like that.'" Garrison's wish for teachers is that if, or when, they read *Democracy and Education*, they be sure "to attend to the quote where Dewey says the best form of education is through the occupations." Here Dewey's emphasis is on education through occupations, not *for* occupations. That is, for Dewey, learning occurs through performing the activity, not learning merely by doing, as the activity becomes a lived experience, which in turn is a primary experience that gives secondary experience or knowledge its context.

Learning, experiences, and knowledge become a segue back to reflective thinking—the tool of inquiry, a most useful tool. Garrison points out that another misunderstanding about Dewey is that his theory of inquiry is not the same as scientific inquiry, as many have claimed. Garrison emphasizes that Dewey viewed science and all its technical aspects as an art. He interprets Dewey's perspective in the following way: "You can enjoy science itself for the beauty of this knowledge it creates, but its fundamental and larger role is to be of service to other arts, because all arts have a cognitive component."

A Conversation with Dewey

In regard to what Jim Garrison may still want to know from other scholars given his open and ongoing access to those in the contemporary Dewey community, he focuses on Dewey's ideas on the issues of aesthetics and religiosity—two areas he considers a personal research limitation despite his expansive study and understanding of Dewey. An equally important inquiry is what Garrison would ask Dewey, or what he would tell Dewey about himself, if they were at a dinner party together. The response is his surprising admission that "I never read a word of Dewey until I had a lot of different degrees, including a Ph.D. in philosophy."

Now, however, Garrison is in an extremely knowledgeable position to share that Dewey has provided "powerful existential answers to the existential question for me like, 'What is life? What is the meaning of life?' That is what I would talk to him about." He expresses that certainly a dinner conversation with Dewey would be very engaging and a tremendous lived experience.

A Legacy of More Democracy

How would Garrison describe or depict Dewey's legacy? Garrison insists that the entire pragmatic tenet of his philosophy is an important part of Dewey's legacy. Early on in our conversation, Garrison outlines what could very likely be an epitaph on Dewey's tombstone. After Garrison acknowledges that we—educators and citizens—keep working to improve ideas, plans, and policies but never reach the final stages to enhance and enrich lives, he indicates instead, "You leave it for the next generation to take up the accomplishment of individuals but collectively of humanity and try to rectify it and improve it and build on it and continue it." Certainly, this reaches to the heart of Dewey's philosophy. However, our dialogue returns specifically to ideas of democracy. Garrison states, "I think he bids us not to rest and to make the catastrophic error of thinking we have all the democracy we need." Instead, Dewey's legacy is that "the solution for the problems of democracy is more democracy." This became an ideal conclusion to our expansive dialogue about John Dewey and the related philosophical aspects of Dewey's ideas.

Epilogue

It is quite a challenge to keep pace with Jim Garrison's knowledge base of both John Dewey and philosophy. His expertise comprises an unlimited melding of Dewey's ideas and ideals, philosophy, and politics with a social justice orientation. Garrison's dialogue is a consistent flow of reflection that moves through the major precepts of Dewey's thinking. Garrison's educational philosophy, as does Dewey's, endorses lived experiences, education through occupations, the inquiry toward reflective experience, knowledge and understanding as intelligence, and experimentalism as primary properties of democracy and education.

Author note: All quotations in the Prologue and the Epilogue are from the Jim Garrison dialogue transcript.

Jim Garrison Dialogue

TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH JIM GARRISON

Chicago, IL, April 2015 (Edited)

GREGG JORGENSEN (GJ): *I am going to be addressing readers who may have a passing acquaintance with John Dewey, or not know him at all. What would you say about Dewey himself for this audience?*

JIM GARRISON (JG): Well, what's kind of interesting is how little you can say about Dewey himself. I guess for me the thing that often fascinates me about Dewey is he never shows us any of his interior, so you do not really know very much about him in that regard. You could say things like, "He's a public figure" or, "He was a famous late nineteenth and up to the mid-twentieth century intellectual," or, public intellectual and that sort of thing, but about Dewey himself—sure, there has been three, maybe four biographies—several hundred page biographies—written on him. But the thing that really most fascinates me about Dewey is he shows us almost nothing about his interior. When he does show us something about his interior, it is like in *Absolutism to Experimentalism*, one of the two—only two things that have an element of autobiography about him at all, but he will certainly talk about the inner lacerations of his upbringing and his struggle with his mother's congregation and things like that.

I do have a sense that, unlike others who would not agree with me, that Dewey is a fragmented being that at some level knows that you do not get yourself into some sort of perfect, eternal, enduring harmony. And that is interesting for a guy for whom dynamic equilibrium, which is what Dewey's unity is; it is not the simple harmony that many people think is, but a kind of open equilibrium. Even that has polarities in it. I think that is how he thinks it is done. Right at the end, the last thing he does in *Absolutism to Experimentalism* is really kind of interesting. He says that he has been wandering in the wilderness for forty years but that's not a bad thing just as long as you do not think you have arrived. I am not much for psychologizing, actually, so this is kind of an odd answer for somebody—to me, it's what you do that really matters, to be very honest with you. The inner tumults may be real, but it's what you do with them that actually mattered to me—but I did find that intriguing.

There's a personal element there. I have always sensed that in Dewey. So for someone like myself that has some of those qualities—and remember, I've already said there is nothing special about this; it does not make you better, but I think that maybe some of my attraction to Dewey is that I sense him struggling for a dynamic polarity, sense of unity, that only lasts a little while and you have to constantly be working on it—and even then it is in relation with the world, it is not all between your ears. I really like that component. Too many people have problems because they are so self-absorbed. I do not think Dewey is self-absorbed. I think he is a guy who is struggling to get it right. He is almost a perpetual beginner, in a way. He keeps reconstructing himself sort of slowly, but he keeps reconstructing himself. I do not think he believes that we get to Ithaca. We do not complete the journey. That does not mean there is just not a lot of good places to go, there just is not a final destination in that regard. And, then you leave it for the next generation to take up the accomplishment of individuals, but collectively of humanity and try to rectify it and improve it and build on it and continue it. And that is basically the sentiment that is on his tombstone.

He would not have chosen that himself; and he would not have chosen to have his ashes in front of a library at the University of Vermont where he went to school with a stone on it, but they chose something well for him, which is—any parent can understand this; anyone can understand it. We receive things from those that went before. Some of it needs to be rectified, corrected and improved, but we do begin life with the endowment of those generations. So, I do not see him just thinking he has to be perfect.

The other thing that is very important is if you have ever seen—there is some film of him. He was never going to be a media star. He was a media star in his day, but today he would not have survived. He wrote maybe two hundred articles for *The New Republic*, but anyway, many dozens of them; and he was in the *New York Times*. He was in all of the media of the day. There are also radio interviews; he *is* a celebrity intellectual; maybe the biggest one that America has had since Emerson, in his day. But he would have never survived the visual media because he was too shy. It really comes out, which is kind of amazing for a guy who did the things that he did—the public speaking that he did. But really, the few things that were done with him on visual media; the shyness—which he was known to have—came out; others have noted it. He was not the least pretentious. So, I think when you are looking for things, there are well-documented biographies. Go read one. It's an idiosyncratic answer; I am telling you the things that have grabbed me about him. What would you say about him? Well, either go read a biography or know at least some of the things like that; that he's a shy man, he's striving perhaps even struggling but does not think he's going to get there. But that has to be a conjecture, because he does not ever really tell us, so we will never know much about the inner man.

GJ: *Do you believe that John Dewey's philosophy still has a role to play in the twenty-first century, and if so, how do you see it happening?*

JG: There is a standard distinction between the social efficiency progressives and the social justice progressives. The social efficiency progressives like [Franklin] Bobbitt won. In many ways, public schooling is education for probable destiny, right? Here are the somewhat subtle Calvinisms that is hidden in that. It is in [Franklin] Bobbitt; this is the curriculum that won; this is the educational model that won which was a vulgar social efficiency that was going to slip people into predetermined roles in society. For instance, Dewey fought tracking. In the pages of *The New Republic*, he fought it hard and he lost. The Smith–Hughes [Act of 1917] passed, and in a certain sense that defeat is with us right up to the present moment where we not only track, but everything is about getting jobs in a society—even though they know that jobs of tomorrow are not here today; that if you are twelve years old or so, the job that you will be getting fifteen years later, many of those we know will not be there, but we are still educating for probable destiny. That will always be there, I'm afraid—that's Gary [Indiana], by the way. But we do continue to educate for the jobs, we think that are going to be there.

We try to plan too much. Dewey liked a planning, but not planned society. What that means is he is as relevant as he has ever been, because your task is to educate unique individuals. The distinction that I make—Dewey did not say it this way, but it is what he's after—training answers the question, "What can I do with it?" and that is almost all we hear anymore from students or anything else. If education answers the question, what happens if it does something to me? The assumption is we already know the identity of the young person, which is ridiculous. Any parent knows that children may have some basic predispositions early, but how those things play out across life can be really amazing. But the assumption we have that the roles of society are fixed in advance and who people are can be determined early and in advance is a democratic tragedy, and it is certainly a tragedy of life to not ever be able to explore—not only to explore yourself, but to develop your capacities. To literally not so much discover yourself, but discover your capacities so you can continually create yourself.

So, in many ways, he still remains important for that struggle. The truth is, we can see it going on. Bobbitt won then; I would argue that Bobbitt-like ideas are winning today, but Dewey has always been that sort of alternative current that has remained influential, so it creates a different kind of conversation. He is as relevant as he ever was and perhaps more so. The nightmarish question is how do we get that? And then that is a scary question, because, of course, who owns the media? Rich people that often

times have a very vested interest in the status quo. They are the last people who want positions in society to change and flow. The deeper thing is that Dewey is known as the philosopher of democracy. This is the struggle for democracy, which is simply—I want to take it to that level. Education is that important. Democracy is that important. *Democracy and Education.* Democracy is not about voting on Election Day. That is a part of it, but that is only one way of translating the will of the people and the policy. There are actually other ways of translating the will of the people and policy.

In any case, I see him in many ways as the alternative that lost, but remains vibrant in the American fabric. Others will not agree, and that is the beauty of Dewey. There are a lot of different intelligent readings of Dewey, and I think that is important. I think Dewey would actually like that. As I described him earlier, he is always in flux anyway. He does not think he has arrived. In a certain sense, what you are to do with any text or any philosophy or any mode of thought is to think about it, reflect upon it, and make use of it. But, yes, I do think he remains immensely relevant for that reason.

GJ: *Do you think Dewey was underrated in any way in the twentieth century?*

JG: No. I think he was massively misunderstood, but, no, I do not think he was underrated. I think it might be better to say that he was massively misunderstood. And as is often times the typical case, less misunderstood by his enemies, who tended to understand him pretty well. But you have to remember, he writes *Experience and Education* in many ways to correct the misreadings of his allies.

Could we go back to the previous question a minute, because I do not know that I would say a whole lot more about that; however, another place where I think Dewey's going to remain very viable is in my own recent experiences dialoguing with Daisaku Ikeda. I think Dewey will dialogue across differences very well in the twenty-first century. Not just because Larry [Hickman] and I had that dialogue [contained in *Living as Learning: John Dewey in the 21st Century*], but there is a book out on Confucian Democracy that is heavily influenced by Dewey. Dewey is not a formal democrat—he is substantial democrat. He is sensitive on cultural tradition. That's right. If there is going to be a democracy in China, it is going to be Confucian; it is going to have Hindu overtones in India; it is going to have a lot of Buddhism and Shinto in Japan. There is the case where we won the war, so we forced American formal democratic structures on them, but that does not matter. The practices under them remain what they are. Of course, the United States of America is founded on a Judeo-Christian tradition and a Greek tradition, which is Roman Law and British Law—it is like, in all these cases, it is sort of the water the fish swim in whether they know it or not. And that is going to become important

if democracy is going to continue to evolve in the twenty-first century—remember, we always say we secured conditions for democracy, not democracy. So, if you are a substantial, not a formal, democrat—in other words, the power resides with the people, who then create the structural forms of government—Dewey could be very valuable in this century in the larger Democratic conversation. I think that is an important component to realize that Deweyan democracy, unlike formal structures, could be actualized in many ways. I would go so far as to say those countries cannot realize our notion of constitutive formal democracy because they are just different kinds of peoples. They have a different ethos; they have a different history. I am not saying we cannot dialogue with each other; in fact, I am saying Dewey is great for that because he respects difference not just abstractly, but very concretely—because of course the customs of a culture inscribe themselves on habits of the body. So, that embodied sense of his philosophy, I think would matter.

With regard to your last question, I do not think Dewey was underappreciated or anything like that, but he was often misunderstood and, most often, misunderstood by his allies. Again, he is often confused with the social efficiency progressives and he is very far from them. He wrote against those positions; you can see it all over *Democracy and Education*, plus many other places.

GJ: *Why do you think he was so misunderstood by his supporters?*

JG: That is an interesting question and I am not sure. It is rather intriguing compared to someone like Martin Heidegger, who, with anything less than a bachelor's degree in philosophy or something, I am not sure you could actually read him. I have read *Being and Time* and a lot of his other work, but sure, I have a Ph.D, in philosophy—no kidding! I am not saying intelligent people could not read him. On the other hand, Dewey—I have copied and pasted pages of Dewey over and then ran a spell checker on it to see what the grade level is, and on average it is the twelfth grade. The thing is his philosophy is every bit as intricate and as powerful and as original as say, that of Heidegger or [Ludwig] Wittgenstein or other highly influential late-nineteenth, early- and mid-twentieth century philosophers, but you can actually read him. If you read him carefully—he is a bad prostylist, but you can read him; and if you are careful, you can understand him. But his relaxed writing almost gets him in trouble. I think there are issues there. And there is always dialectical negation—if all of this is bad, we will do the opposite. Instead of desks in a row and rigid discipline, we will just let the kids do whatever they want to. That is a progressive idea. And of course, discipline is intrinsic. Oftentimes—then and now—those who tend to be politically center or left-center who appreciate Dewey get caught in that sort of dialectical negation. They know what they do not

want, but they really are not careful about what they really need to be positively doing. So, I think there is a tendency to form dialectical negation.

Another thing that I think is immensely overlooked in terms of education that matters with regard to the second question and the fact that he is a substantial democrat, is that most people on both sides fail to recognize the very thick conservativism in Dewey. For instance, he did not much care for the word *rationality*, because rationality suggests something cold and detached. Whereas Dewey prefers *intelligence* because it has an emotional, effective component in it. At one point in *Human Nature and Conduct* where he is talking about thinking, he says, "More emotions, not feelings. Only an emotion can check an emotion." He wants to harmonize—getting the emotions in balance is part of thinking intelligently. Of course, *imagination*—the ability to see the possible and the actual—is built in there. All of that is very important to Dewey. But cultural practices, that is where rationality resides. It is a cultural achievement of millennia. Ever since we acquired language to pass on learning or the technical skills of domesticated plants or animals, which are the breakthrough technologies—that accumulated wisdom is in the concrete customs and practices. Of course, there is a lot of idiocy there, too, and that is why Dewey does want to emphasize reflective intelligence that has the character that we have just described. And, by the way, what could release that reflective intelligence is a set of cultural customs. A set of cultural narratives never was a monologue. There are always multiple statements of what it is to be a good protestant girl or boy, just for instance. There is text here and there are not always agreements about text and translation and the rest, but the point is that type of reflective intelligence can always agree. Maybe mommy and daddy don't agree with the people on the street corner who you like to hang out with. I do not want to count this an automatic positive or negative vector, but the possibility for reflective intelligence exists in any society, even a totalitarian society. Nonetheless, there is a cultural conservative strain there. You do not reconstruct everything at once, you use parts of your entrenched cultural customs to reconstruct other parts of your cultural customs. The notion that we are going to reconstruct everything instantly—you see utopias on the left often times more than the right—they are detached from concrete cultural customs. That scares Dewey. That is ideology that has no grounding in the actual. Plus, the truth is, there are a lot of practices in a culture that you may no longer understand why they are good practices until you start messing around with them. Then you will find out, well, maybe not that good, because this is condensed wisdom of generations. So, I think the conservativism in Dewey was not always appreciated. Now it is not the kind of conservativism people are thinking about, but he has a very healthy respect for tradition, even as he insists that we critique it. So, he is not the kind of person that thinks intelligence exists apart from customary

social practices. I think that is one of the things about a certain kind of liberal—that bothers me. I certainly distrust anyone that is ideologically driven left, right, or even center because they detach themselves from their ideology, which is formal, and has begun to detach itself from cultural tradition. It is always interesting to see what happens when conservatives do that, because oftentimes their ideology actually gets detached from the conservation of the social practices. If you tell me you are conservative, then tell me what you want to conserve; we might agree. If you tell me you're a liberal, tell me what you want to liberate; we might not agree. I mean personally and politically, I tend to be liberal but in kind of a Deweyan sense, so until I know what you want to conserve and until I know what you want to liberate, I do not know whether I disagree with you or not. And that actually allows Dewey, or someone influenced by Dewey, to dialogue with a lot of people that perhaps others could not dialogue with because there is that appreciation that there is a culturally entrenched wisdom in these practices. To be honest with you, liberals tend to not pick up on the conservative strain in Dewey.

GJ: *Do you believe that Dewey ever influenced the American curriculum?*

JG: I think there was a time, perhaps the late twenties and through the thirties, but certainly the opening of the Cold War put an end to an awful lot of that. In fact, there are those that argue that pragmatism in general and Dewey in particular—because let's face it, Dewey is a socialist and there is just no way around it. It is sort of fascinating how—this is an aside, but I have to say it is fascinating to see. Everyone knows socialism is bad, but the Wall Street Journal—not the most radical publication in America for sure—about three months ago had a rating of the top ten happiest countries in the world: they are all socialist, every single one of them, and they became less so as you go down the list. Now there's stupid socialism and there's smart socialism. I do not think things came out that well for China or Russia, which is communism, of course. And, of course, Dewey resigned his membership in the teachers' union [American Federation of Teachers] when it went communist. But he is a thoughtful socialist who did not want to eliminate capitalism; he wanted capitalism to contribute to a good society. And, all the evidence is out there. Well-conceived welfare states—not poorly conceived, because there certainly are—but in socialist countries of the Nordic region or Switzerland or New Zealand or Australia, the notion that you have to have the threat of poverty hanging over your head—the truth is we know people's quality of functioning decreases under distress. For instance, on exams: the more stress there is, you move to your next level of functioning. There is not a lick of evidence actually that this occurs. Horrible things happened in the communist countries, but Dewey rejected communism. He could not have been

clearer about it. The teachers' union in New York became communist and he left. People forget that he presided at the Trotsky trial. The Cold War, I think, put a damper on any curriculums that were developed out of the Deweyan tradition. Dewey does not make a good Cold War Warrior.

In many ways, I think, like many others, that his popularity was restored after the end of the Cold War. That seems a funny connection but I want to say the brief answer, as we were discussing earlier, would be that there was a considerably enduring effect on teaching methods. And often times on the part of teachers who in fact resist the highly standardized, rigorous, straight-line curriculum—we do not want to forget that curriculum comes from the root word for a racetrack, right, the curricula. You always see Ben-Hur or something running around in their chariots on the curricula—but amongst actual teacher practitioners, I do think that there is an enduring influence that is on method, and thereby it enters the curriculum in that direction. In fact, the irony is, if you encounter Dewey curriculum, it would all have been developed at the school level—in some large package—it will be idiosyncratic to a teacher or a school. Of course, what is really funny is when you look at Dewey in education, many times you are more likely to find that in an elite private school somewhere because it is the kind of education that empowers you to be your own reflective, original, creative thinker, find your own way in life. And, of course, that is just the education you want to give the rich and the powerful, but you sure would not want workers to have it, would you? So, there are also some real ironies about where you would find at least Dewey-inspired curriculum. But there are tens of thousands, if not more, American teachers in their classroom when they decouple from the system—as we know they do to preserve the creative autonomy that good teachers must have or they will leave if they cannot find it—that is Dewey. To be honest with you, often times, they do not know much about Dewey. They just have a good sense if they figured it out on their own. But formally, no. He certainly influences curricular theorists, but not latter-day Bobbitt's who believe that curriculum is supposed to align you to your job in society. And that is not a misrepresentation of Bobbitt at all; Bobbitt would have liked that characterization very much. In his day, he wanted to do away with what we would call the humanities. Well, in our day we are really getting the job done very well, getting rid of the sort of things that allows you to be more—rather than to have more—we are doing a great job. So, I want to say in curriculum, no, in a certain sense.

GJ: *How did Dewey deal with the concept of social efficiency?*

JG: We have already said some things about vulgar social efficiency; in fact, we just finished mentioning Bobbitt. That is the acme of social efficiency.

Here are the jobs you need, here is your human—he did not use "human capital," but that is what we are using these days—it is the same thing. Only now we say, "Here is your human capital. We are going to refine it to fit the job." I have actually said this in several places: the great idea of the nineteenth century was refining natural resources as interchangeable parts in the global production function. The great idea of the twenty-first century is refining human resources—which means you are no longer talking in moral terms about human beings—but refining human resources as interchangeable parts to the global production function. This is horrible; this is immoral, to say the least, and then after that it gets worse.

Dewey favored what he called a "planning but not a planned society," and that is a subtle distinction of Dewey that is very important. When you are thinking about, "Well, we know socialism doesn't work. Look at this five-year plan!"—first of all, that was communism; and, if you're drawing up five-year plans, you are an idiot. Dewey wanted a planning society, but not a planned society, and he wanted all phases of the society to be involved. There is a lot of good work theory out there; in fact, much of it coming from Nordic countries—but if you look at what makes for a good start-up—and this is the real irony, right—if you really want good start-up companies, you do not educate a few entrepreneurs, you educate unique individuals to actualize their unique capacities to make a unique contribution in society. And, if you do, they will create things that you did not even know you needed until the unique person showed up that could do it.

This is not merely economic—although we all want to make a good living. I do not have any trouble with that. I would actually argue if you are educated that way, you would have even more money, if you want to be that crude about it. But you would also have a more aesthetically rich society and a more moral society. The core of Dewey's answer to this question is actually very clear in *Democracy and Education*. You get social efficiency when people very much realize the necessity of referring their conduct to that of others, so that they can live well in a society. So, not only do you not need, you do not want gated communities. You want a community in which you have good wealth distribution and everyone refers their conduct to that of others. It makes for a great classroom, by the way. I am not saying classrooms are junior little democracies, but it is a good place to start learning how to be democratic. Much of Dewey's notions of participatory democracy is just how you live in good community with each other. That is also something that passes across cultures fairly nicely.

So the core of it: you will get social efficiency when people are conscious of the fact that they need to refer their conduct to that of others and others refer their conduct to them, because then everyone lives well or should live well. So, social efficiency is important but it is not vulgar,

straight-line social efficiency moving to a predetermined place. That actually turns out to be surprisingly inefficient, but we will bear those inefficiencies, because it allows those in power to maintain the status quo.

GJ: *What is pragmatism from Dewey's point of view?*

JG: First of all, Dewey does not call himself a pragmatist very often. He uses a wide range of words: radical empiricist, humanist. The best characterization of Dewey might be empirical naturalist, which is one that he opens *Democracy and Education* with. Certainly, there is no pragmatist for which it means vulgar practicalism. It is not that you should not be able to repair computers or fix your toilet, go buy the kit at Lowes to fix your toilet—I am not arguing against that. But it is certainly not about vulgar practicalism either.

Pragmatism is sort of like a family resemblance. There is not a Rorschach or something for it; you cannot get an impression there. But Deweyan pragmatism would certainly have the usual ingredients that almost any pragmatism would have. It is going to have a huge emphasis on community. We could go deep with that. What is reality? It is what the community is ultimately going to affirm; it is a belief that the community relied on and never changed. The problem is that a contingent universe—this is the second component of almost all pragmatists—is that things are always changing, so even a warranted truth, at least in a first order sense; may be revisable. On the other hand, pragmatists are committed to saying what exists is contingent. They are going to contend it is a truth, but what is important even there, is that all truth claims remain perpetually open to falsification. No matter how well-warranted or how entrenched or how long-enduring a truth proposition may be, it is always subject to falsification. And, of course, when you look at the history of science, it is that rendering subject to falsification that actually has been critical to the rapid development of sciences.

My Ph.D, is in the history and philosophy of science and mathematical logic. I can absolutely guarantee you that almost anything in the history of, say, physics has been falsified, and there is no reason to think that we have a last theory. I mean, heck, quantum mechanics does not even have a realist interpretation; it is purely instrumental. There is no reason to believe we are at the end of history. On the other hand, it may turn out that the community eventually evolves truths that just do not change, and that would be a good stand-in for what reality might mean. These types of ingredients are important. Antifoundationalism—there is not one absolute thing or even a collection of absolute unalterable things that are the foundations of society or scientific inquiry or anything else. Or again, these are things that almost all pragmatists share and certainly Dewey shares. Pluralism is another one that most pragmatists share

and Dewey is certainly a pluralist. He is also not an anything-goes cultural relativist, because although he is culturally conservative, we can reflect on social practices and figure out that some social practices are not particularly good—which connects us to a very distinctive characteristic that many pragmatists have that is very distinctive of Dewey. Many pragmatists have it because Dewey had it, but it is also in [Charles] Peirce, the founder of pragmatism, and that is experimentalism. He does not mean just laboratory experiments; he means intelligent trials of things. You know, the word experiment has the etymology of "to make a trial," actually. I will give you a social example: we, Deweyan Pragmatists, would not pass some legislation in Washington, D.C. and then immediately implement it in the entire nation. If we thought we had something going, then we would try to pass some legislation in D.C. that the states could work with where we will try these new ideas in some select large cities, and then we might try these ideas in some select moderate-sized cities like, say, Roanoke, Virginia, down the road from me is about one hundred thousand people. But even those cities are different, because that is an old economy—Norfolk, a Western railroad town, that is struggling in the new economy. So, what about a city of 100,000 in the new economy? Well, what we might find out—and this is another important component of Deweyan pragmatism—is contextualism.

Again, that is very common to pragmatism, but particularly to Dewey. So, Dewey is very aware, and notices a kind of conservative component here, that there is a respect for locality and situatedness in his contextualism that an educational system that might work for most people in Chicago and New York and perhaps LA—although those three cities are very different—may not work in rural southwest Virginia where I live. My wife is in Appalachian studies as well as girls' studies and did pioneering work, and can tell you all about Tazewell, Virginia, because she is related to about a fourth of the people. My brother-in-law lost most of a finger in a mining accident—this is southwestern Virginia. Another brother-in-law of mine about six or seven years ago won $1,000 for having the second-largest buck during hunting season brought down with a bow and arrow. What works in these rural areas almost assuredly—so that's one of the ironies of one-size-fits-all—that oddly enough is supported by both, say, the Republican and the Democratic Party. People forget No Child Left Behind was initiated by Edward Kennedy as much as anybody else. So, the one thing that the Democrats and the Republicans can seem to agree on is one of the things Dewey does not agree on: you do not have one-size-fits-all standards—especially in a pluralistically complicated nation like the United States. So, experimentalism is important, which means that we do not pass one-size-fits-all. Maybe No Child Left Behind works someplace. I personally doubt it, but if it does, it does. If they take this No Child Left

Behind standard-driven, teacher-proof curriculum and we find out that it works in mid-sized towns of fifty thousand with large rural communities about it, then I say we do it, being constantly aware that it is falsifiable and perhaps contingent and therefore subject to reconstruction, which might actually help us understand what a lot of liberals did not understand about Dewey. This is a big one. So, the experimentalism is important.

I have already said that he would characterize his philosophies as a certain kind of humanism. It has the classical notions of humanism—human agency matters—that the role of intelligence allows human beings to create their own lives. He did not particularly care for the kind of humanism that thought that we could do that in isolation, because we are social beings through and through. This is also an important part of his pragmatism worked out with the best friend of his lifetime, George Herbert Meade, namely, we are social beings through and through. That is another important component, but because we are social beings through and through, any freedom project that we have is going to have to involve the community and relationships with others. In fact, it actually looks an awful lot like what Martin Luther King [Jr.] did. You find a community, then you form a public, and then because he is not a formal democrat, you form substantial communities and you petition government, which is really only supposed to be an expression of the will of the people—notice there is a subtle kind of conservatism here as long as you do not get confused about the other components of his philosophy.

The notion that human beings can control their destiny is an important humanist notion that has an Ancient Greek lens, but of course it emerged again in the 16th century, and is with us, but it is not secular humanism. So, humanism is a component, but Dewey does not have that arrogant confidence in a fixed thing called rationality, first of all because intelligence itself evolves, is contingent, and is falsifiable, and contextualized. What is intelligent today may have evolved, say, since a thousand years ago and that is not necessarily a simple progress in some terms; it has just simply evolved like species do to fit the new environment. What is important about Deweyan intelligence, of course, is you can alter the environment which you adapt. That is certainly an important component.

Another component of Deweyan pragmatism that is very frequently overlooked is what he calls the common faith "natural piety," the realization that—on his account—we are participants in the universe, not spectators. We belong here, but so do many other things also belong here, and that ultimately no matter how remarkable the achievements of intelligence are in science and engineering and the arts or otherwise we are still pretty puny and we are what appears to be finite participants in a universe that does appear to be infinite. And the commensurability between anything finite and the infinite is incomplete. In commensurability, which means

that while we should use intelligence, cultivate intelligence, expand intelligence, acquire more of it for future generations, there is an element of reverence in Dewey. He would not use that word, but there is a sense of humility, wonder, and awe inside his notion of natural piety that tells you that ultimately it is the larger universe that is going to have this position in relation to our actions. He is not a secular humanist—that is a massive mistake. He is a religious humanist who thinks human nature changes in part because of the work of intelligence. We can decide what kind of human beings we would like to become, our children can then decide, and on and on and on. We will not know what humanity is until perhaps unfortunately the species either evolves into something else or disappears. We will always be working on that humanism, just as we will always be working on our individual humanity right to the end. This brings discomfort to some, but it brings comfort to people like me, I guess. I am not saying that every ingredient of Deweyan pragmatism is in there, but there is a bunch—I guess that would be the way to say it.

One other thing. On a personal note, given what I have just said, I think there is an element of spirituality in Dewey. Maybe I'm mistaken, but I will say that for me personally—not to impose this reading of Dewey on others—but for me personally, the principle attraction to Dewey for me is spiritual. We are participants in the affairs of existence and our creative acts matter, not because any individual's creative acts matter or decide things, but they matter. And even if they do not matter at the end of cosmic history, it will matter for our children, our grandchildren—of many kinds, not just biological but otherwise. And insofar as we become a part of that thing much greater than ourselves, then as Dewey would say: even though the forces of the universe may slay us, we may nonetheless identify with that which we find good. He's echoing Job, rather clearly. I am not saying that is exactly how he said it, but he is echoing Job who even under the condemnation of the God that he loves, will nonetheless "maintain his ways before Him" in humility, awe, and wonder. The universe may crush us, but that does not mean we cannot identify with those aspects that we find good upon reflection. That stuff moves me, but other people are drawn to Dewey for very different reasons. I think at some point it is important to be a bit honest and autobiographical. That is idiosyncratic of me.

GJ: *When you read Dewey and he uses the word "intelligence," what do you think his focus is?*

JG: We hinted at that earlier—it is itself falsifiable and contingent and evolving. Dewey is a naturalist; there is no getting around that. If one wanted an ingredient of Deweyan pragmatism, I would have to add intelligence.

And, he is a Darwinian, but one has to be very careful for him, because nature is bigger than the Darwinian picture. Dewey follows the classic Spinozaistic—you know, Spinoza; the distinction of Spinoza—between natura naturata—nature natured; nature fixed and actual as we would actually find it—and naturans, which is the possibilities of nature. It is nature still realizing its possibilities. I have said, and certainly people like my friend Tom Alexander and others agreed, that what that means for Dewey, is reality is not only the actual. It is the infinite possibilities. That is nature.

I am going to move over to Darwin for just a bit. Dewey did not like materialism and emergent naturalism, so you could not reduce things back to their material constituents any more than you can reduce the functional effects of water back to hydrogen, which is highly combustible, and oxygen, which sustains combustion, but H_2O puts out a lot of kinds of fires—not all, but many kinds of fires. Which means that there could be emergent properties to the universe still that we, in our lifetimes at least, will never know; and in fact, we may be the source of that, which means that we would like those emergent properties to be good for living things, not bad for living things, because there is always an ambivalence there. But inside that rich notion of nature, as an evolved species, intelligence for Dewey is kind of a Darwinian function.

I tried to contextualize Dewey's thinking about intelligence inside the fact that he is a naturalist; it is an integral part of his pragmatism. I then wanted to situate that in Darwinism as long as we do not reduce Dewey's understanding of nature to Darwin. And just sort of do this trace of intelligence as a natural embodied thing in which feelings, emotions, desires, count—you know, imagination, and habits—embodied habits—inference for Peirce, for [William] James, and for Dewey, and for me, for the classical pragmatists. It is not abstract, that is logical implication—A implies B; B therefore; A plays B; A, therefore B—that kind of thing. But inference is embodied; it is what a habit does. So, if you make the following inference. It's five o'clock; I don't feel good. I think I'll have a drink. Ah, I feel better; I think I'll have another one. The habit keeps making inference and then you have had seven or eight of them and you are making bad inferences and you have a bad habit. Habits are a part of intelligence. The things we desire without reflection control us. Likewise, habits of which we are unconscious and we do not control, control us.

So, a very important function in doing pragmatism is controlled inference; and we can get to that before we start talking about science. This counts for educators in an immensely important way. The way I like to put it is that it is one thing to say that you need to restructure your Piagetian schema; it is another thing to say, "You must do something about that drug habit you have," "You really need to stop smoking,"

"You really need to alter your eating habits that are causing you high blood pressure and are threatening the health of your heart." That is a whole different thing, and that is what Dewey has in mind in terms of reflective intelligence: self-control. But the habits themselves are a function of intelligence in terms of the fact that a habit is a generalized response to a class of stimuli. You can already see that if you can articulate that in words, it is a general proposition. And so, inference—intelligent inference—is literally built into the habits of your body. Peirce called them "thirds." They have general properties. They are not abstract; they are concrete. But nonetheless they have inferential properties. So, if you, like I, over the years have had to learn to infer beets and greens rather than puddings and such, then you have grown more intelligent—which does not mean that you cannot aesthetically enjoy chocolate, but you will exercise your intelligence to enjoy it in its proper balance—harmony and ratio.

Even in the basic functions of science, the inferential component is embodied; and where it shows up in the sciences is having the skill to know how to properly set up and run an experiment. There are places in the biological sciences where the techniques are possessed only by a few people who can, therefore, actually carry out that research; other people that do not have the techniques cannot do it. All those techniques are skilled habits; that is exactly what they are. Now, it also helps to understand that intelligence is not always a good thing, but reflective intelligence, well used, can improve your individual intelligence by improving the quality of your inferences. All this is really a part of Deweyan intelligence, in an embodied sense. Notice what it is not—it is not detached, cold rationality, which Dewey thinks is a fiction. He absolutely believes it is a fiction—that alone is enough to separate him from many secular humanists. The belief. In fact, I will not say it that way. They have a belief in something abstract and deep, disconnected called rationality, and they believe it with the same fervent strong passion as other people believe in other things—"By their fruits they should be known."

Which is a core concept of pragmatism, which we forgot to mention—one core concept that almost all pragmatists share is conditions and consequences are determinant. I actually forgot to mention the most important thing is conditions and consequences.

GJ: *Do you think Dewey's approach to reflective thinking can be implemented in today's curriculum, and if so, what would have to happen?*

JG: First of all, there is a massive irony that these kids, when they want to misbehave and are being mischievous, are very good at executing the components of Dewey's reflective experience. So, it is actually already there; the real problem is more of how the structures in the current classroom

inhibit it rather than liberate it, because it is getting used all the time, whether they know it or not. Dewey wants this continuity between common sense and science. You know, science refines all of these things, but any successful inquiry already has the ingredients of inspecting the situation, collecting data, developing a hypothetical—a hypothesis. I want to goof off in class, how can I avoid detection? I collect data on the teacher's actions and the rhythm of the class day; I develop a hypothesis, and if I do not get disciplined for the rest of the school year, I have a well-confirmed hypothesis. So, you cannot keep it out, but you could surely suppress it as being something reflectively understood. In other words, the aspects of a reflective experience are not themselves reflected upon and made conscious and aware, just like the habits may not be consciously aware or the things you value unconsciously are not made aware to you. And, of course, it is notorious. Everyone knows that pencil-and-paper machine-graded tests pretty much stink at measuring reflective intelligence. In fact, you may not know this, but the famous PISA [Programme for International Student Assessment] exam, which of course is driving the insanity for international test scores has a creativity component to it. I have actually looked at that creativity component, and, of course, it is convergent. I am not saying that there is not a kind of creativity that you might in fact be able to get some kind of measurements on. Now, it is already more loose—this is not pencil-and-paper machine graded—but you have to get to the right answer.

When you really release those possibilities, then this is what the status quo fears. You do not know what is going to happen next when you actually get the divergent imagination that sees possibilities that could be—oh my God—revolutionary. And, I know revolution is a bad word, except when so-called conservatives want to follow the Founding Fathers. There were some things wrong with Jefferson, but he is very Jeffersonian about his democracy. It is quite interesting that conservatives do not point out the most obvious thing about the Founding Fathers: every one of them was a revolutionary, every single one of them. The ones that were not, did not found anything. It is curious how that is suppressed, isn't it? Yes, a tremendous work of reflective imagination. But that really involved, I understand, the Locke inspirations and the role of Grotius and Hobbes, and Roman law and all of that. I know it is still bounded, because in the chaos it is the only thing that is not bounded. But I have to say this was a pretty radical exercise of imagination for which all the Founding Fathers, being fairly wealthy people, were willing to risk not only their wealth but their lives. Do you really want to go back to the Founders? Because Dewey likes many aspects of Jefferson—people need to be reminded that Jefferson thought we needed to redo the Constitution in every generation. Let that generation decide how they wished to be constituted.

Oddly enough, when we get back to those revolutionary founders, that one does not come up too much. But if you are interested in the original intent—of course, being a Deweyan, I have a lot of trouble decoding that original intent—but if you really want to decode the original intent, I could make a fine argument for you that it is revolutionary and continually revisable. At least, regarding Jefferson, who unquestionably drafted a little thing called the Declaration of Independence and probably is one of the Founding Fathers—yes, he was a revolutionary, too. Just like every other one of them. That kind of imagination cannot be measured, the champions of the status quo, obviously not only want to contain it, they do not want to awaken it. My way of putting it, is they want you to be imaginative, creative, and reflective enough to create the product and sufficiently unimaginative enough to buy it. I mean that, because that other kind of imagination is what Dewey's talking about. And he does not mind the conversion imagination; if there's a well-articulated problem in physics, then let's go looking for the Higgs Boson, and see if it is really there. That's cool. We have well-warranted reasons to assume they are serious, and we will hand a couple of people a Nobel Prize. Dewey's not against that notion of imagination, but the other one could alter the very notion of what imagination is if you really get going on—maybe it is not just releasing the possible and the actual. I think it is, but no telling what young philosopher is going to come along and prove that Garrison was an idiot or something. Obviously, I believe I have backing or warrant for it, but I do think that the inability of any kind of conservative system to act—to forever constrain the imagination is curiously enough right there in the founding of our country.

I wish they would have included women and Native Americans and slaves and lots of other folks; they didn't. On the other hand, their imagination created something they themselves could not contain. I would agree that we ought to go back to the Founders; but the truth is, those founding documents continue to torment the limits of the imagination of those that founded our nation because we are far from exhausting these explosive imaginaries that they gave us—right up to the current struggle for civil rights, for the disabled, LGBT, and the rest. You can't test that stuff. The huge irony is Dewey did not have much interest in that kind of testing at all. The best test, if anything, is can they do it? Such as, this person claims they know some physics. Can they actually go into the lab and do it? We are not expecting too many people to do original science, but we would be very interested in whether they can actually do it, in which case, what do you need to test for? That is, at least in the standardized sense. I do not care what unique idiosyncratic way they can solve the problem, as long as they can utilize the publicly-shared standards of our community.

Of course, every scientific revolution occurs when those standards become upset—whether it is the theory of relativity, quantum mechanics, and all the rest. So, the answer is it can be. It's there already; it can be, but there is a lot that is done to limit it and arrest it.

GJ: *Could you address what role Dewey's ideas and ideals may have had in the social justice movement?*

JG: There are many social justice movements launched from many different directions. I mean the importance of, say, Thoreau, and Gandhi, and the struggle for civil rights—which was not just race. Of course, women's rights became a part of that. Rights for the disabled were a very explicit part of that within the bounds of the short-lived Kennedy administration. But the answer is "absolutely so." And in part, one only has to look at Dewey's own participation in social justice movements. I think it is a nice place to start. Dewey was not perfect on race, by the way. I do not think I am perfect on race, and I do have suspicions about you and many others; all I mean by that is we have not arrived at the place where we have reflected on all of our enculturated habits of, say, whiteness, and understood what those mean. And, that itself is an ongoing struggle. Dewey could have done better, but it does matter that he did speak at the inauguration of the NAACP; even was invited back a couple decades later. It does matter that he helped found the American Civil Liberties Union. It does matter that he did join in the—I think it was Local #5 of the New York City Teachers' Union, which later became part of the AFT [American Federation of Teachers], if I remember correctly; I could be mistaken. He was an honorary lifetime member of NEA. In part, the point that I am making is that all of these institutions of which he was a part of—including I think the American Association of University Professors, of which I'm a member—the fact that these institutions that he did not merely join, but that in many of those—the AUP, Civil Liberties Union—he was there at the founding; he actually contributed time and energy to the founding. Insofar as those institutions exist and continue to execute their functions, you can actually see him present. It is not like everything they do is his success, there were many other people involved in that. But the point that I am making is that these are ongoing institutional realizations of Dewey's ideas and ideals. Again, I like going that route because institutions, for Dewey, are an instance of concrete intelligence. There are some he would like to get rid of, because they are maleducative and harmful, but I actually like to go at that lasting legacy to show you that—in a certain sense—his ideas live on. More abstractly, his notions of communicative pluralistic democracy live on, in which democracy is always a thing in the making. We have already talked about the importance of substantial democracy,

which can turn out to be immensely important if democracy survives in the twenty-first century.

We can look at not just his vision of a democracy, but his particular vision of a pluralistic democracy, communicative democracy, in which meanings are made, not found. So, you do not impose formal democracy in the Middle East at the end of a bayonet. We already have reasons here in America's longest war to think this may not have been such a good idea. Dewey would have known that at the start. If we ever figure it out, maybe we will stop trying to do that. If you want a democracy built, that is fine; you can play an important mediation role. This is an abstract. Northern Ireland had a democracy, but they had a conflict that was hundreds of years old that you would have thought was not resolvable. But the fact is, George Mitchell was a critical intermediary. There is lots of evidence that there is a role for intermediaries to play just as long as they are not taking sides a whole lot. This nation-building in your own puritan, protestant, Calvinistic, Roman law self-image may not work. That is also a matter of deep historical ignorance about many parts of the world. But you do not impose your style of democracy on anyone. We did not impose it upon Japan, although we thought that we did. We imposed the formal structures of our democracy, which is by the way a warning of how you could think you have democracy because you have the formal structures, and wake up and one day realize you do not have democracy at all. You only have to look at the formal structures of, say, Stalin's Russia or Hitler's Germany to realize you can have formal structures; it is the substance—basically, if publics cannot identify themselves and act effectively to change government, you do not live in a democracy anymore. That is an aside, but it is an important aside. So, yes, we have institutional reasons as well as abstract reasons to believe that Dewey's notions of democracy remain exceedingly viable. It certainly matters that Dewey has a very significant status in China today after Mao and then the emerging of China—we do not know what we are going to get, and it could be horrible. But Dewey is an integral part of that conversation actually, because he was important there when he arrived the first time and instead staying a couple weeks, stayed for two and a half years. That left an enduring legacy. And, he could matter elsewhere. Let me quickly add here: we are talking about Dewey, but if some other democratic theorist works it out better, great, just as long as we work it out. But I do think Dewey's notions of what democracy is work well, his notions of inquiry continue to work well. Those ideas are abstractly viable, but I also think very concretely viable.

GJ: *What can teachers still learn from Dewey that might surprise them?*

JG: The thing that I picked for this one is personal in my own work, and that's fairly typical. So, it is going to be idiosyncratic. There are other things,

they are just not really coming to mind, to be honest with you. We have already touched on it—it is the role of embodiment and feelings. What is interesting is any competent, capable, able teacher who is actually able to connect with kids can creatively make a difference—Dewey had this wonderful phrase; I forget where he says it, but in effect he is saying there are those that would be surprised that students bring their bowels as well as their brains to school. I might also add they bring their sexual organs, and I distinctly remember when I was studying in the seventh grade, I also brought those along with me—they seemed to have greatly influenced my thinking at the time, as I recall, nor do I believe I was alone in having an experience like that. That's the education truth of which I have been so concerned. One only has to look at No Child Left Behind or various education legislation over the decades, and certainly since the Cardinal Principles, which is as good a mark as any for the moment when modern schooling—not education—arrives in the United States. The body is not there. The emotions are not there. When Dewey courts this in one of his writings—was it *School and Society*—one of his educational works—he was looking for classroom furniture and he could not find it; and actually the business owner or the clerk suddenly goes, "Oh! You want something where students can do something! We don't have anything like that." We still don't. I understand we put computers in their hands and all of that, but fundamentally we all know that we still line up the desks in rows, don't we? And that turns out to be both literal, and in many ways a metaphor, for some very interesting other things that we do.

One of the catastrophic misreadings, even by philosophers that ought to know better—you know, PhD's, really smart people! —I hope my mocking attitude towards that is clear, because Dewey loved good practice and he did not really care who had the intelligence to carry out good practice. William James is famous for writing *The Ph.D. Octopus*, how your formal education gets in the way of you actually being of good use for anything. It is obvious, almost, that we are already a formally educated society and an undereducated society in the rich ways of practice.

Here is one that I wish teachers would pay attention to if they ever read *Democracy and Education*. I would like them to attend to the quote where Dewey says the best form of education is through the occupations.

GJ: *Yes*

JG: Why? Because intelligence is in the social practices of your culture. When he says that, he underlines occupations—he is writing that when he is in a battle with [David] Snedden and [Charles] Prosser which he is going to lose—that created tracking. All of the kids should have a substantial component that involves being engaged in practice, actually engaging in

concrete occupation. Then, of course, you reflect on it, then you learn the theory, and then you know what the mathematics are good for and where you might be able to use these statistics. There is a lot of evidence even in very definitive school programs where we are going to create this program that teaches for this job—everything I have just argued against. We nonetheless notice that all those kids that cannot learn, when they are suddenly learning a skill, a trade, they do get excited. I hope that does not sound like I am undoing myself. I am just saying you can do the same thing without necessarily locking them in on a specific job. Dewey had what he called "industrial intelligence," by which he meant what it took to make the worker the master of their industrial fate. We do not want industrial intelligence, right?

Dewey understood that capitalism has arrived, and this would be like deciding you were going to overthrow feudalism in the year 1250. You are not going to overthrow capitalism in the year 2017; it *is not* happening. Which does not mean that on the path to becoming a piece of human capital, we cannot do all of the other stuff that does not fit you for a preexistent society but actually allows you in what I would call the postindustrial society to change it. I went through on the middle track, actually, after flunking out on the vocational track. I also got a "D" in typing, because I was not a good student. Yet, I saved a lot of money that I could ill-afford at the time by being able to type my own dissertation. Why? Because I got a "D" in the class, but necessity being a well-known mother that it is, when it came time for me to save that money I just sat down at the big old IBM Selectric back in the day and you know what, in three days I was typing really good. Why? Because I wanted to. Likewise, I do not use all the math that I learned on the way to get my degree in physics; I use the math that they don't teach, which was the accounting math and the Rule of 78 s, which is why I always pay off my loans early. Because I know what that interest rate is doing. But all that math that we almost do not teach anymore—once I needed it, I actually was able to make use of it.

Of course, once you are engaged in the occupations, then there are powerful motivators for you. Dewey would only want to keep those motivators going on out to reflecting on the postindustrial machine itself, and the quality of work—studies that you find that say the Scandinavian countries are disgusting countries, but which almost all of them are among the happiest on the face of the planet. People do work hard there, and they work intelligently, but they also have a tradition of good work where your work means something to you. And because our work means something to us, it should mean something to everyone who is doing good work. It should have a value and a quality. So, when the product goes out the door, part of who I am is in fact invested in it. But I also have the critical creative

skills to understand the entire system from the bottom to the top, so I am not contradicting myself at all. Dewey could fight Snedden and Prosser and make the statement that the best form of education` is through—he underlined "through"—the occupations, but not for. Which would not bother me at all if these kids acquire all of those skills and decide, "The heck with this, I'm going to get a good job and raise a family." Great. Along the way, I think it would also be cool if they were able to reflect on the political industrial system that they will participate in. There is no reason not to allow them to do that, too. And if all of this actual going-on is going to be of interest to them, then the full richness of the global economy should be this close to them, and only an idiot is against the global economy.

On the other hand, I would be real concerned about what it would do to localities and a lot of other things. It is not conversation that bothers me so much as what is absent in the conversation. Then I have to say something about the wonderful Maxine Greene, right? That part of freedom is naming the absent. Well, Dewey would name that. You would end up naming it for yourself, actually, in a good Deweyan space. So, that would surprise people, I think, the end of vocational education with embodied emotions. And even the technical philosophers mistake Dewey's theory of inquiry as instrumentalism which, by the way, did not mean the narrow means ends rationality, that instrumentalism is what we're usually thinking of. He means it in the classical straight-up translation organon of principles, as in the classical organon of Aristotle's logic or the new organon of Bacon. It's just a tool; it is a useful tool. Thought itself should be retooled. But actually, Dewey condemns what he calls "arbitrary intellectualism," and this is important for teachers who should already know it—many good ones do. In fact, for many teachers, this is the part that matters: Our primary relation to existence is not a cognitive, knowing relation. Knowledge is always secondary experience, that's Dewey's phrase. Primary experience is immediate and anoetic and gives secondary experience knowledge, its context. When we experience the world, we experience pain, and joy, and wonder, and reverence, and humility that reverence brings with it. Pain—I thought I mentioned pain—melancholy—I love that; world-sickness! We have many relationships to existence, of which the cognitive knowing is only one.

If you want to do something to avoid relationships you find unpleasant or maybe horrible and soon repeat relationships with the universe that you found rewarding, and would find rewarding upon reflection—big distinction between the desire and the desirable—then cognition and knowledge has an important office to carry out. But Dewey is very clear even regarding high science. Science is an art and the handmaiden of other arts. I wish

he had picked another word, but I think his meaning is pretty clear; it is the server. You can enjoy science itself for the beauty of the knowledge it creates, but its fundamental and larger role is to be of service to other arts, because all arts have a cognitive component. It can help you get into the right relationship with the universe, but if you worship it as an end in itself, even in education, you will become a very destroyed human being. Actually, it is funny, for instance in the Big Bang Theory [American television sitcom], they get that exactly, right? The focus of it is an intellectual giant that is otherwise atrophied as a human being. At the edge of any comedy is tragedy, because you are almost at the heart of the tragedy of hyperrationality. The classical tragedy can mean many things, but the specific Western meaning—there are whole cultures that do not have this. Not a Hindu notion, for openers. Now, they have bad things happen to good people and the crush of loss of those we love and, we have all had experiences that you do not articulate in settings like this. Dewey is fully aware of that, but he is not troubled by the tragedies of hyperrationality because he does not value mere rationality that much. He values it a lot—a whole lot—because it is critical to the good life. But it is only in its role as servant to all of the other relationships; this might surprise many people, much less teachers. So yes, that's a big one. There is a couple of big ones there.

GJ: *What would you still like to know about Dewey if you were to ask other Dewey scholars?*

JG: This is going to sound terrible and it is not meant that way, but I have wonderful access to some of the best Dewey scholars there are. Although one of the things that—I was doing a response to a graduate student panel. So, having made that statement, I also want to make a quick statement that these young, fresh scholars who are just feeling their way—their Dewey will not be my Dewey. I would really like to see what they are doing, in part because they may alter the presuppositions of the questions I would ask by seeing possibilities that I do not see. But contextualized sort of in the middle of that, because of what spirituality means to me—because what people like Mark Johnson, with whom I agree—that with Dewey, your primary relationship is aesthetics. By that he does not mean courting beauty (although that's an important part of it), he means aesthetics in the sense of immediate qualitative noncognitive sensory experience because your primary relationship is not cognitive. And this is where the arts matter, because the arts operate in the nondiscursive spaces, the spaces outside of mere conceptualization. They must be. Dewey is going to think that you have to feel anything correctly to think it correctly, but sometimes, you just feel well. Then other meanings begin to change and evolve. In my preferred

conversations, it's not like—I do have a Ph.D. in philosophy of science and I feel I understand certain aspects of Dewey very well, but because my weaknesses are in the perceptive domains, my own particular situated limitations—or needs, as the case may be, and this is meant to be very idiosyncratic and personal—center on issues of aesthetic and religiosity. Those are the conversations that are mostly important to me. For once, I would not generalize for anybody. This really is personal and idiosyncratic; for me, it is what is most important for me in Dewey, and, ironically at the same time, the aspects of Dewey in which I am least qualified and competent. But things just happen that way sometimes. As long as you take it idiosyncratically, that is the personal answer to that question.

GJ: *If you were at a dinner party and Dewey were there, what would you ask Dewey, and what would you tell Dewey about yourself?*

JG: Again, personally and idiosyncratically—Personally, I never read a word of Dewey until I had a lot of different degrees, including a Ph.D. in philosophy. I never read a word of Dewey. For me, he provides a better aesthetics solution to the problem with nihilism than Friedrich Nietzsche. It's more social, it's more communicative; it's self-creation, but it's social self-creation. He provides powerful existential answers to the existential questions for me like, "What is life? What is the meaning of life? How should I live my life?" That is what I would talk to him about. If I could engage in those kinds of questions, I would say all I cared to say about myself and he would say to me all he cared to say about himself. Were we great friends of the type of which I would promise not to ever disclose like Scudder Klyce tried to—the crazy guy that Dewey dialogued for twenty years and never met and knew was crazy—I would want to know if he is indeed in his interior as I think he is, because most people do not believe that. Why they do not think it is possible, I do not know, because anytime he releases anything it has an aspect of melancholy—my favorite mood, by the way; my most elevated mood. It would be exactly where a lot of people do not think he has much to say; and, in fact I think he has everything to say. What is life; how should I live my life; what does life mean? The questions that the moment you become reflective—oftentimes consciously so around twelve, thirteen and fourteen—those questions obsessed you. I am sure he would engage me. I am very confident he would engage me, and he would say all I needed to know about me, and all I would really need to know about him from whence I might be able to infer all the rest that I need to know.

There is a story—I forget who tells it—they were at the dinner party. There is this young (I think) medical doctor or someone who wanted to meet the great John Dewey and got an invitation to this small dinner party, just a few people at the table. I do not think it was this young medical doctor, but someone really asked Dewey the kind of existential

question that I am talking about—I forget the exact wording, but it was in effect, "I like to climb mountains." Someone asked him why, and he said, "Because when you get to the top, you can see another mountain." The meaning of life, for me, is to make more meaning; I think that is what the meaning of life is for Dewey. You see what I'm saying? It's not an ultimate telos. I think I know the answer, but I do not want the textbook, "The meaning of life is to make more meaning." I would love to continue the conversation about what you do when you see another mountain, because to scale that mountain you can't repeat what you have just done because it is a different kind of mountain, and it may require different skills and techniques, and besides, it is higher. I would like to have that kind of existential conversation. Then he may surprise me and say, "Well, eventually I'll get to the highest mountain and I'll go to sleep" or something, but something tells me I do not think so.

GJ: *How would you summarize the legacy of John Dewey?*

JG: Dewey said that we had not created democracy, we created the conditions for democracy. And it is pretty clear in created democracy tests before us that we are going to be after that mountain—up that mountain forever. So, I think he bids us not to rest and to make the catastrophic error of thinking we have all the democracy we need. He is famous for saying the solution for democracy is more democracy, by which he did not mean whether we are going to vote today, to learn, or go do a good job or anything like that, but that the solution for the problems of democracy is more democracy. I think that is an important legacy. A part of his legacy that is most disturbing is his efforts to reconstruct a liberal democracy. Of course, neoliberals—one of the powerful far-right put him ahead of *Das Kapital*; put *Democracy and Education* ahead of *Das Kapital*, and, it is one of the most dangerous books ever written from their perspective, I fear that they were right. Dewey rejected innate free will and replaced it with intelligence. Intelligence is the key to freedom, and if I omitted anything from our earlier discussion of intelligence, it is to understand it is socially distributed. So, he is going to replace all of those founding components of the Enlightenment that are incorporated into our Constitution and got us going good. He is going to reject innate rationality; that should be obvious from the things we have been saying about intelligence. If we are social through and through, we sure are not atomistic individuals calculating our utilities in a battle of all against all, are we?

The fact is, not everyone wants the same thing; and people like me would be more than happy to trade salary for time. Many people would. There is a lot of evidence that once your needs for security are met, many people redirect themselves energetically to pursuing other than mere economic pursuits. But if one understands a rich economy, securing those

goals would contribute also to economic enjoyment and development. He did not much care for notions of private property, the Lockean foundation that is woven right into our founding documents. I wish he had said more about colonialism. William James said a lot, but he [Dewey] certainly wrote an essay entitled, "Imperialism Is Easy," so he may have been worried about it a bit. I think that was actually written when he was presiding at the Trotsky trial, by the way, which puts together something that I think endures, and he was sort of reflecting on American imperialism, I think in Mexico. I am not certain of that, but it is one of those things I would bet $100, but I wouldn't bet $1,000.

What is really kind of interesting is that when you are looking for distinct American music, meaning North America but particularly United States, you think of jazz and blues, and that has been globally masterfully successful. Philosophically, the only contribution we have made is pragmatism and it has gotten almost nowhere inside of American philosophy departments. But he is a part of that legacy. It is interesting—I do not personally endorse Richard Rorty's particular kind of ironic, linguistic pragmatism. I'm at odds with that, to be honest. But he wrote that wonderful book, *Achieving Our Country*, and it is Dewey and [Walt] Whitman. Dewey said that Whitman is the seer of democracy, he is the prophet of democracy, in which the religious component is critical. Certainly, for Whitman or for Dewey, that is not dogmatic religion but it is religiosity, which I interpret as reverence—wonder, awe, and humility before that which you cannot comprehend and control. But it could just be good old-fashioned sense that the kingdom of God is among you; it is in the quality of wherever you assemble—He, too, is there. Well, I do not know if He's there, but I do know that there is something spiritual about good company and that you can secure it, as somebody who grew up in fundamentalist circumstances is well aware in all kinds of community because people that are into the four gospels got the eleventh commandment.

Dewey also considered the foundations of democracy in ways that are really going to matter in the twenty-first century. You know, the whole pragmatic ethos in which I think is an important legacy. He is certainly in the tradition of Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman, that is for sure. I do not need to turn Emerson, Thoreau, or Whitman into pragmatists to say that; some do. Cornell West very clearly does in the case of Emerson; and for what it's worth I happen to think he's right, but whether he is right or not, he is certainly in that trajectory. But in a certain sense, that has always been the alternative telling of America, as opposed to the various great awakenings and the gospel of greed and the whole tradition that confuses having more with being more. Those two tellings continue to struggle.

Dewey is part of an alternative narrative that can be found in the Founding Fathers, actually, not completed there, but found, in particular Jefferson. Yes, I know about Sally Hemmings. Being from the South, I am the least surprised to realize that she was related to his wife, because that is the way things were. So, he had to struggle with a lot of things we continue to struggle with, unlike Washington who freed his slaves—but even that was tricky if you are freeing people who do not have the material conditions to be genuinely free. I am a supporter of [Philip] Sheridan's general field order, and forty acres and a mule, and provide economic freedom for people when we are going to free people formally, and we would all be in much better shape today on race if we had understood the economics of freedom—substantial freedom—right at the beginning. I mention that because that was a real possibility; that was an issued field order by a general that could do it, that Lincoln did not oppose and may never have if he had not been assassinated. We will never know, but he may not have. We know that it was in place for many months and he did not oppose it. That would have been really different, unbelievably different, if we all had an automatically economically viable position—we, however, essentially allowed the rich planter to keep their ill-gotten goods. This is controversial, I do not support reparations in that form now, but what does it mean? If material conditions matter for a substantial democrat, what does it mean that opportunity passed us by, and what can we do now? It is a different kind of question, but it is not an abstract question. A general that could issue that and get it in place because he had—all the bayonets that were left were pretty much his. They were doing that and it was working remarkably well because there are a lot of mules laying around here we do not need and the horses, too, because this war is over. We do not want to feed them. We will let you feed them on your forty acres and a horse or mule.

We are still trying to achieve our nation, and Dewey is an important part of the conversation that at the moment is not winning. That is Dewey's legacy. There are chords in America that could still be hit if we wanted to pluck those strings indefinitely.

GJ: *Thank you very much*

JG: Thank you. Enjoyed it.

CHAPTER 16

Final Reflection: Common Ground, not so Common Ground

We always live at the time we live and not at some other time, and only by extracting at each present time the full meaning of each present experience are we prepared for doing the same thing in the future.
—John Dewey, Experience and Education, 1938[1]

The only freedom that is of enduring importance is freedom of intelligence, that is to say, freedom of observation and of judgment exercised in behalf of purposes that are intrinsically worth while.
—John Dewey, Experience and Education, 1938[2]

The overarching theme of this volume of collected scholar interviews is to ascertain whether John Dewey's educational philosophy remains relevant and has a role to play in twenty-first-century education. Fourteen different individual scholar voices have now spoken. At the outset of this interview venture, I anticipated a spectrum of opinions—advocates, dissenters, and some responders with lingering questions. My goal was to seek out both positive and negative input about John Dewey.

In this analysis, there is much to be gleaned personally from these conversations. At the outset, I identified a relatively common denominator among most of these fourteen scholars, if not all, namely, that discovering Dewey is an unplanned event—either an epiphany or an evolutionary process. Many of these scholars found at some point along their journey of discovering Dewey that Dewey's ideas become part and parcel of their individual thoughts and reflections. Moreover, even with the voiced acknowledgment that reading Dewey can be somewhat

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difficult, these scholars reinforce that this difficulty should not become a barrier to pursuing a wider understanding of how John Dewey's ideas and ideals remain beneficial to the thoughtful expansion of democracy, education, and society. In the interview conversations, each scholar reveals genuine, forthright, spontaneous vignettes of his/her individual experiences discovering and developing a personal awareness of Dewey. These dialogues are not necessarily revelations of knowledge solely gained from professional research, graduate studies, or teaching. Instead, these scholars disclose more frequently that they gained a deep understanding of Dewey through lived experiences—not unlike the way in which Dewey discussed the process of experiential learning.

In conjunction with this common thread throughout the dialogues is the scholarly advice to read Dewey—and to reread Dewey—to reach an individual understanding of, and a synergy with, Dewey's theories that, as a result, become a contribution to each reader's individual knowledge and appreciation of democratic values. In other words, the ideal way to bring Dewey into classrooms and communities is to experience reading Dewey and to reflect on his message. This, in turn, creates new experiences involving Deweyan ideas and ideals. Such experiences should clearly reveal that Dewey did not reside in an isolated enclave of a narrowly focused educational environment. Dewey practiced outreach and expanded his perspectives to include interdisciplinary and international communities. Dewey's ideas and theories have no boundaries. He endeavored to open eyes, expand thinking, and stretch imaginations to address any and all problems and issues in society.

The various labels affixed to Dewey—such as pragmatist, socialist, progressive, and social democrat—have been discussed, defined, and dissected in these interview transcripts. The same holds true for Dewey's frequent application of common terms—such as *occupations, experience, savage*, *community, experimentation,* and *democracy*—in his writings to add depth to his educational philosophy and adroitly foster knowledge and understanding. Ideally, these scholar interviews add clarity to and enhance understanding of Dewey's philosophical ideas as well as demonstrating the manner in which the practical applications of his educational principles continue to advance teaching and learning in today's schools.

But most important, when all is said and done, all fourteen scholars strongly believe that in this twenty-first century, John Dewey not only is relevant but also contributes a vital and vibrant educational philosophy

that resonates a sound critical and reflective thinking path to address the issues confronting a rapidly changing and global society. In support of the discoveries and conclusions from these interviews, I selected the following thought-provoking quotations from each of our fourteen scholars, which I present in random order, for your consideration.

Final Words

The impression I would try to convey to someone who did not know much about Dewey was how much there is to know and how probably there is some concern in their lives upon which he had something to say that they would find worth reading, if not everything he had to say. But he touched virtually every aspect of human experience. (Robert Westbrook)

Dewey has a sense that speaks to us as contemporary people of how to think about real problems that we encounter, and to find strategies that we and other caring people can actually feel good about exploring. (Judith Green)

In the Deweyan concept, the core would be how he expressed it in *Democracy and Education*: how the curriculum meshes together, interrelates in terms of the nature and needs of the learner, and the prospects for democracy. So, it requires a totally different structure of our curriculum, and that's not the old "subject by subject" structure. (Daniel Tanner)

With the curriculum, he certainly would not approve of having a specific learning objective, for every lesson, every single day. (Nel Noddings)

Dewey was a great believer in incidental learning. In other words, you do one thing and you learn something else. (Herbert Kliebard)

People do keep drawing upon Dewey's ideas because he really did get to the heart of truths that are still recognized by other people as truths. (Christine Sleeter)

I think he has been underrated politically, and I think increasingly people in critical education and in critical pedagogy—whatever those words mean today … are rediscovering Dewey. That, I think, is a very, very good thing. (Michael Apple)

It is nice to have a voice [Dewey's] that has balance to it; even if that balance is not as robust as perhaps I would like to have it, it is still there and it is still a marker for many people who feel that we are going too far in the wrong direction. (Walter Feinberg)

> And you know if Dewey had had more influence, if his ideas were realized in more practice, the world would be a better place. (Ellen Condliffe Lagemann)
>
> The authentic pedagogy material looks not just at practices of teaching; but what the intellectual demands are that teachers make on the kids and are they asking kids to think critically, are they are asking kids to show deep understanding instead of complex understanding of the subject, and they are asking kids to connect their academic understandings to some real issues beyond school—three basic ideas. (Fred Newmann)
>
> You could say the legacy is helping people think deeply about educational purposes, methods, strategies, approaches, that will lead children and young people to experience an empowering kind of learning that will enrich their lives. (Linda Darling-Hammond)
>
> I think of Dewey as a contemporary … a person in whose voice you recognize something of yourself. It's a person in whose voice you hear or feel a provocation into thinking. It's a person in whose voice you see a concern, a concern that matters, for things that matter. (David Hansen)
>
> There is a lot of interest in Dewey right now, in pragmatism in general, and his legacy. I suppose one could say that he is stimulating people in a number of different areas to take his ideas seriously and push them forward. (Larry Hickman)
>
> We are still trying to achieve our nation, and Dewey is an important part of the conversation that at the moment is not winning. That is Dewey's legacy. There are chords in America that could still be hit if we wanted to pluck those strings indefinitely. (Jim Garrison)

Ideally, these fourteen voices will serve to inspire others to follow similar paths to discovering Dewey. All fourteen of the scholars interviewed form a unified voice underscoring that in times of turbulent, continuing change and controversial conversation—such as in our twenty-first century—John Dewey's dialogue, considered from multiple perspectives, is needed more than ever. In closing, let us strike a chord with his words from *Democracy and Education*: "The educational process has no end beyond itself; it is its own end."

Notes

1. Southern Illinois University Press. Used by permission.
2. Southern Illinois University Press. Used by permission.

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