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# Where Have You Gone, John Dewey?: Locating the Challenge To Continue and the Challenge To Grow as a Profession

Dorothy H. Evensen,\* Patrick Shannon\*\* and  
Jacqueline Edmondson\*\*\*

## I. Introduction

The organizers of this symposium<sup>1</sup> believe that the perspectives offered through the discourses<sup>2</sup> of various professions might provide conceptual tools with which participants could forge more concrete versions of what a profession of mediation<sup>3</sup> might mean. They turned to us, as educators, to explain how good ideas can go awry, specifically asking us where the ideas of John Dewey figure within the profession of education today. Given this charge we set out to encapsulate a very long, complicated story, but before doing that, and consistent with Dewey's principle of *connection*, we attempt to situate ourselves within the themes and topics of the symposium.

First, we recognize the historical and cultural similarities between mediators and educators; similarities Robert Dingwall aptly points out.<sup>4</sup>

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1. See Symposium, *Dispute Resolution and Capitulation to the Routine: Is There a Way Out?*, 108 PENN ST. L. REV. 1 (2003).

2. We use this term to include both the encoded and enacted texts that include histories, mythologies, biographies, theories, empirical research, and anecdotes.

3. See Robert Dingwall & Kerry Kid, *After the Fall . . . : Capitulating to the Routine in Professional Work*, 108 PENN ST. L. REV. 67 (2003). Dingwall and Kidd acknowledge the absence of consensus concerning exactly what the profession under question might be, but state, "Although a number of different job titles are in use, let us call this the profession of mediation." *Id.* at 68.

4. *Id.*

Both groups, he reminds us, are practitioners of “ancient arts that are now being turned into professions.”<sup>5</sup> Second, we resonate with the refrain of “*not just*” heard throughout the numerous formal and informal conversations of the symposium. Mediation is *not just* an alternative to litigation, *not just* the presence of a neutral party between clearly biased contestants, *not just* a trainable position, and *not just* a collection of expedient, common sense methods that “work”<sup>6</sup> in most contexts. Likewise, education is *not just* a modern surrogate for parenting, *not just* an expeditious way of transmitting a dominant cultural ideology, *not just* a preparation for future living. Finally, we identify with the symposium’s theme of “capitulating to the routine.”<sup>7</sup> Scores of contemporary social critics have noted that, although the everyday contexts of twenty-first century living would appear quite foreign to time travelers from the nineteenth century, such imagined beings would feel right at home in most contemporary classrooms.

We will, however, depart somewhat from the framing metaphor of the symposium: *Paradise Lost/Paradise Regained*.<sup>8</sup> We stand at an intermediate position, perhaps the one described by the angel sent to escort Adam and Eve from the garden—a promise of “A Paradise within thee”<sup>9</sup> achieved through deeds that conjoin knowledge with faith. The post-garden generations need to remember that it is living on earth, not yearning for paradise, that is important. It is within cultural histories, not mythologies, that answers are found. It is through philosophical inquiries, where theory and practice are dialectically related, that lives worth living materialize.

John Dewey, a philosopher by training, proposed that this project, actualizing a philosophy of life through professional practice, was best advanced through education.<sup>10</sup> In an 1894 letter to his wife, Alice, Dewey proposed: “The school is the one form of social life which is abstracted [and] under control—which is directly experimental, and if philosophy is ever to be an experimental science, the construction of a

5. *Id.* (quoting EVERETT C. HUGHES, *THE SOCIOLOGICAL EYE: SELECTED PAPERS* 311 (1984)).

6. For a critique of the “what works” rationale for professional activity, see FRED NEWMAN & LOIS HOLZMAN, *LEV VYGOTSKY: REVOLUTIONARY SCIENTIST* 164 (1995). They declare “what works” to be “the banal dictum of post-modern human understanding.” *Id.* They point out the circularity of its logic as “what works is what is and what is is what works.” *Id.*

7. Symposium, *supra* note 1.

8. See ROBERT ACKERMAN, *DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYMPOSIUM AGENDA* (2003) (on file with the Penn State Law Review).

9. JOHN MILTON, *PARADISE LOST* bk. XII, ln. 5871, in *THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE* (M.H. Abrams et al. eds., Rev. ed. 1968).

10. Letter from John Dewey, to Alice Dewey (July 12, 1984), in LOUIS MENAND, *THE METAPHYSICAL CLUB* 320 (2001).

school is its starting point.”<sup>11</sup> Dewey anticipated, nonetheless, that converting this realization into a reality required tangible proof made accessible to skeptical constituencies.<sup>12</sup> In a letter written to William Rainey Harper, then president of the University of Chicago, Dewey outlined his “scheme,” the Laboratory School,<sup>13</sup> which would embody the professional practice he envisioned:

The conduct of a school of demonstration, observation and experiment in connection with the theoretical instruction is the nerve of the whole scheme. Without this no pedagogical department<sup>14</sup> can command the confidence of the educational public it is seeking to lay hold of and direct; the mere profession of principles without their practical exhibition and testing will not engage the respect of the educational profession.<sup>15</sup>

Later in this letter, Dewey, ever the realist, made a plea for continued funds for the Laboratory School by promising to do more, that is, include more grade levels and launch a summer program for teachers, with the same amount of funds.<sup>16</sup> This “more for less” refrain continues to be representative in the debates over educational funding.

Dewey was also realistic about more direct threats to his scheme.<sup>17</sup> He warned that other “sciences” were poised to provide remedies to the ailing state of American education through quick fixes and controlled curricula.<sup>18</sup> Many of the bases of these so-called innovations drew from theories of industrial productivity or psychological experimentation conducted under controlled laboratory conditions.<sup>19</sup> Dewey warned:

11. *Id.*

12. Letter from John Dewey, to William Rainey Harper, President, University of Chicago (1896), in JOHN DEWEY, NEED FOR A LABORATORY SCHOOL (1897), *reprinted in* 5 THE EARLY WORKS, 1882-1898 (S. Ill. Univ. Press 1972) [hereinafter Harper Letter].

13. Leo S. Shulman, *Theory, Practice, and the Education of Professionals*, 98 ELEMENTARY SCH. 511 (1998). Shulman points out that Dewey advocated not an apprentice model of teacher education but the creation of a laboratory. *Id.* An apprentice system would serve to propagate that which already exists; only a laboratory would be truly scientific in that it would serve to both extend and test knowledge. *Id.* The Laboratory School operated at the University of Chicago from 1896 to 1904.

14. It was also through Dewey’s advocacy that the Department of Pedagogy was established at the University of Chicago. See JOHN DEWEY, LETTER AND STATEMENT ON ORGANIZATION OF WORK IN A DEPARTMENT OF PEDAGOGY (1897), *reprinted in* 5 THE EARLY WORKS, 1882-1898, 442-447 (S. Ill. Univ. Press 1972). This department served as the prototype for Colleges of Education in universities throughout the US. It is ironic that Chicago phased out and ultimately closed its Department of Education in the late 1990s.

15. Harper Letter, *supra* note 12.

16. *Id.*

17. JOHN DEWEY (1897), *reprinted in* 5 THE EARLY WORKS, 1882-1898, 39-40 (S. Ill. Univ. Press 1972).

18. *Id.*

19. *See id.*

[T]here is no way to discover what is “more truly educational” except by the continuation of the educational act itself. The discovery is never made, it is always in the making. It may conduce to immediate ease or momentary efficiency to seek an answer for questions outside of education, in some material which already has scientific prestige. But such a seeking is an abdication, a surrender. In the end, it only lessens the chances that education in actual operation will provide the materials for an improved science. It arrests growth; it prevents the thinking that is the final source of all progress.<sup>20</sup>

In this article we take up two issues implied in our introduction—education as scientific inquiry and education as a contested terrain. We contend that John Dewey provided education professionals with a theory, a method, and innumerable demonstrations that allow educators to continue his pragmatic mission,<sup>21</sup> albeit through continuous personal, professional, and political struggles. Those who practice mediation, those who *would* practice mediation, and those who seek to understand better how mediation stands within other forms of dispute resolution, in short, our reading audience, must judge the relevancy of our narrative to their own professional situations.

We begin by looking at the philosophical, social, and personal influences on Dewey and describe his basic philosophy of education. Next, we situate Dewey’s work within the context of the progressive education movement in the United States, especially as it was enacted between World War I and World War II. We consider how divisions within this movement attenuated its effect and strengthened the position of those pedagogical forms that would encounter the least resistance from administrative forces. We then survey the political landscape of the post World War II era through today, noting the increasing role of government policies aimed at aligning education with corporate culture. Finally, we conclude by asking where we might find John Dewey today and speculating on the societal investments needed if his professional agenda were to be advanced.

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20. JOHN DEWEY (1928), *reprinted in* 5 THE LATER WORKS, 1925-1953, 39-40 (S. III. Univ. Press 1981).

21. The pragmatic perspective rejects foundationalism, or the idea that knowledge claims can be based on absolute truths. THOMAS A. SCHWANDT, *QUALITATIVE INQUIRY: A DICTIONARY OF TERMS* 123 (1997). Conversely, the pragmatist acknowledges the contingency of human knowing and perceives knowledge as a tool with which to organize experience. *Id.* The value of activity is tied to the consequences of activity knowable through inquiry and reflection undertaken within social contexts. *Id.* As Menand points out, “Pragmatism conjoins knowing and acting and posits them as the means through which humans ‘intelligently’ deal with the contingency of the world.” MENAND, *supra* note 10, at 374.

## II. Background: Why Education?

### A. Influences on Dewey's Work

Perhaps one of the most salient, yet least understood aspects of Dewey's philosophy of education was its non-dualistic premise. Drawn from the writings of Hegel<sup>22</sup> and the field-based anthropology of G.H. Mead, this philosophy maintained that dualities such as mind/matter, objective/subjective, activity/knowledge, and capital/labor are not "natural" categories, but derive from social and class distinctions, clearly "artifacts" of human interaction.<sup>23</sup> As an increasingly industrial society was poised to exacerbate class divisions, Dewey argued that wealth is not so much based on personal effort and foresight, but on fortune, particularly birthright, and that capitalism is not instinctive but learned.<sup>24</sup> Equipped with these non-dualist ideas, Dewey hypothesized an education where person and world are continuous, where children become attuned to the meaningfulness of both natural and social environments, and where they "make sense of the world for the sake of acting productively on the world."<sup>25</sup>

A second influence on Dewey's interest in education was the abominable conditions of American schools, especially the ever-growing urban schools of the late nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup> Beyond the physical squalor exposed by people like Joseph Mayer Rice and Jacob Riis,<sup>27</sup> Dewey recoiled at the intellectual poverty of schools, where instruction was dominated "by rehearsing of second-hand information, by memorizing for the sake of producing correct replies at the proper

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22. It is well documented that Dewey was particularly influenced in his youth by the work of Hegel. See ALAN RYAN, *JOHN DEWEY AND THE HIGH TIDE OF AMERICAN LIBERALISM* 85-86 (1995). He continued to acknowledge alignment with Hegelian ideas with regard to the need to study life and human consciousness in its wholeness; however, he split from Hegel regarding the issue of Absolutes. *Id.* In short, Dewey rejected the notions of essence and truth. *Id.* Reality for Dewey was perceived as the consequences of democratic activity, not a search for fundamental truth. *Id.*

23. JOHN DEWEY, *DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION* 333 (1916).

24. PATRICK SHANNON, *THE STRUGGLE TO CONTINUE: PROGRESSIVE READING INSTRUCTION IN THE UNITED STATES* 61 (1990).

25. RYAN, *supra* note 22, at 127.

26. See JOHN DEWEY, *HOW WE THINK* 338 (Prometheus Books 1991) (1910).

27. Rice was a pediatrician who had spent two years studying psychology and pedagogy in Germany, returning to the U.S. to observe 1,200 classrooms in the Northeast and Midwest during 1892. JOSEPH MAYER RICE, *THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM OF THE UNITED STATES* (1893). Riis chronicled the conditions of New York's public schools through photography at the turn of the twentieth century. JACOB RIIS, *HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES: STUDIES AMONG THE TENEMENTS OF NEW YORK* (1901).

time.”<sup>28</sup> Dewey recognized that these schools aimed at conserving a society that benefited the few over the many.<sup>29</sup> He pointed out the absurdity of clinging to reproductive forms of education, forms based on an assumption that “the future would be much like the past” when Americans live “in a society where change is the rule, not the exception.”<sup>30</sup> In dismissing the importance of students’ backgrounds and understandings, and of teachers’ education, these “traditional” schools produced few, if any positive outcomes.<sup>31</sup> Dewey was not alone in recognizing the societal need for schools to progress, with the nation in general, away from an antiquated way of life. Indeed, a later section of this article will take up the many forms of progressivism that appeared during the first half of the twentieth century.

It is the third influence, however, that so greatly distinguishes Dewey from other philosophers of education:<sup>32</sup> Dewey truly liked children, and publicly affirmed that he became involved in education “mainly on account of the children.”<sup>33</sup> The beginnings of Dewey’s social constructivist thought might be seen in a comment made in a letter to Alice Dewey concerning their son, Morris,<sup>34</sup> who, according to his father represented “social intelligence incorporate.”<sup>35</sup> Liking children certainly made Dewey’s lifelong project delightful; still, he was not so much interested in teaching five-year olds how to calculate and read as much as he was interested in “how the natural world and human culture combine to shape our minds and personalities and the cultural settings in which we live.”<sup>36</sup> The school provided the perfect cultural context in which to observe this simultaneously social and psychological phenomenon.

28. DEWEY, *supra* note 26, at 338.

29. *Id.*

30. JOHN DEWEY, *EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION* 19 (1963).

31. *Id.* In Dewey’s own words, he concluded that the “lack of mutual adaptation made the process of teaching and learning accidental.” *Id.* at 45.

32. See RYAN, *supra* note 22, at 338. Ryan gives the following examples:

Plato had no sympathy for childhood, Locke was unmarried and childless, Rousseau sent his five children to the foundling hospital, where they almost certainly died in infancy, Mill was childless and unkind to his siblings, Russell’s advice to parents was that they should take care what sorts of servants they hired to look after their children, and Mme. Montessori had an illegitimate child she had to place for adoption.

*Id.*

33. MENAND, *supra* note 10, at 316.

34. Sadly, Morris died of diphtheria at two-and-a-half years of age during a family trip to Europe in 1895. LAWRENCE A. CREMIN, *POPULAR EDUCATION AND ITS DISCONNECTS* (1990).

35. MENAND, *supra* note 10, at 318.

36. RYAN, *supra* note 22, at 182.

### B. *Basic Principles of Dewey's Educational Philosophy*

Dewey lived a long, productive life and was one of the most prolific yet popular philosophers of any era. To reduce his body of work on education to a handful of principles is not, however, an impossible task. Indeed much of the bases of his thinking about education were articulated in a succinct statement he wrote for the *School Journal* in 1896, titled *My Pedagogic Creed*.<sup>37</sup> In that work, Dewey established his integrated ontological and epistemological argument that man is social by nature, that psychology and sociology are intrinsically interwoven, and that knowing amounts to learning how to interpret experience within the activities of cultural communities.<sup>38</sup> In his own words, Dewey said, "I believe that all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race."<sup>39</sup> The motive to participate in this sociocultural project was, according to Dewey, likewise natural: "The child is born with a natural desire to give out, to do, and that means to serve."<sup>40</sup>

Another tenet of Dewey's credo affirmed: "I believe that education . . . is a process of living and not a preparation for future living."<sup>41</sup> Education was experience that simultaneously connected students to funds of cultural understanding and afforded them the opportunity to contribute to the future of their culture.<sup>42</sup> If there was to be an aim, it had to be *growth*.<sup>43</sup> Lawrence Cremin notes the scope of this enterprise:

John Dewey liked to define the aim of education as growth, and when he was asked growth toward what, he liked to reply, growth leading to more growth. That was his way of saying that education is subordinate to no end beyond itself . . . [The aim of education is] to make human beings who will live life to the fullest, who will continually add to the quality and meaning of their experience and to their ability to direct that experience, and who will participate actively with their fellow human beings in the building of a good society.<sup>44</sup>

These themes—the social nature of human beings, continuity, and

37. John Dewey, *My Pedagogic Creed*, SCH. J. (1897), *reprinted in* 5 THE EARLY WORKS, 1882-1898, 84 (S. III. Univ. Press 1972).

38. *Id.*

39. *Id.*

40. JOHN DEWEY, ETHICAL PRINCIPLES (1896), *reprinted in* 5 THE EARLY WORKS, 1882-1898, 118 (S. III. Univ. Press 1972).

41. Dewey, *supra* note 37, at 87.

42. *Id.*

43. *Id.*

44. CREMIN, *supra* note 34, at 125.



growth—echoed throughout the works that followed. Dewey's educational project can best be characterized as pragmatic and progressive. Pragmatism was the means to make philosophy an experimental science, and education was the means through which progress was to be insured. For Dewey, there was no need to search for first principles or Hegelian "Absolutes." Rather, it was the processes and the consequences of an educational enterprise that warranted attention. Education, for Dewey, was simply the methodological component of philosophy that both embodied and insured "social progress and reform."<sup>45</sup>

This revolutionary idea was to be revisited by Dewey in what is probably his most widely read opus, *Democracy and Education*.<sup>46</sup> In that work he stated:

[P]hilosophy is at once an explicit formulation of the various interests of life and a propounding of points of view and methods through which a better balance of interest may be effected. Since education is the process through which the needed transformation may be accomplished and not remain a mere hypothesis as to what is desirable, we reach a justification of the statement that philosophy is the theory of education as a deliberately conducted practice.<sup>47</sup>

This statement illustrates Dewey's conceptualization of the use of the scientific method to solve the social problems of life within the laboratory of education.<sup>48</sup> Faced with the contingencies of being both in the inner world of the classroom and in the larger world outside of the classroom, students and teachers could act *intelligently* when acting was conjoined with knowing and theory was wedded with practice.<sup>49</sup>

Through the Laboratory School, Dewey grounded his seemingly abstract ideas, allowing the school's activity to reflect the continuity and connections inherent in his work. But how could one demonstrate that children who could grow their own wheat and make their own bread had grown in their capabilities to reform society? Alan Ryan, one of the more recent biographers of Dewey, notes that Dewey struggled to find a mechanism through which to forward his educational vision: "What was needed was a criterion of growth-promoting experience, and Dewey found it . . . in the concept of democracy."<sup>50</sup> With the notion of democracy added to his conceptual repertoire, Dewey located both a

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45. Dewey, *supra* note 37, at 93.

46. DEWEY, *supra* note 23, at 332.

47. *Id.*

48. *See id.*

49. *See id.*

50. RYAN, *supra* note 22, at 282.

solution and a problem. He once said that “democracy has to be born anew every generation, and education is the midwife.”<sup>51</sup> Indeed the birthing of democracy was a difficult labor in Dewey’s own time, and continues to be difficult today.

### III. Multiple Progressivisms: The National Progressive Education Movement

During the Progressive Era at the turn of the last century, many Americans believed that reformed social institutions could improve the lives of all citizens. They demanded that governments at all levels work to address the tragic economic, political, and social consequences of unregulated urbanization, industrialization, and immigration, which left too many people hungry, homeless, and unhealthy. Whether you consider the Progressive Era the triumph of liberal America over the business community<sup>52</sup> or the emergence of political capitalism to stabilize that system in a time of uncertainty and trouble,<sup>53</sup> American institutions, since that time, have assumed greater responsibility in and for our public and private lives.

At that time, schools were understood as both a problem and a solution. As Jacob Riis and Joseph Meyer Rice demonstrated, contemporary schools varied widely in their abilities to address the needs of children displaced from farms, living in squalor, or unable to speak English.<sup>54</sup> Over ninety percent of American teachers worked as overseers or drillmasters in order to continue the traditional curriculum of classics throughout primary and grammar school, without regard for social conditions or school populations.<sup>55</sup> Although nearly everyone agreed that schools should be changed in order to prepare children for the economic and civic demands of the twentieth century, there was considerable disagreement about the goals and means for those changes. Different groups advocated different ways of conducting schools according to their different views of the ideal future. As a result, each offered a different type of expert to direct school reform.

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51. JOHN DEWEY, *THE NEED OF AN INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION IN AN INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY* (1916), *reprinted in* 10 *THE MIDDLE WORKS, 1899-1924*, 139 (S. Ill. Univ. Press 1976).

52. *See* ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, *THE AMERICAN REFORMER* (1968).

53. *See* GABRIEL KOLKO, *THE TRIUMPH OF CONSERVATISM: A REINTERPRETATION OF AMERICAN HISTORY, 1900-1916* (1963).

54. *See supra* note 27 and accompanying text.

55. BARBARA FINKELSTEIN, *GOVERNING THE YOUNG: TEACHER BEHAVIOR IN AMERICAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS* (1989).

### A. *Conservative Reform*

Conservatives proposed modest changes in existing curriculum and virtually no changes in pedagogy in order to do a better job of maintaining the social, economic, and political status quo. William Torrey Harris and his national education committees called for a simple increase in the number of lessons per week, intensification of the drill within those lessons, and extension of discipline across more years of schooling.<sup>56</sup> Anyone knowledgeable about the structures of the subject matter could be a teacher, whose job it was to periodically monitor students' mastery of those subjects.<sup>57</sup> Teachers were content experts and teacher training was to be an apprenticeship.<sup>58</sup>

### B. *The Child-Centered Approach*

Others sought more radical reform. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Francis Wayland Parker complained that traditional schooling served the American aristocracy, rather than the masses, at public expense: "The methods of the few, in their control of the many, still govern our public schools, and to a great degree determine their management."<sup>59</sup> Parker believed that schooling was a primary mechanism through which to maintain the gap between society's haves and have nots: "The problem was how to give people education and keep them from exercising the divine gift of choice; to make them believe that they were educated and at the same time to prevent free action of mind. This problem was effectively solved in the method of quality teaching."<sup>60</sup> He suggested a complete overhaul of schooling, beginning with what he saw as the fallacious notion that the content of the curriculum was more important than the pedagogy.<sup>61</sup>

As superintendent of schools in Quincy, Massachusetts, Parker asked teachers to reform their teaching and curricula according to four principles: (1) children have the right to be themselves; (2) learning is natural; (3) teachers should experiment in order to meet learners' needs; and (4) curriculum should be based on the individual's knowledge of the world around the school.<sup>62</sup> This child-centered approach became quickly

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56. WILLIAM TONEY HARRIS, REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF FIFTEEN ON ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (1895).

57. *Id.*

58. *Id.*

59. FRANCIS W. PARKER, TALKS ON PEDAGOGICS: AN OUTLINE OF THE THEORY OF CONCENTRATION 436 (1884).

60. *Id.* at 408.

61. *Id.*

62. See LELIA PATRIDGE, THE QUINCY METHOD ILLUSTRATED (1885).

famous for its innovations, with nearly thirty thousand visitors to Parker's schools between 1876 and 1880.<sup>63</sup> Many of the remarkable Quincy lessons were captured in Lelia Patridge's *The Quincy Method Illustrated*.<sup>64</sup> Parker's method relied on teachers to develop their understandings of child development in order to reform their own teaching.<sup>65</sup> Knowledgeable teachers working together would likewise reform schools, enabling students to reach their full potentials in a changing world.<sup>66</sup>

Dewey accepted many parts of Parker's child-centered approach to schooling.<sup>67</sup> He urged educators to begin instruction at points contiguous with children's understandings and experiences and to construct educative experiences that directed learners to activities that simultaneously developed intellectual capabilities and advanced a social democratic agenda.<sup>68</sup> Dewey also recognized that teachers were the key to improved schooling.<sup>69</sup> He expanded Parker's ideas about developing professionalism among teachers, suggesting that only teachers could plan curricula that had "a positive content and intrinsic value of their own, and which called for the inquiry and constructive attitude on the part of the pupil."<sup>70</sup> Yet, most child-centered advocates were confident that social problems could be resolved by persons whose educational experiences allowed for optimal realization of personal pursuits<sup>71</sup> or who were left free to discover educative values through projects.<sup>72</sup> Dewey eschewed such practices and argued against activity for activity's sake.<sup>73</sup>

63. *See id.*

64. *Id.*

65. *Id.*

66. *Id.*

67. *See* John Dewey, *The University Elementary School: Studies and Methods*, UNIV. REC. 1 (1897).

68. *See id.*

69. *See id.*

70. *See id.*

71. *See* SHANNON, *supra* note 24, at 81-104. The City and Country School, founded by Caroline Pratt in 1913, provides one example. *Id.* Here, children used the material found in their immediate environment as a source of personal expression. *Id.* Another example is Margaret Naumburg's Children's School (later called the Walden School), which began operating in 1915. *Id.* Naumburg accused progressive educators, including Dewey, of neglecting the emotional development of children. *Id.* Her artistic-based curriculum was designed to allow children to realize their personal needs and ideas. *Id.* Teachers largely functioned as therapists to enable this goal. *Id.* For further descriptions of these and other child-centered projects, see *id.*

72. William Kilpatrick is usually considered the author of the "project method." *Id.* at 84. This differed largely from Dewey's theory inasmuch as it focused on individual development rather than on the role of the individual within a larger community of practice. *Id.*

73. Kilpatrick was a student of Dewey's at Teachers College and is often referred to as a "disciple" of Dewey. *See* RYAN, *supra* note 22, at 145. Ryan points out that Dewey

He believed that child-centered educators often left students “to operate in a blind and spasmodic fashion which promotes the formation of habits of immature, undeveloped, and egocentric activity.”<sup>74</sup> Dewey perceived this form of “progressive” education as catering to upper middle class values and priorities, and not as progressive in a socially significant sense.<sup>75</sup>

### C. *Scientific Management*

A second group of radical school reformers sought to apply business principles to curriculum development and teaching by translating the remarkably productive power of industry into the organization and methods of schooling.<sup>76</sup> Frederick Winslow Taylor’s scientific management theory captured the imaginations of many educators at the time.<sup>77</sup> This system of factory management rejected traditional common sense explanations, embraced professional expertise, employed the experimental method, and applied learning theory in order to maximize the productivity of each worker.<sup>78</sup> Through objective evaluation of each job, each organization, and each institution, Taylor sought to engineer a more perfect world.<sup>79</sup>

Taylor’s search for the one best system for any endeavor required the use of scientific tools to measure the effectiveness of the system in reaching its intended goal.<sup>80</sup> Once a prospective method was discovered through observation of master workers, Taylor’s labor engineers would: disassemble the method to its elemental parts; measure the accuracy and speed of each; experiment with new, potentially more accurate, and quicker elements; look for ways to translate the responsibility to technology; and then distribute the parts of the job among workers to

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attempted to disassociate his philosophies from practices, such as the project method, throughout his lifetime. *Id.* at 145.

74. John Dewey, 29 NAT’L SOC’Y FOR THE STUDY OF EDUC. Y.B. 204 (1930).

75. SHANNON, *supra* note 24, at 206.

76. RAYMOND CALLAHAN, EDUCATION AND THE CULT OF EFFICIENCY (1965).

77. See MARTHA BANTA, TAYLORED LIVES (1993) (providing a detailed analysis of how Taylorist efficiencies entered into people’s everyday lives); ANDREA GABOR, THE CAPITAL PHILOSOPHERS (2000) (describing how Taylor influenced all subsequent management experts including Herbert Simon, Robert McNamara, and Peter Drucker); ROBERT KANIGEL, THE ONE BEST WAY (1997) (writing in his biography of the philosopher that Taylor that was interested in changing all aspects of American culture through scientific management); NELSON, A MENTAL REVOLUTION (1992) (suggesting that Taylorism influenced psychology toward behaviorism which promoted that all human behavior could be measured).

78. See sources cited *supra* note 77.

79. See sources cited *supra* note 77.

80. See sources cited *supra* note 77.

create a labor system of greater efficiency.<sup>81</sup> To insure that each worker followed the procedure, Taylor produced instructional cards to explain the job to each worker and posted the appropriate cards at each workspace.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, he proposed an elaborate hierarchy of supervisors who would be responsible for efficient production and assembly of each successive part until the product was completed and inspected for quality control.<sup>83</sup> To make supervision more accurate and precise, supervisors were also issued instructional cards on how to complete their jobs efficiently.<sup>84</sup> In scientific management, only the top authorities in a factory were allowed to make substantial decisions about their work.<sup>85</sup>

In 1911, the National Society for the Study of Education appointed a Committee on the Economy of Time in Education, which was to apply a four step adaptation of Taylor's scientific management to schooling: (1) conduct and collect research that surveyed learning environments in order to determine curricular goals; (2) analyze those goals to identify their component parts and a best sequence in which those parts should be mastered; (3) measure the effects of various instructional methods to meet those partial goals in sequence using specifically designed tests; and (4) promote the methods that yield the highest results.<sup>86</sup> In its final report, the Committee articulated the priorities of education as: "To put its recommendations in simple, direct language, that its report may constitute a handbook and guide for the use of teachers and supervisors who are interested in planning classroom procedures with due regard for both economy and efficiency in teaching and learning."<sup>87</sup>

The efforts to find the one best system of schooling and to produce the instruction cards for teachers were greatly aided by the work in the emerging field of educational psychology. Psychologists used the newly codified procedures to discover scientific laws to solve the mysteries of human learning, memory, and intelligence.<sup>88</sup> Once found, these laws could be combined and translated into objective tools with which to shape human beings, and ultimately a better social order.<sup>89</sup> This new

81. See sources cited *supra* note 77.

82. See sources cited *supra* note 77.

83. See sources cited *supra* note 77.

84. See sources cited *supra* note 77.

85. SHANNON, *supra* note 24, at 10-12.

86. See Harold Wilson, FOURTH REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ECONOMY OF TIME IN EDUCATION, in 18 NAT'L SOC'Y FOR THE STUDY OF EDUC. Y.B. 204, PART 2, 7 (1919).

87. *Id.*

88. KARL PEARSON, THE GRAMMAR OF SCIENCE (1896).

89. *Id.*

society would be based on meritocracy—rather than wealth or power.<sup>90</sup> To facilitate the discovery of these laws, educational psychologists developed mathematical scales in order to measure accurately the change in social and mental activity directly attributable to the various experimental methods of instruction.<sup>91</sup> For educational psychologists, the first two decades of the twentieth century were “one long orgy of tabulation.”<sup>92</sup> As a result, they provided expert advice and scientific legitimacy for the scientific management of schools.

Dewey appreciated these efforts to identify and specify the goals of education within academic disciplines.<sup>93</sup> He recognized that children learned to reconstruct their experience by employing their understandings of those disciplines.<sup>94</sup> He believed that child-centered advocates’ lack of respect for those disciplines limited their chances to help individual students to grow.<sup>95</sup> However, Dewey deplored scientific managers’ efforts to make routines of teachers’ and students’ behaviors, thinking that nothing of value for schools could result from the “orgy of tabulation.”<sup>96</sup> The key to the structure of disciplines, and therefore to student growth, could only be found in students’ participation and reflection on the experiences of their lives.<sup>97</sup> Although teachers could and should plan curricula, they should not attempt to make it standard across contexts or reify it as a scope and sequence of skills.<sup>98</sup> Students should not be seated in neat rows, quietly reading or reciting according to a set format; instead, they should be engaged in experiences in order to “discipline” their lives.<sup>99</sup> Dewey persisted in reaffirming his themes of continuity and growth: “Experience has its geographical aspect, its artistic and its literary, its scientific and its historical sides. All studies arise from aspects of the one earth and one life upon it . . . . Relate the school to life, and all studies are necessarily correlated.”<sup>100</sup>

Although Dewey never capitulated to using the instructional card of scientific management to direct teachers’ actions in their classrooms, he did recognize the heavy load his ideas placed on teachers.<sup>101</sup> Several decades after closing his Laboratory School at the University of Chicago,

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90. Edward L. Thorndike, *Intelligence and Its Uses*, 140 HARPER’S MAG. 235-38 (1919-20).

91. See HAROLD RUGG, THAT MEN MAY UNDERSTAND 82 (1941).

92. *Id.*

93. See DEWEY, *supra* note 30.

94. See *id.*

95. *Id.*

96. See *id.*

97. See *id.*

98. See *id.*

99. See *id.*

100. JOHN DEWEY, THE SCHOOL AND SOCIETY 91 (1943).

101. KATHERINE MAYHER & ANN EDWARDS, THE DEWEY SCHOOL 366 (1936).

Dewey admitted:

In avoiding hard and fast plans to be executed and dictations of methods to be followed, individual teachers were, if anything, not given enough assistance either in advice or by way of critical supervision. There might well have been conditions fairer to teachers and more favorable to the success of the experiment.<sup>102</sup>

#### *D. Dewey's Theories Within the Context of the Progressive Era*

Dewey's answer to these shortcomings was to make teaching a profession in which teachers would study continuously their subject matter, the latest teaching methods, child development, and the history of education. True to his thesis that the discipline of teaching was wed to the experience of teaching, Dewey believed that this professional development would arise out of teachers' daily experience in their classrooms and schools during daily and weekly debriefings. In this way, teachers would work collectively on developing the best system for themselves in order to build new theories of teaching and education.

In a nation enamored with production and consumption of material goods, child and community-centered school projects were forced to the margins of school reform.<sup>103</sup> Advocates of scientific management found these demanding approaches to reform, at best, "a valuable and legitimate supplement to a program of systematic and sequential learning,"<sup>104</sup> and at worst, a "waste of valuable time."<sup>105</sup> At the elementary school level, scripted lessons became the norm in most schools for reading, writing, and arithmetic, with teachers following the leads of educational publishers' attempts to capture the essence of the scientific pedagogy provided by educational psychologists. At the secondary school level, conservative notions of school reform took greater hold, with tradition and content knowledge leading the way. Despite the occasional foray into child or community-centered approaches, American schoolteachers historically have employed routines to negotiate their school days, and continue to capitulate to that routine.

It is curious that Dewey is considered the "guru of progressive educators,"<sup>106</sup> despite the fact that his version of progressive education

102. *Id.*

103. LARRY CUBAN, *HOW TEACHERS TAUGHT: CONSTANCY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CLASSROOMS, 1890 TO 1990* 1 (2d ed., 1992).

104. William C. Bagley, *in* 33 *Y.B. OF THE NAT'L SOC'Y FOR THE STUDY OF EDUC.*, PART 2, 77 (Guy Whipple ed., 1934).

105. SHANNON, *supra* 24, at 91.

106. RYAN, *supra* note 22, at 118.



failed to maintain a primary position even in its own day. Dewey's progressive educational project stood among competing progressivisms. All were focused on aligning schools with the progress witnessed in other societal organizations. How this alignment was to proceed was differentially determined; each form of progressivism offered different routes to professional practice. Child-centered advocates offered expertise on child development and developmentally appropriate, stage-driven practice.<sup>107</sup> Scientific managers promised teachers scientifically proven best practices applicable to any classroom situation.<sup>108</sup> Dewey's "professional" was a knowledgeable experimenter comfortable with the ambiguity of growth as a goal. Advocates of these positions did not compete as equals as politics played an ever-increasing role in the future of American education.

#### IV. The Struggle from Without: Politics and Education

Despite the fact that Dewey envisioned education as a national priority, he most likely never anticipated that government involvement in education would result in narrowing educational goals. By the second half of the twentieth century, it became clear that schools amounted to contested ideological terrain.<sup>109</sup> In the 1950s, politicians pressed schools to design more rigorous science and math curricula in response to the strategic threat posed by the U.S.S.R.'s advances in the space race and the arms race. During the 1960s and 1970s, local school boards, often under pressure from state agencies, strong-armed schools to adopt a homogenizing civics curriculum aimed at safeguarding American ideals from opposing social "isms" associated with securing the rights of women, minorities, and increasing numbers of special interests.

Many of these movements invoked the notion of democracy, albeit one far removed from Dewey's conceptualization of that term. The freedom touted was respectively a freedom to compete and a freedom to retain the *e pluribus unum* spirit of American individualism. But nowhere in this rhetoric were schools accused of causing the problems. Rather, these threats to "our way of life" were blamed on an overly content system that was not keeping up with or working to check forces that could potentially undermine American values.

But the government's strategy to safeguard dominant ideology shifted its focus and adjusted its discourse in the early 1980s as

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107. See *infra* Part III.B.

108. See *infra* Part III.C.

109. STANLEY ARONOWITZ & HENRY A. GIROUX, *POSTMODERN EDUCATION: POLITICS, CULTURE AND SOCIAL CRITICISM* 109 (1991).

conservative forces gained more power. A “crisis”<sup>110</sup> was heralded based on yet another genus of scientific investigations, comparative demography, which revealed a “rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people.”<sup>111</sup> The data providing the evidence for this claim demonstrated for its interpreters a causal connection to schools where great numbers of students failed to meet minimum standards of literacy and numeracy, and a national system of public education that paled in relation to systems in competing industrialized nations.<sup>112</sup> In short, our nation was “at risk” *because* our schools were failing.<sup>113</sup>

#### A. *The Neo-Progressive Movement*

Although some progressive educators attempted to use the growing list of national reports documenting the problems of public education to resurrect ideas from reformers such as Dewey,<sup>114</sup> political remedies were most likely predetermined. Because the ultimate costs of a faulty educational system were measured in terms of industrial, technological, and economic shortcomings, so should it have been predicted that members of blue-ribbon panels, government consultants, and private researchers would emerge from the business world.<sup>115</sup> In essence, human capital theory<sup>116</sup> regained its foothold; education’s function was to

110. Some authors maintain that this “crisis” was greatly “manufactured” and based on faulty evidence. See DAVID C. BERLINER & BRUCE J. BIDDLE, *THE MANUFACTURED CRISIS* (1995). The real crisis in education, they contend, does not relate to the entire system, but to pockets where clearly the fault is inequality of resources—both educational and social. *Id.*

111. U.S. NAT’L COMM’N ON EXCELLENCE IN EDUC., *NATION AT RISK* 1983, 5 (1984).

112. *Id.*

113. *Id.*

114. It was during this era that many neo-progressive movements arose, such as the whole language of philosophy.

115. One example is David Kearns, CEO of Xerox Corporation during the 1970s, who later joined the George H.W. Bush administration as Deputy Secretary of Education. Kearns gained fame in the business world when he used international comparisons of productivity in the copy machine world to establish benchmarks to improve Xerox production. Kearns, along with Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander and New York University professor Diane Ravitch authored one of the key education reports of the time, *America 2000*. DAVID KEARNS, LAMAR ALEXANDER & DIANE RAVITCH, *AMERICA 2000*, available at <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/GOALS2000/TheAct/sec102.html> (last visited Aug. 1, 2003). For a critique of *America 2000* in relation to reading education see SHANNON, *supra* note 24.

116. See Marshall Smith & Brett Scoll, *The Clinton Human Capital Agenda*, 96 *TCHRS. COLLEGE REC.* 389-404 (1995). The authors define “human capital” as citizens who are well-equipped to adjust to the ebb and flow of the globalized market economy. *Id.* During the Clinton administration, literacy was considered central to the development of this human capital, ultimately expected to secure U.S. dominance in the world market. *Id.*

prepare the best and the brightest to be corporate leaders in a world economy, and business was to provide the most appropriate model for education in the twenty-first century.<sup>117</sup> As Christopher Whittle remarked: “The biggest contribution business can make to education is to make education a business.”<sup>118</sup>

The form of democracy embraced by this movement derived from the democratic liberalism of John Locke. This was a democracy that assured the individual of inalienable rights, primary among which was the right to hold property. Now moved to a neo-liberal agenda, freedom emerged as the democracy of consumerism—the right to earn money and buy things.<sup>119</sup> With business interests determining educational objectives, increased shares of government funding were awarded to programs that identified potential leaders early, siphoning off the “gifted and talented” among American youth and providing them with “enriched” experiences. Conversely, the education of new generations of consumers proceeded in virtually unchecked ways, perhaps most egregiously demonstrated by the scheme devised by Whittle to air commercials in public schools in exchange for technological hardware.<sup>120</sup> The justification of the neo-liberal agenda is a claim that pursuing private interests results in the greater public good. Neo-liberalism offers a new twist on “What’s good for General Motors;” in this form the beneficiaries dwell not on the factory floor, but inside the corporate boardroom. Furthermore, the principles that undergird the perspective derive not from democratic theory, but from economic theory.

In short, neo-liberalism transforms that which has traditionally been considered part of the public domain and reconceptualizes it as a private trust. Its strategy is to first denigrate those institutions previously associated with the public sphere (public schools, public parks, public hospitals, etc.) and then to launch a campaign of revitalization spearheaded by corporate benefactors.<sup>121</sup> So an Edison Corporation sets out to rescue the failing Philadelphia school system, Donald Trump transforms a New York City skating rink into a showplace, portions of

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117. BERLINER & BIDDLE, *supra* note 110, at 151.

118. *Id.*

119. See DAVID SEHR, *EDUCATION FOR PUBLIC DEMOCRACY* (1997) (discussing the differences between “public” and “private” democracy, particularly as realized in American education).

120. MICHAEL APPLE, *OFFICIAL KNOWLEDGE: DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION IN A CONSERVATIVE AGE* (2000) (offering an interesting critique of this “Channel One” intrusion in public education).

121. See Henry A. Giroux, *Neoliberalism, Corporate Culture, and the Promise of Higher Education: The University as a Democratic Public Sphere*, 72 HARV. EDUC. REV. 425, 428 (2002). Giroux points out that “any notion of the public—for example, public schools, public transportation, or public parks—becomes synonymous with disrepair, danger, and risk.” *Id.*

roadways bear markers of private philanthropy, private hospital boards continue to acquire their public counterparts, and drug companies become the chief investors in medical research.<sup>122</sup> Private interests have replaced public principles.

*B. Why Privatization, and Why Now?*

Henry Giroux contends that “in the current historical moment neoliberal capitalism is not simply too overpowering but . . . ‘democracy is too weak.’”<sup>123</sup> Throughout his life, Dewey maintained that democracy “is not an easy road to take and follow.”<sup>124</sup> In his treatise on democracy, he spoke about the liabilities of separating principles from interests.<sup>125</sup> To act on principles was to act “disinterestedly,” while to act within one’s own interests was to act selfishly.<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, when immediate circumstances (such as an educational crisis) clouded potential consequences of activity (the privatization of the public sphere), morals were likely abandoned.<sup>127</sup>

There are probably three reasons why schools have been particularly vulnerable to the equivalent of corporate takeovers.<sup>128</sup> One reason is found within their organization, the other two in their rhetoric. Unites States schools, unlike schools in other Western countries, simply try to do too much. Berliner and Biddle refer to this as the myth of “unbounded responsibility,” wherein “Americans believe that schools can and should assist students in intellectual tasks AND political tasks AND economic tasks AND social tasks.”<sup>129</sup> Of course, we can and should blame Dewey, along with Americans from Thomas Jefferson to Ralph Nader, for planting this seed in the American psyche. What we forget, however, is that these people provided blueprints and tangible evidence for the success of such projects. Yet, one cannot but be cynical about the overly optimistic forecasts about societal willingness to support such efforts. In Article Five of Dewey’s pedagogic creed he stated: “I

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122. *Id.* Giroux also uses research in medical research conducted by Cho as an example of the danger that ensues when the public interest moves to the private sphere. *Id.* Cho found that ninety-eight percent of industry sponsored research reflects favorably on the drugs being examined as compared with seventy percent favorability when studies are not funded by industry. *Id.*

123. *Id.* at 431 (quoting Benjamin R. Barber, *A Failure of Democracy, Not Capitalism*, N.Y. TIMES, July 29, 2002, at A23).

124. DEWEY, *supra* note 23, at 234.

125. *Id.*

126. *Id.*

127. *Id.*

128. This article leaves out the most obvious reasons for the perpetrators: greed and power.

129. BERLINER & BIDDLE, *supra* note 110, at 156.

believe that when society once recognizes the possibilities in this direction, and the obligations which these possibilities impose, it is impossible to conceive of the resources of time, attention, and money which will be put at the disposal of the educator."<sup>130</sup> The irony, the almost absurdity of this statement would not be lost among teachers who must spend their own money to provide books for their students, who threaten walkouts to achieve slight increases to their salaries, and who, in general, enter a profession from which they glean little respect.

The second reason for the corporatization of education lies within the discourse of competition, commercialism, and individualism. This is the more insidious. Critical theorists urge educators to assist students to deconstruct such a language and replace it with a democratic discourse that, in turn, would lead to "projects of possibility,"<sup>131</sup> where present conditions are investigated to reveal their undemocratic bases, and new conditions are constructed that would allow persons to live freely but cooperatively. Again, such projects connect well with Deweyan ideas. As Alan Ryan points out, "Philosophers have no political authority as philosophers, but they may have some useful skills as rhetoricians."<sup>132</sup> The battle against neo-liberalism is a battle for who controls the language that frames the discourse about how lives are to be led, and, as Dewey recognized, schools provide a ready-made forum.

The third reason for this blending of corporate America and education relates to Americans' penchant to get things done, again probably no better symbolized than through the promises of industry and technology. We seek panaceas and final solutions to our social, and among them our educational, problems. We want programs that "work." Dewey's ideas that progress never ends, that direction is more important than destination, that continuous growth supersedes a finished product, are not compatible with the corporate focus on the bottom line or the version of science that posits a knowable, discoverable truth as the ultimate goal.

#### V. Where Are You Now, John Dewey?

The project of education as inquiry, as experience, as intelligent, directed activity continues amidst what is packaged as the rational and empirically justified way of operating schools. Our government promises that no child shall be left behind, but hints that this goal will only be accomplished by increased privatization. Still, we hear of

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130. Dewey, *supra* note 37, at 94.

131. Roger Simon & Henry Giroux, *Schooling, Popular Culture, and a Pedagogy of Possibility*, 170 J. OF EDUC. 9 (1988).

132. RYAN, *supra* note 22, at 355.

pockets where educators continue to struggle with and struggle to enact the philosophies of John Dewey. One of the last strongholds of Dewey's ideas are colleges of education where education students are asked to think critically about their own education, and to both envision and enact new educational forms in terms of Dewey's notion of inquiry.<sup>133</sup>

Such efforts, however, are under attack. As we write this article, an education subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives has approved the Ready to Teach Act,<sup>134</sup> a law which, if enacted, would allow the federal government more oversight of teacher certification programs, provide grants for "innovative programs" that encourage alternative routes to teacher certification such as "charter colleges of education," and offer loan forgiveness opportunities for teachers in particular subject areas regardless of whether they work in affluent or economically depressed districts.<sup>135</sup> Efforts to bypass colleges of education in the certification of teachers are being stepped up by a Republican dominated legislature who perceive that an existing monopoly should be unseated through competitive market forces. The American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence represents a group dedicated to the eradication of colleges of education.<sup>136</sup> Its president, Kathleen Madigan, argues that a new national teacher certification test will "provide a simplified means for helping smart people with expertise in academic subjects become schoolteachers."<sup>137</sup> If all there is to teaching is transmitting knowledge from the smart to the ignorant, then why are colleges of education necessary? In short, and again based on the logic of economics, the government is in the process of creating a competing market for teacher education in the hopes of making colleges of education unnecessary and obsolete.<sup>138</sup>

Some might say that we do need to know the best way to do this thing we call teaching, and the government is among the group that

133. For an overview on present examples of inquiry education, see Marilyn Cochran-Smith & Susan L. Lytle, *Beyond Certainty: Taking an Inquiry Stance on Practice*, in PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THAT MATTERS 45 (Ann A. Lieberman & Lynne Miller eds., 2001).

134. H.R. 2211, 108th Cong. (2003).

135. The argument for providing loan forgiveness to science, math, and special education majors is based on the reported shortage of teachers in these areas. Julianne Basinger, *Congressional Panel Approves Measures on Teacher Training Accountability and Loan Forgiveness*, CHRON. OF HIGHER EDUC. (June 5, 2003), available at <http://chronicle.com/daily/2003/06/200306501n.htm>.

136. Julianne Basinger, *House Committee Will Investigate Claim that Schoolteacher Certification Test Was Sabotaged*, CHRON. OF HIGHER EDUC. (June 13, 2003), available at <http://chronicle.com/daily/2003/13/20033130501n.htm> (relaying the views of Kathleen Madigan, President of the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence).

137. *Id.*

138. See *supra* notes 134-38 and accompanying text.

would point to research as the way to secure such information. However, what the government counts as research diverges more and more from the research supported in colleges of education. As the former narrows, the latter expands. At a 2002 symposium sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, speakers from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement made it quite clear that “scientifically-based research” proposals would receive priority status within the present administration.<sup>139</sup> According to those speakers, scientifically-based research includes experimental, quasi-experimental, and translation designs and stands in contrast to what currently poses as research, namely “anecdote, tradition, and superstition.”<sup>140</sup> Clearly, this movement extends from the principles espoused by the scientific managers of the early progressive era. Yet, within colleges of education, research studies are emerging following research traditions that derive from disciplines such as history, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies that do not employ the limited designs that now seem to hold exclusive claim to the term *scientific*.<sup>141</sup>

Lee Shulman, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, reminds us that the academy has traditionally been considered the source of “radical ideas” and is thus perceived as dangerous, but that “the field is where you encounter the elastic cord that pulls matters back to the conservation of extant habits of practice.”<sup>142</sup> But dangerous ideas, including those professed by Dewey over a century ago, can be found in pockets of practice. These are places where students are taught how to question what appear to be immutable realities through a critical literacy and an empowered discourse. They are places like New York City’s Central Park East—an alternative high school

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139. U.S. DEPT. OF EDUCATION, THE USE OF SCIENTIFICALLY-BASED RESEARCH IN EDUCATION: WORKING GROUP CONFERENCE TRANSCRIPT (2002), at <http://www.excelgov.org/displayContent.asp?>. Translation designs are defined as projects that set out to study the effects of treatments found effective through experimental and quasi-experimental methods. Thus, it represents simply the application of what is already determined as scientific.

140. *Id.*

141. *Id.* The question of “is it science” was taken up at a plenary session of the American Educational Research Association’s annual meeting in Chicago (April 21-25, 2003). In this session, notable qualitative researchers such as Courtney Cazden from Harvard, Frederick Erickson from UCLA, and James Gee from the University of Wisconsin challenged the narrow definitions of science presented in the 2002 report from the National Research Council, titled *Scientific Research in Education*. Courtney Cazden, Frederick Erickson & James Gee, Remarks, American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting (Apr. 21-25, 2003); see NAT’L RESEARCH COUNCIL, SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN EDUCATION (2002) (on file with author). In particular, they were critical of point number five from the report, which privileges research that is replicable and generalizable. Cazden et al., *supra*; NAT’L RESEARCH COUNCIL, *supra*.

142. Shulman, *supra* note 13, at 6.

founded around *habits of mind*, where coverage is replaced by constructive critique.<sup>143</sup> They are college classrooms organized around principles of cooperation, where students are put in positions to confront issues of race, class, and gender, and literally challenged to *change their minds* through an acknowledgment of previously unexamined assumptions.<sup>144</sup> The basic organizing idea of such educational projects is to give voice to a multiplicity of ideas. This is what Dewey meant by democracy—the means by which everyone is permitted to participate in community decisions.<sup>145</sup>

Berliner and Biddle conclude that the real crisis in education, and in our society at large, continues to be inequality of opportunity and the failure to meaningfully address diversity in all of its forms.<sup>146</sup> Dewey would remind us that one is dependent on the other because the conversations can only take place if everyone is invited to the table. It is the job of professional educators to set that table. But through his lifetime and into today, this was the minority view. As we reflect upon the Supreme Court's recent decision that narrowly saved affirmative action,<sup>147</sup> we can rally and remain optimistic (as Dewey was wont to do) that this view will prevail.

A genuine crisis in education seems inevitable if those within the profession surrender to outside pressures, particularly those presently influencing our government. In short, the profession stands to be abducted in a way foreseen by Dewey.<sup>148</sup> Like all professions, education is evolving, and change needs to be internally directed while externally negotiated. If education is indeed the laboratory of democratic activity, then educators must more diligently safeguard the profession. The words of Toni Morrison capture this idea well, and resonate with warnings proffered by Dewey:

[I]f the university does not take seriously and rigorously its role as a guardian of wider civic freedoms, as interrogator of more and more complex ethical problems, as servant and preserver of deeper democratic practices, then some other regime or ménage of regimes will do it for us, in spite of us, and without us.<sup>149</sup>

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143. DAVID BENSMAN, *CENTRAL PARK EAST AND ITS GRADUATES: LEARNING BY HEART* (2000).

144. STEPHEN M. FISHMAN & LUCILLE MCCARTHY, *UNPLAYED TAPES: A PERSONAL HISTORY OF COLLABORATIVE TEACHER RESEARCH* (2000).

145. MENAND, *supra* note 10, at 432

146. BERLINER & BIDDLE, *supra* note 110, at 236.

147. *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 123 S. Ct. 2325 (2003).

148. *See supra* note 21.

149. Toni Morrison, *How Can Values Be Taught in the University?*, MICH. Q. REV. 436 (2001).



## VI. The Lesson for Mediators

We again borrow from one of our fellow presenters, Jonathan Cohen, who suggested to mediators that in thinking about the future direction of the profession, they consider the two thousand-year old words of Rabbi Akavya ben Mahalalel: "Know from where you came, and where you are going, and before whom you are destined to give account and reckoning."<sup>150</sup> John Dewey discovered the starting point of education. For him, education begins where life begins. He provided a clear direction for educational activity, the realization of democratic living. He recognized that education must be accountable to the democratic community consisting of fellow professionals and the general public whom they serve. Dewey saw the contract between the profession and the public as bound up in the experimental, scientific activities that advanced both participants and the profession itself. It was the members of the profession, however, who knew best how to conjoin knowledge with faith in their own methods to achieve progress and within the ethics that bound them. What might be added to the Rabbi's advice is the caution to know your opposition, know the forces that stand to lose should you succeed.

The profession of education is fortunate to have had a giant like Dewey in its midst. However, there are other voices that resonate with Dewey's message. Together, these voices give further depth to the message. The profession of mediation would do well to locate, bring together, and listen to such voices.

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150. See Jonathan R. Cohen, *Let's Put Ourselves Out of Business: On Respect, Responsibility, and Dialogue in Dispute Resolution*, 108 PENN ST. L. REV. 227, 228 (2003).