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## Editorial

I was speaking with a friend about the outcome of the recent Presidential election and I had brought up some questions about the wisdom of that segment of the electorate that voted Bush back into office. My friend's response was rather abrupt — "what the #&\*% is wisdom?" My immediate discomfort at the question led to an equally immediate response — "it's the love of philosophy, of course." He smiled a knowing smile, which is to say he knew I was avoiding the question by using reverse etymology.

But there is something to my response after all, is there not? There is the ancient connection between wisdom and philosophy. Philosophy is literally the love of wisdom. But this is hardly satisfying, and my friend's question I still believe is an important one, and no less so for us professors of education. No doubt, in these so-called postmodern times, it has become increasingly difficult to give enduring structural integrity to our definitions. Indeed, the very act of defining something is itself an act of interpretive force, and this makes any given definition somewhat shaky and contingent. So, for example, many (perhaps many who voted for Bush) when asked to define "philosophy" might respond, "it is religion, of course." And a cursory look at the philosophy sections in New Age book stores signals that they might not be far off the mark. Language is a tremendously pliable force, for better or worse.

It might just be that lots of people, feeling the pinch of trying to find some meaning in a world (a post-Nietzschean

world) where all our highest values supposedly are busily devaluing themselves, are struggling with their own interpretive power, their own agency if you will. The key is that it is a felt problem, not easily explained away through acquiring some faddish epistemology — even as many turn in their struggles to new (and old) fundamentalisms. Whatever it is, I'm confident that wisdom has never meant the same thing as knowledge. At the same time, though, nor can it afford to be such a distant relative. How we come to know about things, and more importantly, what we *do* with our knowledge signals that wisdom might play some crucial role in helping determine how we act on our various hard-earned knowledge. Wisdom has (must have) a practical function, not necessarily to explain, but to help clarify and intelligently interpret our world and our place in it.

How we grapple with notions of wisdom will continue to be an elusive issue for us humans. But elusiveness need not be construed as a negative. We have learned from thinkers like John Dewey that our quests for epistemological certainty do not always garner untainted rewards. Indeed, elusiveness itself may very well be a necessary condition for wisdom's imaginative and hopeful potential, the very thing that keeps us energized towards possible better futures.

In this issue of *Professing Education* we invite our readership to a thoughtful consideration of wisdom as they read through the various contributions. Our first contribution by our Associate Editor, Dirk Windhorst, tackles the notion of wisdom head-on. In his recent trip to Yale University, he was able to interview Dr. Linda Jarvin and Dr. Jill Citron-Pousty, two research associates of Robert Sternberg, whose work at the Centre for Psychology of Abilities, Competencies, and Expertise (PACE) has been instrumental in the birth of new psychological theories about the developmental role of wisdom in our lives. Next, George Demetrian offers a contribution based on work from his new book, *Conflicting Paradigms in Adult Literacy Education: In Quest of a U.S. Democratic Politics of Literacy*. Exploring elements of John Dewey's theory of inquiry, especially Dewey's

notion of growth, Demetrian is able to find enlivening connections to his own work in *Adult Literacy*. Our final two contributors offer responses to last issue's Wisniewski Lecture, "No Intro Course Left Behind?" written by Joseph Newman. First, John Carter takes his many years of experience as a teacher educator and offers suggestions for applying Newman's strategies to Foundations of Education courses. In the process, Carter proposes three novel components for augmenting Newman's own suggestions and providing some potential closure to an overly prolonged debate about Introduction to Education courses. In a comparable vein, Steve Grineski draws on his own experiences teaching Social Foundations of Education courses and extends Newman's ideas and suggestions. In particular, Grineski pays close attention to the socio-political contexts and the players therein, who quite often are most responsible for shaping policy while failing in terms of their connectedness to the day-to-day realities of the world of K-12 schooling. We close out this issue with a book review from our Co-Editor, John Novak. Here he reviews Peter Singer's book, *One World: The Ethics of Globalization (Second Edition)*.

It is our sincerest hope that you find this issue of *Professing Education* provocative and engaging. We welcome comments and articles that might wish to engage/challenge the kinds of issues that have been highlighted herein.

K.M.

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**Educating for wisdom: Can an ancient virtue be cultivated in postmodern times?**

*Dirk Windhorst*  
*Redeemer University College, Ontario*

About fifteen years ago, Robert Sternberg invited eighteen colleagues to contribute to a volume that assessed the feasibility of studying wisdom as a psychological construct. *Wisdom: Its Nature, Origins, and Development* (Sternberg, 1990) exhibited a coherence and collaboration that is uncommon among edited books: each contributor

referred to the others in ways that made the reader wonder if they had coordinated sabbaticals and attended a semester-long seminar together. More importantly, this book boldly asserted that wisdom could be studied with scientific seriousness despite its past association with speculative metaphysics and spiritual mysticism. Psychologists were entering a field where analytical philosophers fear to tread. How many reputable philosophers would have the audacity to assume the literal meaning of their titles and call themselves lovers of wisdom?

Since 1990 two research groups have continued to develop and test psychological theories of wisdom: 1) Paul Baltes and his colleagues at the Max Plank Institute for Human Development and Education in Germany and 2) Robert Sternberg and his associates at Yale University's Centre for Psychology of Abilities, Competencies, and Expertise (PACE). The Baltes group has defined wisdom as expert knowledge and good judgment regarding the practical affairs of life. They seek to understand wisdom from a developmental perspective: how do perceptions of wisdom change for individuals across the lifespan? The PACE Center has developed a conception of wisdom that has evolved from Sternberg's triarchic theory of intelligence. The remainder of this article will review Sternberg's balance theory of wisdom as it has been applied in education, specifically, an eighth-grade American history curriculum entitled *Thinking Wisely about History* (2003).<sup>1</sup>

Sternberg's balance theory of wisdom is based on his theory of successful intelligence<sup>2</sup> – an idea which seeks to broaden the notion of intelligence beyond I.Q. testing. He has maintained the unity of this construct by formulating a triarchic theory that embraces all the environments in which intelligence can be applied without assuming the existence of “multiple intelligences” (Gardner, 1983). Although Sternberg distinguishes three kinds of thinking – analytical, creative, and practical – that address the continuum of reasoning from “school smarts” to “street smarts,” he maintains a unified model of intelligence.

How does he do this? First, at the base of the

triarchic theory is a set of problem-solving components or processes that Sternberg (2003) believes underlies all aspects of intelligence for any individual in any culture (p. 44). These processes involve three main components: metacognitive skills (the understanding and control of one's own thinking), learning skills (the acquisition of knowledge), and thinking skills (knowing how to analyse a problem, knowing how to generate a solution, knowing how to apply a solution in a particular context). Second, these components operate through an experiential dimension where the relative ease or relative difficulty of processing is determined by how familiar or how novel a problem appears to an individual. “Analytical thinking is invoked when components are applied to fairly familiar problems abstracted from everyday life” (Sternberg, 2003, p. 44). Schools emphasize analytical thinking, and I.Q. tests are good at measuring it. “Creative thinking is invoked when the components are applied to relatively novel kinds of tasks or situations” (Sternberg, 2003, p. 44).

Schools usually do not encourage creative thinking as much as analytical thinking, especially when creative individuals challenge conventional wisdom. Students rarely have to grapple with novel problems that require thinking “outside of the box.” Third, these problem-solving components operate more or less successfully in a variety of contexts or environments – the domain of practical intelligence. Here the youngster who barely passed grade school surprises former teachers by eventually becoming a successful entrepreneur. “Practical thinking is invoked when the components are applied to experience to adapt to, shape, and select environments” (Sternberg, 2003, p. 44).

Sternberg views intelligence and creativity as necessary but not sufficient components of wisdom. Successful intelligence – “the ability to achieve success in life in terms of one's personal standards, within one's sociocultural context” (Sternberg, 2003, p. 42) – is the basis for his theory of wisdom. Wisdom seems to grow out of practical thinking in balancing the three responses to an environment:

Should one adapt to this environment, or shape it, or select another one? Yet wisdom transcends successful practical thinking in that it seeks the common good beyond one's own immediate interests. "Wisdom is the application of intelligence, creativity, and knowledge for a common good by balancing one's own interests, other people's interests, and higher level interests (e.g., organizational, community, cultural), through the mediation of values, over the short and long terms, in order to adapt to, shape, and select environments" (Sternberg, 2004).

How can one educate for wisdom understood in this way? Sternberg and his research associates at the PACE Center have developed an eighth-grade history curriculum that attempts to teach wise-thinking skills. The curriculum is divided into two units: one focuses on the causes and events that led up to the American Revolution; the other looks at slavery in the United States from its beginnings to the Emancipation Proclamation. Three groups of middle-school students were taught using three different curricula: a control group who were taught these topics using primary source materials; a second group that used the same primary source materials embedded within activities that employed critical-thinking skills; and a third group that used the primary source materials embedded within activities that employed critical-thinking *and* wise-thinking skills. All students were assessed to see whether the third group were more likely to develop habits of wise-thinking than their peers who had engaged the primary source material in other ways. The PACE Center is currently interpreting the data and writing up a report.

How does one distinguish between critical thinking and wise thinking? Jill Citron-Pousty of the PACE Center provided the following explanation:

Critical thinking is the ability to look at a situation and identify those important bits of information that can bring you to the point at which you can decide on the best course of action. Wise thinking is a completely different level of thought. Once you pick out those elements of a scenario which are most

important or critical, the information can then be considered on multiple planes: How does this situation affect the community-at-large? How does it affect my relationship with other people? How does it affect me? How was this situation handled in the past? How is it best to handle it now and in the future? (Windhorst, 2004a).

Phil Montanaro, an eighth-grade teacher in Connecticut, taught four months of American history using *Thinking Wisely about History* (TWH). Although looking at primary sources is a current emphasis in the teaching of American history, Montanaro was impressed with the way TWH structured group learning tasks to evaluate arguments and to appreciate opposing viewpoints. For example, in assessing what happened in the Boston Massacre of 1770, students read and evaluated three accounts of the event: one by a British officer, another by a Boston shoemaker, and the third by a Boston newspaper of the day.

At times, the history lessons came close to home. His students found it difficult to understand how Thomas Jefferson could write the lofty sentiments expressed in the Declaration of Independence while at the same time owning black slaves whom he believed were inferior to whites. Because of the activities of a racist gang called the "White Wolves" which operated in the vicinity of their own school, the students' sensitivities were particularly acute to what they viewed as Jefferson's hypocrisy. On the more positive side, Montanaro's students took Ben Franklin's maxims to heart. Many of them took seriously the curriculum's invitation to imitate the way Franklin tried to improve his character by developing their own maxims and keeping daily logs of their own behaviour.

As a Canadian, I was impressed by the way TWH brought out the historical dilemmas faced by the American colonists as they became increasingly frustrated with British taxation policies. Since English Canada began with Americans who chose to stay loyal to Britain, it was heartening to see them referred

to as “Loyalists” rather than the more pejorative “Tories.” The Loyalist side of the debate was represented fairly. Nevertheless, this curriculum did not proceed to show further how many Loyalists were forced by the “Patriots” to leave their homes without compensation and begin life all over again as refugees north of the border.

As a former teacher of eighth-grade students, I appreciated how TWH introduced students to wise-thinking exercises in a gradual, incremental fashion. For instance, the idea of achieving the common good was introduced in the second lesson and then was elaborated as the unit progressed through a number of activities that taught students how to deconstruct arguments until eventually they were challenged to solve dilemmas with a view towards achieving a balance among the competing parties in 1776. At the same time, it artfully wove historical dilemmas with current ones that students could connect to their own experiences. For example, after the lesson in which it is recalled how the Daughters of Liberty protested British policies by spinning cloth in public rather than buying imported British material, students consider the dilemma of whether or not to buy a popular brand of sneakers manufactured in Asian factories where workers are paid about a dollar a day.

Did the students experience any problems with the curriculum? Linda Jarvin (one of the researchers) and Phil Montanaro (one of the teachers) both replied that many students had difficulty reading the eighteenth-century prose of the primary source material. Montanaro addressed this problem by performing the role of the original speaker. For example, he preached a short sermon on drunkenness originally delivered by George Whitfield, one of the influential religious leaders of the Great Awakening. As a result of Montanaro’s oral performance, the students were better able to appreciate the emotional impact of Whitfield’s words, something that is difficult to pick up on the written page. In the following lesson, students were instructed on how to analyse his argument and discovered how Whitfield artfully combined an appeal to reason with an appeal to emotion – something all effective speakers

do.

*Thinking Wisely about History* is a rich, engaging curriculum. In my view, it successfully applies Sternberg’s balance theory of wisdom in an educational setting. It will be interesting to read the PACE Center’s report on this experiment to see if this curriculum cultivated the virtue of wise thinking among middle school students. Sternberg (2003) notes that despite the fact that IQ scores have risen in the past century, the world “at times seems bent on destroying itself” (p. 147). If we believe that educating for wisdom has a better chance of alleviating the needless suffering in the world of tomorrow,

then we need to put our students on a much different course. We need to value not only how they use their individual abilities to maximize their attainments but also how they use their individual abilities to maximize the attainments of others. We need, in short, to value wisdom. (p. 173)

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Dr. Linda Jarvin and Dr. Jill Citron-Pousty, two research associates at the PACE Center, who gave me copies of *Thinking Wisely about History* and consented to be interviewed for this article (Windhorst, 2004a). I am also grateful to Phil Montanaro who shared with me some of his experiences teaching the wise-thinking curriculum to his eighth-grade history class in Connecticut (Windhorst, 2004b).

<sup>2</sup> For a comprehensive summary of two decades of work on intelligence, creativity, and wisdom see Sternberg (2003).

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### Linking Dewey's Logic To His Concept of Growth: A Personal Encounter

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The philosopher of science, Karl Popper (1960 cited in Miller, 1985) observes, rather than progressing “from theory to theory,” science might be better “visualized as *progressing from problems to problems* (original italics)—to problems of ever increasing depth” (p. 179). This position is similar to that of Dewey (1929/1958), who argues that problems burst forth from long-seated habitudes into consciousness, which then evoke a quest for resolution. Thus, for Dewey, “the starting point is” what is experienced as “the actually *problematic*” (original italics) (p. 67) in any given situation. Inquiry, more broadly, learning, is the primary method Dewey draws upon in the systematic effort of working from problems identified to “warranted resolutions” in any given situation. The recursive stages of inquiry progress via what Dewey refers to as a “means-ends” continuum in successive phases of hypothesis formation, data analysis, and experimentation in the leading toward the desired solution of the problem at hand.

For Dewey as with Popper, it is not typically theory that first stimulates a serious investigation. It is, rather, some perplexity that arouses doubt in an existing pattern of living or thought that then requires an investigation. The process includes provisional

hypothesis (and eventual theory) formation along with the collection of and analysis of data in the careful working through of the various stages of an investigative process. Dewey (1938/1991) articulates this procedure most programmatically in his key chapter, “The Pattern of Inquiry” in *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (pp. 105-122). The object of such investigation is not the acquisition of knowledge, which for Dewey is a means. It is, rather, the resolution of the problem, to which knowledge contributes into the formation of a unified reconstruction. New challenges and problems emerge, but the result of a successful inquiry process is a proximate “close” to the earlier quandary. As Dewey expresses it in a classic statement:

*Inquiry is the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole.* (original italics) (p. 108)

Dewey's logic shares close symmetries to his concept of growth as the enhancement of experience through critical thought and deliberate action through the operation of the means-ends continuum in the movement toward a satisfactory learning occurrence.

It is as a well-read field practitioner that I “discovered” Dewey's concept of growth in the early 1990s through an indirect route of reading Richard J. Bernstein's (1983) neo-pragmatic text *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*. Reflecting on my study of republican political ideology as a Ph.D. student in the field of U.S. history, I experienced a sense of connection, particularly with Bernstein's discussion of Gadamarian hermeneutics. I derived from that the prospect that this fruitful concept could serve as a vehicle through which to reconstruct a historical tradition, namely, the U.S. political culture on its founding republican, democratic and constitutional grounds. Through the impetus of Bernstein, I moved directly into the primary resources of the intellectual tradition and moral and political value

center of the American pragmatic tradition through an engagement of Dewey's philosophy. Taking his concept of growth as an operating springboard, I concentrated on those aspects of his vast work that appealed to me or that I could readily understand, with the prospect that this would serve as a scaffold through which I could deepen my understanding of Dewey's philosophy and its possible applications to adult literacy education. The process that I described in that preceding sentence is itself an explanation of what Dewey means by growth, in short, progressive learning through continuity of development and engagement.

I experienced this systematic working through of Dewey's writing based on my own growing center of interest and knowledge. That is, my experience shifted from that of relative novice to emergent specialist as a result of a deliberate process of taking this effort on. This was stimulated by what Dewey (1934/1989) refers to as "an impulsion" of motivational energy that the task offered the prospect of a sense of direction and coherence that I sought to attain. In terms of Dewey's logic, that was a tentative hypothesis that pushed the experiment forward which would require considerable experimentation, analysis and refinement to prove its mettle in my living experience as an adult literacy educator. This gradual shift from novice to specialist emerged as a felt accomplishment in the *expansion* of my understanding as I began to reflect upon and shape my practice based on what I came to understand and experience. That is, as I worked through this framework in my practice as an adult literacy practitioner and in my more formal academic thinking about the subject, my understanding of the nuances of Deweyan philosophy grew.

The insight that that single word "growth" unleashed has taken on symbolic proportions which, admittedly moves toward the iconic. This is guarded against by a sense of skepticism that a metaphor can serve as an adequate representation of reality. The additional factor is an awareness of the profusion of problems that face the field of adult literacy education in the working toward any proximate resolution that proposes a coherent source of direction. Nonetheless,

as a metaphor, a poetic way of thinking, and as a heuristic, I have found Dewey's concept of growth a fruitful one. In my early thinking with this concept, it evoked an imaginative resolution to the problem that I encountered in thinking about adult literacy education through the dominant paradigms of, respectively, functional and critical literacy, neither of which seemed to have gotten to the core of what I observed on site. There needed to be a middle way between these poles, I sensed. Yet, the resolution remained vague until I happened on Dewey's axial concept of growth that opened up the prospect of working out the problem of a viable definition of literacy that had perplexed me.

Initially, this concept served less as a formal intellectual framework than as a creative explanation of what I concretely experienced as a program manager of an adult literacy program in Hartford, Connecticut. It was not that I discovered Dewey's writing, but that his concept of growth that I adapted from his work seemed to have fit my situation. It was through this internalization of this core idea that I then sought to organize my activities in program, instructional, and curriculum development. As I continued to work with this concept, I increasingly sought to explore the various theoretical underpinnings that underlay Dewey's notion of growth even while persisting with what might be viewed as only a partially successful effort of developing a viable praxis through it in the literacy program I operated (Demetron, 2000). I began to characterize this Deweyan space, based on the tradition of philosophical pragmatism, as a "middle ground" that was congruent with a distinctively American politics and pedagogy. The working through and the testing of this core idea, has consumed much of my practice and academic writing for the past decade (Demetron, 2001, 2002, 2004).

*Progress* might have served as a less evocative term in the capturing of much of what I sought in the imagery unleashed in my mind by the term *growth*. This particular term, however, has the benefit of a specific philosophy of education articu-

lated by Dewey (1916/1944, 1938/1963) and elaborated upon by contemporary Deweyan educational scholars (Garrison, 1997, 1998). It is this concept of growth that underpins Dewey's (1938/1963) quest for an "intellectual organization that can be worked out on the ground of experience" (p. 85) that I find so potentially fruitful for the field of adult literacy education even if only as an imaginative heuristic. Dewey defines growth in a variety of ways. The following, an apt summary of the entire concept, provides a useful introduction:

[G]rowth depends upon the presence of a difficulty to be overcome by the exercise of intelligence... [I]t is part of the educator's responsibility to see equally to two things: First, that the problem grows out of the conditions of the experience being had in the present, and that it is within the range of the capacities of students; and secondly, that it is such that it arouses in the learner an active quest for information and for production of new ideas. The new facts and the new ideas become the ground for further experiences in which new problems are presented. The process is a continuous cycle. (p. 79)

Dewey's concept of growth permeates his key book, *Democracy and Education* (1916/1944). It is invariably linked with the optimistic imagery of the vision of American democracy that he held, notwithstanding skepticism toward any easy hope. As Dewey (1917) expresses it: "Faith in the power of intelligence to imagine a future which is the projection of the desirable in the present, and to invent the instrumentalities of its realization is our salvation" (p. 69). It is this faith that Dewey tied to an American vision of a progressive culture and society in which the growth of individuals is the expression itself of the nation's foremost ideals in an increasingly humane and democratic political culture.

As Dewey (1927) elsewhere put it about the "New World" civilization, at the heart of the American experiment is "[t]he liberation of individual potentialities" through "the evocation of

personal and voluntary associated energies." "That is, the nurturing of "individuals and their potentialities" (p. 322) depends upon communities that both foster and depend upon what Dewey (1927/1954) elsewhere describes as the Great Community. This is an elusive ideal, but one grounded in the peculiarity of the American imagination, which holds the promise of unleashing potentialities of a better society and culture through progressively realized selves. This, in a nutshell, is what Dewey means by growth in which for him education would serve as a primary pathway for its unfolding. I have richly drawn on this concept in a decade's worth of work in the field of adult literacy education.

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*The ideas expressed in this article are elaborated upon in the tenth chapter of George Demetrios's book, Conflicting Paradigms in Adult Literacy Education: In Quest of a U.S. Democratic Politics of Literacy. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004. An overview of the book can be accessed at: <http://www.nald.ca/rescat/details.asp?bkid=6012&oid=11>*

**Where Do We Start? A Response to Joseph Newman's Address on "No Intro Course Left Behind"**

*John Carter  
 East Carolina University*

At the annual meeting of the Society of Professors of Education (2004), Professor Joseph Newman critically examined the first course being offered to prospective teachers in university education programs. Foundations of education faculty often teach this course. Its purpose is to introduce prospective teachers "to careers they're considering...courses that may (or may not) be titled 'Introduction to Education' or 'Introduction to Teaching' or 'Foundations of Education.'" He states,

I'll suggest that to keep our [foundations of education faculty] jobs, our courses, and especially our contributions to teacher education from being left behind, we can and should do several things. I have four points to make – four suggestions – four pieces of friendly, collegial advice. People like us can and should:

1. Talk about children
2. Talk about teachers
3. Talk about the social context of education – especially specially politics and diversity
4. Talk about practice as well as theory.

In addition to these four suggestions, Newman proposes that foundation of education professors who teach these courses need to place greater emphases on the students' concerns, on current situations that emerge out of the school environment, and on issues that emerge out of the society at large. He envisions the course content initially starting with a practical situation and moving into theoretical understandings that are grounded in academic areas of the professor's specialty (history, philosophy, sociology, economics, policy studies, and diversity studies in education, etc.).

In the following three sections, I make three suggestions for implementing Newman's four suggestions and three proposals:

1. When examining Newman's address, I wondered how his four suggestions and his three proposals for change (mentioned above) might be incorporated into present introductory education courses. At the same time, I was guided by the recognition that many of my colleagues do not want added topics to a course viewed by many critics as overly crowded. On the other hand, many of us continue to struggle as we pull together a seemingly disparate list of educational topics into a unifying whole while attempting to give the course a simplifying theme. Using Newman's proposed starting point for constructing an introductory course, let us "focus on the concerns of students." What are their concerns? Based on my thirty-five years in teacher

education, two concerns of prospective teachers seem to stand out: First, they are concerned about helping others. They go into teaching (putting aspirations for upper mobility aside) expressing a desire to help and serve others. They seek to bring about a better situation in their surrounding world. Second, many of these same individuals hunger in their university classes for “real-world” situations where they can have hands-on, practical work involvement. A thread or method that can link these two student concerns together in an introductory education course is a service-learning component. In addition to the desire to serve and the desire to be involved in the practical environs of the world, a service-learning component is consistent with another one of Newman’s proposals, namely, that the course begins literally with practical experiences.

In this course prospective teachers study a number of constructivist, historical, and cultural/social concepts. Grouped in teams, they are first introduced in class to an assigned concept and follow that study up with background readings. They study one academic course concept each week. Then each prospective teacher applies that concept in a field-based volunteer community project with one or two persons (children, adolescences or adults). While interacting and helping the person(s) for one hour each week, the prospective teacher studies how the academic concept plays out in that person(s) life. Subsequently, the university student returns to the academic classroom and writes one paragraph that defines the academic concept that is being applied in the community, in a second paragraph writes an example of the concept taken from an assigned academic reading list, and finally writes a paragraph discussing how it played out with an individual in the practical service-learning situation. For example, in class the student studies and defines the concept of “experience” in relation to its forming one’s perspective. She writes an example of the concept in a paragraph that briefly discusses Dewey or Piaget on the topic of experience, and finally she writes a paragraph discussing the experiences that helped form the perspective of the individual in the service-learning situation. Overall, the

introductory education course focuses on four concepts from constructive theory, four from critical sociology in education, and four from educational history; one concept for each of the twelve weeks.

Such a service-learning course not only addresses Newman’s proposal that professors focus on the concerns of students and that they begin with the practical situations, it also employs his four suggestions for changing our courses: (1) It involves the prospective teacher in the lives of children; (2) it involves them in actually teaching; (3) it involves them in the social context of the community where they see politics and diversity issues played out; And, (4) it involves them in theory as they read about and apply concepts in “real-life” situations. In addition to those four suggestions by Newman, an added benefit comes from involving students in community situations instead of another school experience. Many prospective teachers come to the university with established preconceived notions and myths about schooling and teaching. With service-learning in the community, the prospective teacher is forced to question many of these myths as they focus on enabling the child to work through his/her own issues in the lived-world of daily existence.

In such a community based course, many formal standards and accreditation outcomes are met; most students see the value of the course to their professional preparation; they tend to grasp the role of theory in guiding their practice; and, many of our fellow university colleagues see the course as making a valuable and unique contribution to our overall program.

2. Professor Newman’s suggestion that receives the most coverage is one that we have already discussed above, namely, focus on the lives of children. However, we did not discuss that he means by this to focus directly on the “everyday lives” of children. He encourages us to talk about children as people, and make them the center of our concern. The course begins by focusing on children and then subsequently “moving to social and political understandings, not

the other way around.” Thus, he claims that we avoid the customary approach of talking “around” children and turning them into “abstractions.”

Can we simply add this topic of the ‘everyday life of children’ to our course syllabi or is Newman asking us to change our perspective? We all change our syllabi from time to time. Each of us can point to changes that we have made in activities and content. But what impresses me in my years in higher education is the staying power of our perspectives, our paradigms of thought. What I am arguing here, and I suspect that Newman would agree, is that changing a syllabus will not be enough, but a more fundamental change in perspective is needed. Many of us may find our efforts to focus on children short lived as our accustomed paradigms reassert themselves. And even if we begin by talking about children, our courses are not likely to change very much for they will continue to be massaged by our individual perspectives. And, as people we tend to remain stuck as if glued to our perspectives, our habitual ways of understanding. After doing things one way for some time, we may find it difficult to begin with children and allow that starting point to put us on a different path of learning. I am afraid that many of us may not be able to move from our honed perspectives in the content areas of foundations, thus leaving any new addition to be molded and massaged into something similar to the old course. The everyday life of the child just becomes dressed up in new clothes. As long as our perspectives are grounded in our area of specialization, the course will more or less remain much the same. I am reminded of Martin Heidegger’s discussion of starting points. He says, “Wherever you choose to start out there you will remain.”<sup>1</sup> In other words our starting point will focus us to move down a path in a particular direction. I am arguing that to change this course the starting point has to be a change in perspective not an additional topic added to the syllabus.

3. Professor Newman raises a concern that recent policy changes may squeeze some education faculty in

introductory courses out of a job. He proposes four innovative and exciting changes in the course content that should make the course more receptive to students, colleagues, and more consistent with a number of new policies and standards. A thorough analysis of this topic by Newman has been needed for some time and his suggestions for change clearly demonstrate here the insight and wisdom of a well-seasoned educator.

As I heard him speak on what we could do in this introductory course, I would like to redirect our focus to his concern about introductory courses providing a job. If we began with this fact, “I need a job,” is there anything that we may add to his suggestions? For example, let us look briefly at another profession and see how it handles its job situation. Do artists perceive their job situation in a similar manner to ours? Artists and potters often work in museums or galleries to provide support for doing their art, for doing that to which they are fundamentally interested and committed. No doubt the museum worker enjoys her job, cannot walk pass a Picasso or Monet painting without studying it, and is eager to teach a tour group about light, form, and color. No doubt there is much taken from the studio that the artist includes in her talks with the tour group and much taken from the museum that is included into her own studio work. Artists working in museums and galleries often speak about loving their job, about how much they learn, and how much it means to them intellectually. However, given their preference they would readily choose to be in their studio creating art. My point here is that artists seem to be able to make a distinction between their activity in a gallery or museum and their work in a studio. As a result, they have a different starting point in each place and their activity differs in the two realms of endeavor. They have a job, albeit related to art on one hand, but on the other hand, they produce art. When they work in the museum their activity is given focus by events within the museum. When in the studio they create art using their primary concern.

In our situation, as university professors of introductory education courses, we seem to have greater difficulty in separating these activities. What supports us and what is our primary endeavor become mixed. We begin with educational issues, problems, and methods and apply them to everyday life situations in both cases. By allowing our specialty areas to define the activity in both areas we have found that our work is not always receptive to other educators. If we were to separate or distinguish our activities in a similar way to the artist, then the events in the introductory class would be the deciding factor in determining what we do and not our specialty area. As such our content may meet with greater acceptance and we may not be having this discussion now. When we focus on the workplace a different starting point is called for when working with others. Although we would be involved thoroughly in education, our area of specialization would not be the starting point for choosing the content. At the same time, applying our area of specialization unencumbered by the activity in the work place may open new possibilities for its application.

In summary, I have argued that Newman's suggestions and proposals for change can be met by incorporating a service-learning component into Introduction to Education courses. Secondly, I argued that Newman's call for change was in actuality a call for foundations faculty to modify their perspective to focus on the needs of prospective teachers instead of the content topics of a particular academic discipline. Finally, in a third section, artists were shown to perceive their employment and their creative work as distinct activities. Subsequently, foundations faculty are asked to re-conceptualize their teaching of introductory courses as employment and as distinct from their perceived life's work.

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#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Holderlin, cited by Martin Heidegger in *On the Way to Language*, Edited by J. Glenn Gray and Fred Wieck. Translated by Peter Hertz and Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper & Row, 1972, p.7.

### Some thoughts on Newman's Essay "No Intro Course Left Behind"

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I would like to thank Joseph Newman for writing the essay "No intro course left behind?" that appeared in the June 2004 issue of *Professing Education*. In this essay, Dr. Newman provided four important suggestions (i.e., talk about children, talk about teachers, talk about the social context of education, especially politics and diversity, and talk about practice as well as theory) for how professors of Foundations of Education could conceptualize their courses. Newman begins his essay by stating that these course suggestions are framed, in part, by the current political context (e.g., government accountability mandates) that supports the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (i.e., NCLBA). He goes on to state that "NCLB is the latest but, unfortunately, the worst manifestation [of macro-level reform] I've encountered" (p.3). An example of this political context is seen in the recently published report by The Teaching Commission, titled "Teaching at Risk: A Call to Action" (Gerstner, 2004). This report's goal is to "raise student performance by transforming the way in which America's public school teachers are recruited and retained" (p. 5), which is part of the NCLBA's mandate that States develop plans requiring highly qualified teachers for every public school classroom by the year 2005. There are several recommendations (e.g., overhaul teacher education programs- See Au, 2004) in this report; however, the one generating the most concern involves making schools more like corporations by infusing competition through a policy that promotes a market-place ideology of production. Teachers who "measure up" to new accountability standards (i.e., produce), as determined by their students' acceptable performance on high stakes tests, would receive additional compensation or incentive pay.

This meso or state-level reform idea, known as the value-added approach, is already being used in Tennessee, tested in Louisiana, promoted in Minnesota and financially encouraged by the Bush administration as a means to improve K-12 test scores. Tennessee is using the value-added approach to satisfy the NCLBA's highly qualified teacher requirement. Louisiana's program is titled "Value-Added Teacher Preparation Program Assessment Model" (Louisiana Board of Regents, 2004). This model "will have the capacity to examine the growth of achievement of children and link growth in student learning to teacher education programs" (p. 1). This linking will then be used to assess program effectiveness in teacher education. As with the NCLBA, results would become a part of the public record, as teacher preparation programs would be publicly ranked on how well their graduates' K-12 students perform on high-stakes tests. In responding to the Teaching at Risk report, Minnesota's Governor Pawlenty, said, "The proposals will be the basis for possible changes in the way Minnesota teachers are trained, scrutinized and rewarded for years to come" ("Teacher Quality," 2004). President Bush, in his new educational plan, wants to provide a \$500 million dollar incentive plan to States that reward its teachers for high pupil test scores ("President Bush," 2004).

Recommendations contained in this report are an example of simplistic and de-contextualized thinking. Like as with architects of the Nation at Risk and Goals 2000 reports and the NCLBA, the writers of this report think by mandating additional requirements and holding more individuals accountable the problems schools face will be solved – of the 19 commissioners responsible for writing this report, eight are or were CEOs of major corporations and four were former governors of Southern States. This membership seems unlikely to understand the contextual complexities associated with K-12 school problems or develop the kinds of policies that would solve these problems. The NCLBA and the Teaching at Risk report are examples of how those least familiar with K-12 schools are proposing reform plans that have

little relationship to the problems many teachers encounter (e.g., funding inequalities), nor to the problems many students and their families encounter (e.g., poverty) on a daily basis (Rothstein, 2004).

Those teaching Foundations of Education courses have a responsibility to help future teachers learn how to critically analyze the political context and policies emerging from this context that shapes and surrounds teaching practice. I would like to extend Newman's thinking about the four important elements he identified for Foundations of Education courses by providing curriculum examples from my Social Foundations of Education course that are intended to promote critical analysis of important ideas, events, and issues that affect K-12 schooling.

### *1. Talk about children*

Newman's thoughts on talking about, not around, children are grounded in ideas from the progressive educator, Marietta Johnson. She believed that children should be at the very center of our thinking about teaching and learning. Once our work is focused on children, she advises, we should work outward to the political and social contexts that shape this work. Lastly, Newman encourages us to make authentic connections with children.

The major activity in my class that focuses on "talk about children" and makes authentic connections with children is a community-based service learning project partnership with the local alternative school (ALC). During the semester, my students are paired with students enrolled at the ALC and participate in a variety of community-based social recreation activities. For example, small group problem solving activities at the campus field house, making craft projects with residents from a community senior center, mini-putt golfing at a local hotel, and building and flying small model airplanes. In addition, my students tutor each week in an ALC classroom. A major goal associated with these activities is for my students to learn about individuals whose life stories are most likely different from their own and interact with individuals who, for whatever

reason, have not been successful in typical school settings. I also want my students to realize that individuals who may be different from them still share things in common. For example, having an adult in their life that cares about them.

Another goal is for my students to acknowledge their own privileges and prejudices and then to realize how these concepts affect teaching and learning (Morris, 2004). Also, students are invited to think about how their privileges and prejudices may have been supported by specific policy decisions (e.g., school funding formulas). Writing in reference to a small group marble maze activity, a student revealed these thoughts, “I was excited to have accomplished something with a group of students (ALC) that I really in all honesty thought had no drive, desire or insight into this activity. This activity will affect me forever in the way that I view students. In my teaching, I will not stop an individual from bringing their voice, ideas or views to the table. Instead, I will look at all thoughts as useful tools to accomplish the goal.” This student not only learned from this experience, but feels this experience will better inform her teaching in the future. In trying to capitalize on this kind of learning, students are required to read Julie Landsman’s, *A white teacher talks about race* and are encouraged to read Herbert Kohl’s, *I won’t learn from you and other thoughts on creative maladjustments* and Gary Howard’s, *We can’t teach what we don’t know: White teachers, multiracial schools*. Students are regularly asked to make connections between these kinds of readings and their experiences at the ALC. This type of reflective thinking will hopefully lead to teachers whose instructional decision making is informed, compassionate and centered on students and their lives.

Another course goal that focuses on “talking about children” understands how risk factors and protective factors shape and surround a young people’s lives and ultimately influences their schooling experiences.

Risk factors are those attributes (e.g., poverty) that make positive decision making difficult, negatively

affect development, and interfere with motivation to learn; while protective factors are those attributes (e.g., caring relationship with an adult) that youth need to grow into healthy adults and provide some resilience to the affects of risk factors. Using the *Rolling Stone* magazine essay, “The crime and punishment of a 13 year old killer,” students learn about a teenager, Nathaniel, whose life was filled with too many risk factors and too few protective factors. Near the end of Nathaniel’s story, we learn that he fatally shot his favorite teacher, was found guilty of this murder, and is now serving a long jail term. One interpretation of this story is that the context of Nathaniel’s life led him to this horrific event. In order for my students to more fully understand Nathaniel’s story, small groups of students create tableaus and perform them for their classmates. A tableau is an intentional arranging of a small group of students in fixed poses that results in a living scene or human snapshot. Through the tableaus, students demonstrate what they learned about Nathaniel, his risk and protective factors as well as the effects these factors had on his development, his motivation to learn, and his decision-making. The following are evaluative comments made by four students following their participation in the tableau lessons:

“This helped me to actually view the factors and to see how they really affected Nathaniel.”

“I realized some factors from other groups that I never though of before. I liked doing it because we had to be creative and put ourselves in Nathaniel’s position.”

“It makes learning more interesting and easier to understand and it showed the big picture.”

“It helped me learn about Nathaniel, better than just reading about it.”

Using a study of risk and protective factors certainly focuses the Foundations of Education course on children and the lives they lead. This study also provides an opportunity to examine policy decisions (e.g., funding cuts for after school programs) that affect many children. Having personal contact with students enrolled at an ALC provides important and authentic connections for teacher education students that hopefully better prepares them for teaching in classrooms that are richly diverse. Following the tableau performances, students reflect on their learning by completing a word journal (Angelo & Cross, 1993). Students identify a word or short phrase that best reflects their learning. They then write a paragraph explaining why they selected the word or phrase they did.

## 2. *Talk about teachers*

I believe, as Newman does, that Foundations of Education courses can help pre-service teachers think critically about and better understand the demands of day-to-day classroom teaching. Some issues related to these demands include the relationship between professional organizations and school governance, responding to increased governmental pressures, the impact school law has on teaching and learning, curriculum, and teacher rights.

In order to better prepare my students for the involvement of the judiciary in their teaching lives, small groups of students analyze Supreme Court cases that influenced public policy and school practice, and then perform mini-plays to demonstrate understanding of these important issues. A sampling of cases and legal issues that affect teachers lives in schools include:

1. *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) – separate facilities are not equal facilities
2. *Pickering v. Board of Education Township High School* (1967) – teacher dismissal for criticizing school officials
3. *Sheehan v. St. Peter’s Catholic School* (1971) – teacher liability
4. *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* (1973) – school funding

5. *Palmer v. Board of Education* (1979) – teacher dismissal for religious reasons
6. *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* (2002) – government funded vouchers

The choosing of appropriate pedagogy is critical when trying to assist teacher education students to better understand the challenges and demands of being the “teacher.” Mini-plays provide such a pedagogy; a problem-based approach that is socially constructed and provides a means to present a variety of perspectives and ideologies. Learning about perspectives and ideologies is central to successfully navigating the teaching life. Because we want learning to positively impact our students, teaching needs to be active, meaningful, and authentic. Moreover, we know that when pedagogy is holistic (i.e., having a blend of intellectual, social, and emotional aspects), learning is richer, deeper and valued more by students. Again, use of mini-plays achieves these aims. When a faculty observer was asked to evaluate student learning through this pedagogy, she reported:

Teacher candidates who see school law as a topic remote from their own experience and not directly applicable to their preparation for teaching careers discovered, because of this teaching strategy, that the topic does have meaning for them. Using drama to communicate the content of the cases allows for the communication of historical context as well as knowledge of school law.

I find myself agreeing with Newman, as I, like he, continue to search for better ways to “...help prospective teachers stand in the shoes of currently employed teachers and appreciate their views on occupational issues” (p. 4, 5). As a result, my students have interviewed retired teachers about the purposes of school, questioned teachers about what they need to know when it comes to K-12 students and their families being involved with chemicals, and listened to teacher stories about life in schools. Maybe until we go back to

the days of campus laboratory schools, we will continue to struggle in creating appropriate learning experiences in this area.

3. *Talk about the social context of education, especially politics and diversity.*

Newman believes that Foundations of Education courses are the place in the teacher education curriculum "... for people like us to join a conversation about diversity, a conversation situated in a highly controversial political context." (p. 5). The challenge is to create meaningful and authentic opportunities for our students so they can become engaged in this context.

An example of how I engage students in this context is through the study of power and control issues in K-12 schools. Specifically, I want my students to understand various political perspectives and resulting policy decisions regarding these issues. This study provides opportunities to analyze the changing governmental landscape at both state and federal levels regarding policies (e.g., government mandated accountability plans) that move more power and control to these entities, while minimizing influence of local school boards. School choice voucher plans and schools for profit are two models that are popular with some policy makers and most free market thinkers. Teacher education students need to realize that these ideas, if widely implemented, will likely have a profound affect on the viability of public schools. Charter schools are yet another means of exerting power and control of public schooling. In order to gain a more complete understanding of these ideas and issues, students read from a broad range of political perspectives, from conservative to progressive. For example, two conservative websites used are the heritage.org, and hoover.org., while two progressive websites used are fairest.org and inequality.org.

This information is applied through a survey assignment. Students create survey questions to assess respondents' attitudes about control and power in K-12 schooling. Examples of survey items

include:

Do you believe that government mandated high stakes testing influences teachers to teach to the test, therefore abandoning the idea of a well-rounded education?

Do you think that parents should be able to use public school money (vouchers) to pay for private school tuition?

Rate in order from highest (1) to lowest (3) who should have the most control over public education – the local school board, state government or federal government.

Surveys are administered to a variety of individuals: male and female non-Education and Education majors, parents with children attending public schools, parents with children attending private schools, parents without children, and males and females over the age of 60. Students prepare a one-page visual display of the findings and a three to four page paper analyzing two findings relating to their thinking about being a public school teacher. Students share their findings and analyses with peers and then a class discussion is held to promote further reflection about this topic.

An important goal linked to the social context of education and that is directly related to politics and diversity is analyzing equal educational opportunity. The activity used to accomplish this goal is a class debate. The issue debated is – "The role of schools in providing equal opportunity." Students are divided into groups of four, with two students arguing the YES position: Schools can and do play a positive and important role in providing equal opportunity, and two students arguing the NO position: Equal opportunity depends on a variety of circumstances beyond the influence schools can exert. Students are required to use issues like social class, poverty, privilege and oppression, race and

racism, sexism, equal opportunity or lack thereof, school funding formulas, and legal issues and cases to support their perspectives and counter-argue opposing perspectives. Following the debates, each foursome discusses what they learned about equal educational opportunity and develops questions they would ask a state or federal level policy maker.

#### 4. *Talk about practice as well as theory.*

If teacher education is to have a positive and lasting affect on its students, Foundations of Education professors must provide lessons that are rich in context, authentic in nature, and make direct connections to practice or “life in the classroom.” How many times have teacher education students sat in college classrooms and listened passively to lectures about John Dewey and active learning, Roger Johnson and David Johnson’s ideas about the academic as well as social benefits of cooperative learning, Ruby Payne’s framework for teaching students living in generational poverty, Mara Sapon-Shevin’s philosophical underpinnings supporting inclusive educational practices or Beverly Tatum’s thoughts about racial identity and racial interactions? Many of these ideas challenge how students have been socialized to think about the purposes of school, relationship between school and society, policy making, race and racism, and best instructional practices. Given this challenge, many students may not critically question their existing beliefs unless provided with engaging learning opportunities. For deep and rich learning to take place we simply cannot have students’ complete textbook readings and then *cover* this material in the classroom. We must develop learning that is as authentic as possible, socially constructed, and meaningful. One solution might be for important learning to emerge from real classrooms, schools, and communities. This learning could then be analyzed using engaging readings, personal experiences and theoretical constructs.

I am attempting this kind of curriculum work through the community-based service-learning project with students enrolled in the ALC. For example, while my students participate in this project, they read Erin

Gruwell’s *The freedom writers diary: How a teacher and 150 teens used writing to change themselves and the world around them* and then relate their experiences and this reading to constructs like the value expectancy theory.

The Foundations of Education course is the place in the teacher education curriculum where students can develop understanding for the day-to-day challenges associated with classroom teaching and begin to analyze the impact of policy decisions on this teaching. The NCLBA (and its many spin-offs – Teaching at Risk report) is an example of a policy decision that has far reaching and long lasting affects on teaching practices. It is our responsibility to provide curriculum and instruction that makes authentic connections with K-12 students and teachers, that is situated in social and political contexts and grounded in what we know about theory-driven best practice.

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### **Grounded Responsibility in a Connected World: Book Review of Peter Singer's One World**

**Full Title:** *One World: The Ethics of Globalization*.

**Author:** Peter Singer.

**Publisher:** New Haven, CN: Yale University Press

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In a world emphasizing “wisdom-lite,” where perplexed postmodernists warn about the dangers of monoculturalism, and color-coded electoral results show that the United States is really two nations under Canada, it would seem writing a rational, carefully argued book entitled *One World* seems out-of-step. Peter Singer, however, is willing to risk standing-out because he thinks there is something important to stand for. He stands for the importance of global responsibility and points out the necessity of thinking about one atmosphere, one economy, one law, and one community. Educators seeking to ground their pedagogy in the problems of people rather than the theories of specialists will do well to attend to his ethical analysis as well as his prescriptions for the one world we mutually inhabit.

Singer's book is the result of his Terry Foundation Lecture entitled “Religion in the Light of

Science and Philosophy” delivered at Yale University. Other lectures in this series have included John Dewey's *A Common Faith*, Paul Tillich's *The Courage to Be*, and Jacques Maritain's *Education at the Crossroads*. Singer holds his own in this elite group and his book cogently challenges people to come to grips with the interconnectedness of life on this planet.

A question asked early in the book and that helps frame its thesis is “To whom do we justify ourselves?” Singer sees people as essentially social beings and points out that if we justify ourselves to the tribe or nation we will only have a tribal or national ethic that does not take us far enough in dealing with our interconnected tensions in a changing world. The challenge for us today, however, deals with “how well we will come through the era of globalization...and this will depend on how we respond ethically to the idea that we live in one world” (p. 13). This challenge is not only a moral challenge; it involves the long-term security of the rich nations of the world. It is in their atmospheric, economic, legal, and social interests to see what is being done now and what might be done in the future to make our shared world an ethically responsible and safer place.

Singer begins his analysis by showing that the atmosphere has been assumed to be a giant global sink with a limitless capacity. Although everyone has used this sink, industrialized nations have been the primary users. For example, “the United States, with about five per cent of the world's population...was responsible for 30 per cent of the cumulative emissions, whereas India, with 17 per cent of the world's population, was responsible for less than two per cent of the emissions” (p. 32). With a sink of limitless capacity, this is no real problem. However, the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change claims that there is new and strong evidence that the sink has limits. The consequences of not attending to these limits results in global warming with its effects on increasing natural disasters, tropical diseases, and changes in food production patterns as well as rising

sea levels. All nations will be seriously affected. The Kyoto Protocol has attempted to use a system of justice and ingenuity in dealing with the best output for the atmosphere. Its mechanism of emissions trading is an early and important attempt to limit green house gas emissions. Since Russia has now signed the Protocol, only one nation, the United States, which is also the largest emitter, has not joined in. Perhaps, the present President of the United States, like his father, believes that “the American lifestyle is not up for negotiation” (p. 2). This certainly gives a new meaning to the assertion that “They hate us because we are free.” Do we assume the assertion entails freedom to pollute indiscriminately or freedom to act with disregard for the consequences on the rest of the world?

Moving to the economy, Singer examines the dynamics of the World Trade Organization in terms of the four charges: 1) It places economic concerns over others; 2) It erodes national sovereignty; 3) It is undemocratic; and 4) It increases inequality. In terms of economics trumping social values, Singer points out how difficult it is for this not to be the case. Ethical issues are seen as a subset of economic issues and have to be couched as such. A “Golden Straightjacket” that prevents individual nations from going their own way controls the erosion of national sovereignty. Nations can much more easily get in than get out. Claims to democratic operations are questioned because there is no weight given to population numbers. In addition, the Appellate Body does not answer to a majority of its members. Regarding inequality, the court is still out. This is an important ethical issue but it is still not clear if the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. In providing a practical ethical suggestion for the global economy, Singer points out the inherent responsibility of all nations and corporations to refrain from enabling dictators to sell off their country’s natural resources. To do so, he claims, is the same as an individual knowingly buying stolen goods. In an ethically principled world, economic values are not isolated deal breakers but rather are a part of a rational and humane system of thought and action.

The issue of one law raises many philosophical questions about transcultural moral judgments. Singer argues that one can certainly work to appreciate, preserve, and learn from other cultures without being a cultural relativist. A consistent cultural relativist stance is very difficult to maintain in an interconnected world. For example, a cultural relativist would have to accept whatever any other culture did, even if that involved another culture’s value of conquering other cultures. Accepting that there is a scope for rational argument in ethics means that “we can . . . ask whether the values we are upholding are sound, defensible, and justifiable” (p. 140). Transcultural moral judgments depend on everyone’s capacity and willingness to reason. This, Singer argues, is a universal human capacity, without which we would just have power struggles.

Although rationality has a major role in Singer’s notion of one community, so does imagination. In order to get beyond the tribal ways of ethical thinking, people imagined themselves to be a part of a larger nation. This helped remove some tribal barriers. The next step is to imagine ourselves as a part of a global community of reciprocity. This will help remove some of the national barriers. The real test of the workings of such a global community can be seen in the ways wealthy nations overcome the tendency to live high and let others die. If we would not allow this at a local or national level, why would we allow this at the global level?

This review only touches on the subtlety and cogency of Singer’s arguments and examples. Unlike some news networks, he strives to present a fair and balanced approach to complex issues. He demonstrates the dedication and imagination necessary to pursue wisdom in a time of great tensions and possibilities. Professors of education can build on this book and work to be a force in creating an ethics of global responsibility. Such a task involves standing out and undertaking the heavy work of not making light of wisdom.

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