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ABSTRACT

This paper traces the professional life of the educator Booker T. Washington. It shows that although he was active at Tuskegee Institute during the years of the development of the progressive education movement, he is virtually ignored in progressive education's body of literature. The paper describes the "project method" which was a way of life at Tuskegee--the physical expansion and the development of Tuskegee served as the source for the school's curriculum. It explains that theory classes provided the opportunity for systematic inquiry and problem solving, and further, the social environment was reflected in every aspect of the typical day at Tuskegee. The older students helped the younger students, for example. Like John Dewey, Washington drew upon recognized masters in the field of progressive education: Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) and Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852). The paper discusses historical distortions concerning Washington's curriculum. For example, critical theorists sought to place Washington's integrated industrial academic curriculum in opposition to the traditional discipline-centered curriculum. However, Washington's educational practices stemmed from a progressive philosophy of education. His theories provide the world with a body of pragmatic thought that is rooted in the principles of education for democracy, experimental inquiry, and evolutionary thought. The paper concludes by listing Booker T. Washington's contributions to education and by stating that he should be given his due recognition. (Contains 39 references.) (BT)

THE ARCHITECT OF PROGRESSIVE
EDUCATION:
JOHN DEWEY OR BOOKER T.
WASHINGTON

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The Architect of Progressive Education: John Dewey or Booker T. Washington

Paternity for the progressive education movement is an idea that is strongly debated. The movement is generally described as developing in two phases (Cremin, 1961). The first phase of the movement involved those who were concerned with the need to change the society and to provide greater opportunities for democratic living. The second phase was marked by specific developments in pedagogical theories and curriculum development. The historical boundaries are loosely marked by historians of progressive education as the period in time between the final years of reconstruction (mid to late 1870s) and the early years of the 20th century (1900- 1915). These years are considered the developing years of progressive education (Dewey, 1915; Cremin, 1961; Tanner & Tanner, 1995). Lawrence Cremin's *Transformation of the School* (1961) portrays an amorphous beginning to American progressive education, but the beginning might well be fixed by Joseph Mayer Rice's essays on the conditions of

education (Cremin, 1961, p. 1). In *Schools of Tomorrow*, the Deweys described what they considered to be representative schools in which progressive educational practices were implemented. Written in 1915, *Schools of Tomorrow* documents the work of those schools beginning with the early years of the twentieth century. Although the professional life of Booker T. Washington corresponds with these years, and his educational accomplishments at Tuskegee are substantial, he is virtually ignored in the body of literature known as progressive education. Further, it is pointed out that Washington's ideas and work at Tuskegee were in evidence well before John Dewey's influence was felt in American education (Curti, 1935; Harlan, 1983; Martin, 1962; Mathews, 1948; Meier, 1963; Thrasher, 1906). Tuskegee was chartered and opened in 1881 with Washington as the principal when John Dewey was a teacher at age 22 on a three-member faculty in Oil City High School, Oil City, Pennsylvania (Dykhuisen, 1973). Beginning with an appropriation of \$2,000 from the State of Alabama, Washington was to serve as principal of Tuskegee until his death in 1915. Washington was at the

height of his career when he died at the relatively young age of 59. It can be said that his life bridged those two periods in time. Paul Monroe, Teachers College professor and Director of the Department of Education at Teachers College during the early decades of the twentieth century, accentuates this point. In a report to the Executive Director of the General Education Board (GEB), Wallace Buttrick, Monroe compliments Washington by portraying him as a man who was involved in the business of doing what others were merely "discussing". (personal communication: Monroe to Buttrick, May 6, 1904). Since Teachers College was to become the preeminent school of educational theory and curriculum development, the report reveals the possibility that Washington's work may have shed some light on the developing theories of progressive education.

In the Sixteenth Yearbook of the John Dewey Society, *Negro Education in America: its adequacy, problems and needs* (1962), William H. Martin, Dean of Faculty at Hampton Institute, refers to the similarities between Washington and Dewey as contributors to the advancement of progressive education. In describing the

"obvious" similarities between Booker T. Washington and John Dewey, Martin points to their application of Pestalozzian ideas; that is, the belief in object learning and the idea that the schools can regenerate the social order (p. 87). Martin points to Dewey and Washington as advancing the teaching principle that states "...the psychological organization of subject matter is sound, when students ascend to general principles by beginning with ideas that are related to their experience ..." (p. 87). William Martin's contribution to the Yearbook establishes three points:

(a)...the Tuskegee idea seemed to reflect a particular philosophy in our historical development; (b) that the programs at the Alabama institution were developed before Dewey's influence was felt in American education; and (c) that obviously, the Tuskegee ideas could not have been influenced by the thinking of John Dewey. (Martin, 1962, chap. 2)

These observations raise intriguing questions about Washington's status as a leading architect in the development and practices of progressive education.

Progressive **Educator**

Booker T. Washington's ideas on curriculum reflect the belief that the personal experiences of the student should serve as the basis for their educational experiences. In effect, the curriculum should be structured in such a way that it links the student's home experiences with formal knowledge. Louis Harlan (1983) poses the question of whether Washington was a Deweyite due to his insistence upon providing education which was associated with the "life of the student and the life of the school" (p. 151). Although Harlan poses the question rhetorically, the evidence suggests that the philosophy applied by Washington at Tuskegee was a philosophy consistent with the writings of John Dewey. He required purposeful connections between educational experience and the needs and nature of the student in connection with the social life of the community (Curti, 1935; Harlan, 1983; Martin, 1962; Mathews, 1948).

Many educators would build upon Dewey's foundation of educational theory, but it was William Kilpatrick who was most noted for developing the theories

into a working curriculum. His curricular contribution to the world of progressive education was known as the project method. The popularity of the project method would place him in league with John Dewey as a founder of progressive education (Cremin, 1961). However, 30 years prior to this development in progressive educational theory, Booker T. Washington built an entire school around a curriculum that was structured around the projects of daily life at Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute.

The "project method" was a way of life at Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute. The physical expansion and the development of Tuskegee served as the source for the school's curriculum. Students were provided with an opportunity to develop industrial and scientifically-based agricultural skills; they were taught the values of work and morality; they were taught the academic theories imbedded in the industries for which they were engaged; and, they were given the opportunity to problem solving. Buildings were built by the students. In the construction of the buildings, according to Max Thrasher, a writer and personal friend of Washington, various levels of education occurred

simultaneously. Thrasher's account published in 1904 stated,

As I was passing a building which was being converted into a boy's dormitory, I viewed four young men laying a floor ...Three of the young men were in their first year at the institute. They were working under the oversight of the fourth, a young man in his second year of study. While in the building, the instructor came in to see how the work was going on. He had squads of men at work like this, in half a dozen places, and divided his time among them. In the carpenter shop several members of the class were at work making the door frames and window frames to be put into Huntington hall. The brick masons had completed their work on this building a few days before, and the carpenters had taken it in hand. Just at that time the men in one squad were engaged in putting on the roof. When I went through the yard in front of the carpenter shop late that afternoon, I found the theory class in that department taking up for their lesson that day the laying out of a roof- pitch, length of rafters, and similar problems. These theory classes are utilized in all the trades for the answering of questions which may arise during the day's work and for the instruction which these questions suggests. (Thrasher, 1904, p. 76)

Thrasher's description of a typical day at Tuskegee portrays students engaged in the real projects of construction and skilled trades correlated with their academic studies. The students' work was directly related

to their own lives and the life of the community. The work and study were tied to the social environment which Dewey talks about and Kilpatrick asserts as necessary. Using an interdisciplinary approach, the students were learning the academic subjects of math, geometry, science, English and the specific trade skills of carpentry, welding, masonry, electricity and other salable skills of the building trades. The theory classes provided the opportunity for systematic inquiry and problem solving. Further, the social environment was reflected in every aspect of the description offered by Thrasher's typical day at Tuskegee Institute. Students were organized as teams at various stations where they worked on projects. The older and more advanced students helped the younger students. (This method served to reinforce the learned skills of the older students.) All of the teams were working in harmony toward a common cause in the interest of their working and living environment. The common cause was reinforced by the presence of the instructor rotating among the various teams.

Like Dewey, Washington drew upon recognized masters in the field of progressive education: Heinrich Pestalozzi who lived between 1746 and 1827, and Friedrich Froebel who lived between 1782 and 1852. Pestalozzi and Froebel's ideas were rooted in the Age of Enlightenment. For them, the education was the basis upon which a society would become democratic and ultimately grow and develop. Education was the only way to eradicate the tyranny of the elite and to empower the poor. Pestalozzi and Froebel stressed the importance of education having its roots in the objects and activities of social living (Tanner & Tanner, 1980,1995). This approach to the curriculum was a shift from the traditional studies where formal academic knowledge was passed down to the learner as unquestionable truths rather than derived from the learner's personal and social experiences. Washington's understanding of object learning is apparent in the design of Tuskegee's curriculum. Students were provided with experiences related to their lives, or the life of their communities, and they were expected to develop their capacity to think from their abilities to do. Washington's

educational philosophies were expressed in his 1902

Annual Report to the Trustees of Tuskegee.

The main groups of effort at correlation of interests are of especial moment to the Academic department: Correlation (1) of each academic study with every other; and (2) of each academic study with (a) the trades and industries of Tuskegee, and all the social activities of the school community; and (b) the social and industrial environment from which the students come and in which they will probably live and labor...the teacher of history will stress the progress of inventions and industrial discoveries, the growth particularly of the basic industries the progress of the working classes. The plow, the saw and jack planes, the printing press...each representing the summation of the mechanical ingenuity of centuries, the students themselves use every day in actual work in the shops and fields. This experience and interest the teacher of history must utilize to develop in his classroom teaching the evolution of selected tools and machines. (2) In English composition it must be remembered that the problem of finding something to write about should be no problem at Tuskegee. The student's experience is full of impressions and ideas and inquiries which the very unusual environment flings at him every moment. Let him talk and write about the things he sees and handles and knows about and is interested in. Let him express his personal experience, the way the things he sees and does actually appeal to him as an individual. (3) The same principles markedly apply to the teaching of arithmetic. Let the teacher remember that,

other things being equal, the real problem-
the problem which the actual conduct of an
industrial operation by the student or by his
fellows has presented for solution-is by far
the most interesting and helpful.
(Washington, 1902)

Historical Distortions

Booker T. Washington was blamed for reversing the educational gains made by Blacks during the Reconstruction period of 1866-1877 (Anderson, 1988; Aptheker, 1953). The concept of universal education for Blacks was being formulated along the same lines as that which was practiced by Whites. Education was seen as purely academic with a focus on the traditional literary subjects. This perennialist approach placed the ancient Latin and Greek languages at the center of the curriculum and considered the traditional academic disciplines, characteristic of a liberal education, to be essential for intellectual growth. Critical theorists sought to place Washington's integrated industrial academic curriculum in opposition to the traditional discipline-centered curricula. In doing so, they distorted his curricular goals by portraying Tuskegee as an industrial education institution

designed to subjugate Blacks to social and economic deprivation (Anderson, 1988; Aptheker, 1953, 1973; Spivey, 1978). The following criticism from Donald Spivey (1978) is typical of the distortions lodged against Washington:

Washington was working to make Tuskegee students into the type of blacks that the white South relished. Their training was primarily in 'how to behave' rather than in how to become skilled tradesmen. To be a skilled craftsman requires proficiency in mathematical and verbal skills. The school's curriculum, however, was industrial almost to the total exclusion of the academic. (Spivey, 1978, p. 54)

Unlike the progressives who considered industrial education, or manual education, to be a means to an educational end, the critical theorists saw industrial education as purely an end in itself. They considered industrial education to be a means for solidifying the social order that evolved from slavery and the Reconstruction period (Anderson, 1988; DuBois, 1903; Spivey, 1978). According to this theory, Blacks were trained to be laborers in a south that was largely dependent upon manual labor (Spivey, 1978). It was believed that the northern

industrialists who provided the financial support for Tuskegee were encouraging industrial education because of what they saw as economic opportunities in the South (Spivey, 1978). Their plan was to expand the southern economy by training Blacks for low skilled jobs and by exploiting the raw materials of the region. Specifically, the industrialists were interested in building railroads to transport cotton and cotton by-products, coal, iron, lumber and fruit (Spivey, 1978, p. 72). At the same time, industrial education would deny Blacks the benefits of a literary education which Whites feared would instill in Blacks a false sense of vanity and would subsequently make them resent and then reject their subservient roles (Anderson, 1988; Aptheker, 1953; Spivey, 1978). This thinking is in direct contrast to the ideas of John Dewey. For Dewey, vocational education is the process of intellectual engagement and insight that will direct the individual to a final goal. The end product of that goal was social in nature since vocations are the means by which individuals interact with the community in the interests of the community's growth and development. Dewey stated, "A vocation

means nothing but such a direction of life activities as renders them perceptibly significant to a person, because of the consequences they accomplish, and also useful to his associates" (Dewey, 1916, p. 307).

Unfortunately, Washington's ideas and actions in the creation of Tuskegee as a comprehensive industrial school came to be construed by his critics, then and now, as "accommodationist." This validates Dewey when he argued that a failure to see the progressive experimental nature of vocational education would lead individuals to believe that vocational education was intended to perpetuate the class divisions (1916). This traditional view of vocational education associates the manual side of education with subservience and conversely the mental side with leisure and subsequently privilege:

It would be quite possible for a narrowly conceived scheme of vocational education to perpetuate this division in hardened form. Taking its stand upon a dogma of social predestination, it would assume that some are to continue to be wage earners under economic conditions like the present, and would aim simply to give them what is termed a trade education-that is, greater technical efficiency. (Dewey, 1916,p. 317)

Philosophy of Education

According to the Tanners, a philosophy of education is a belief system serving as a source and influence for the testing of educational objectives and curriculum development (Tanner & Tanner, 1980, chap. 4). The very process of determining and designing the curriculum depends upon the beliefs that are held together by an educational philosophy. As an outgrowth of social life and the democratic prospect, a philosophy of education should reflect those values that look to the possibilities rather than to the limitations of the social conditions. Questions regarding the human experience and the ways in which associated living is to be improved are elemental to a philosophy. How a school is structured and how it functions serve as tests of educational philosophy in action. Because of the curricular unity characteristic of Tuskegee-the unity between subjects and processes, the unity between the life of the school and the surrounding community-it is quite apparent that Washington's educational practices stemmed from a progressive philosophy of education. Although Washington is not cited

as a great philosopher of education, and not distinguished for any particular philosophic treatise, his theories provide the world with a body of pragmatic thought that is rooted in the principles of education for democracy, experimental inquiry and evolutionary thought. By viewing the things of life as the source for developing the habits of critical thinking, rather than the classic literary courses such as Latin, Greek, grammar and logic, Washington was practicing a method of education that came to be recognized as foundational to progressive educational thought. His philosophy of education did not happen by accident. As a student of the writings of Pestalozzi and Froebel, this writer believes that Washington was deliberate in the implementation of a progressive educational curriculum.

Organic Law

Booker T. Washington was not a man of abstractions. He believed that the answers to life's puzzles were found in the simplicities of the world. To him this was a world of people and things; the closer to nature the

educational practices could place students, the greater the chance of showing them the essence of nature's complexities (Washington, 1902, 1904). As a student of Pestalozzi, Washington recognized that words without concrete meanings were abstractions. They were symbols of something real and something concrete. He believed the student needed to have experience with the thing that the word or symbol represented before he could understand the meaning of the word or the symbol. Washington further believed that to teach words and symbols without first providing the learner with a concrete example of that to which the word symbolizes was placing the student in an unnatural learning environment. Therefore, the first learning experience for the student should be the concrete world closest to his personal experiences. This interaction, however, is not linear. According to the experimentalist model for curriculum development, what motivates the student to understand the symbols of nature is the desire to communicate in a social context. When there is a social interest, then the relationship between the learner, his community and his environment becomes organic (Tanner

& Tanner, 1995). Like Pestalozzi, Washington saw the organic connections in natural growth fostered by sense impression. Pestalozzi's theory described the natural forces as active and essential in building the organic relationship between the learner and the immediate environment (as cited by Guimps, 1894). Working with poor children in dire poverty, whose only experiences were those of their immediate environment, Pestalozzi encouraged them to understand their concrete world through their senses. He believed the basis for thought and subsequent knowledge was created by sense impressions of those things near. Building on that idea, Washington structured the teaching of English around the concept of filling the students' minds with impressions and feelings. He held that no student would be hard pressed to formulate an impression about Tuskegee given the wide range of stimuli coming from the trades and the natural environment. With things to say and emotions to express, students were anxious to find ways to express themselves. Accordingly, the teaching of English at Tuskegee involved correlating the lessons of the English classes with the experiences of the trade shops and the

farms. Through the written medium, students were taught to express their impressions based upon their sensory experiences with the mechanical and agricultural trades. While their time was divided between their industrial classes and their academic classes, the correlation between the classes was such, that the lessons in the English classes were derived from the activities in the shops. For example, a lesson in grammar would not be exempt from such correlations. John C. Wright, the director of the English department explained:

A teacher of grammar visiting a theory class in blacksmithing finds a number of her boys listening to an explanation of the process of welding iron. The next day, when these boys come to her to study the subject predicate and object in sentence structure, he finds such sentences to work upon as these, "The man welded the iron.", "The iron was heated by the blacksmith." (Wright, n.d.)

In the less rote areas of the English curriculum, students were taught to construct ideas by placing facts in a logical sequence such that clarity of thought provided the strength of the ideas. Because of the familiarity with their topics – again, those things for which they shared an organic relationship – the emphasis of the instruction was

placed on the coherence of thought and less on the memorization of facts.

The students' recitations about their trades were examples of how the instruction in English was used to empower the students with the ability to formulate and articulate an idea. The opportunity to deliver a speech in front of a large audience gave them confidence and prepared them to take leadership positions. When giving public orations, rather than the typical subjects for school-boy orations – "George Washington , Abraham Lincoln, the Battle of Gettysburg" – the students presented such topics as "Farm Demonstration Work in the South" or "Basketry as an Art and as an Industry" (Wright, n.d.). Their topics were based on personal experiences which gave them a greater depth of knowledge and comfort about the topics and freed them from the mechanics of memorization. The emphasis at Tuskegee was less in telling the students what to say but, rather, teaching the students with something to say how to say it more effectively (Wright, n.d.). Although the teaching of English was primarily an extension of their organic experiences in the school and in their homes, the

English teachers did not lose sight of the higher values of culture embedded in language and the related artistic expressions of personal experiences. The cultural themes emanating from the students' writings and expressions of personal thought allowed the teachers to codify the common themes of the human experience and then correlate and guide the students to studies on the masters of English (Washington, 1904).

With the correlation between the classes and the industries, Tuskegee always offered an opportunity for praxis. In particular, the theory classes provided a structural component to the curriculum that had the sole function of ensuring an integration between theory and practice and dealing with emerging situations. This dynamic curriculum was fully unified and set in a progressive context that viewed the development of the mind as organic to the social environment. Washington stated:

We have thus used in teaching and for teaching material the things about us--that which everybody touches--or may touch every day--the school plant and school surroundings--including the farm with its various activities, the shop of whatever sort, the building operations, the accounting

offices, business operations, purchases, sales, supplies; In fact, we use every phase of the institution ...Thus it is that we use our entire plant as a laboratory. (Washington, circa 1904)

And finally, in this social context, where the interest of the individual was stimulated by the needs of the community, it was important to maintain the unity between the curriculum and the environment. "In using this plant as a laboratory, we have followed another important pedagogical principle. We have enlisted the interest, the knowledge and the activity of the student as a part of this process" (Washington, circa 1904). Again, these words from Washington which were written around 1904 anticipated John Dewey's *How We Think* which was written in 1910. Dewey stated that interest is one way in which curiosity about a problem is maintained.

Curiosity rises above the organic and the social planes and becomes intellectual in the degree in which it is transformed into interest in problems provoked by the observation of things and the accumulation of material...To the open mind, nature and social experience are full of varied and subtle challenges to look further. (Dewey, 1910, p.32)

The literature on industrial education supports Washington's view that manual education mitigates thinking and stimulates the method of intelligence. The literature extends from a psychological awareness that thought is constructed through the process of stimuli entering into the brain by way of the five sensors (Bennett, 1926). As such, the learning process is enhanced when all avenues that receive and respond to information are in use. According to Charles Bennett (1926), sense perception-seeing, touching, hearing, smelling, testing, doing-is the basis for impressions and consequently knowledge. Pestalozzi expressed this view by stating, "sense impressions, joined to exercises in language for expressing the different impressions received, must be the foundation of education" (as cited by Guimps, 1894). This concept was a principal factor to the theory of progressive education. Washington not only recognized this, but applied and tested the new pedagogy in the total setting of an educational institution. Years later, Dewey wrote and advocated for manual training for children and vocational education for adolescents in a comprehensive curriculum as the means

for developing social power and insight (Dewey, 1916, chap. 23).

Conclusion

The legacy of Booker T. Washington as a progressive experimentalist educator needs to be given the full recognition it deserves. It is tragic that he is so stereotyped as an "accommodationist" by intellectuals Black and White to this day. By recognizing and articulating the realities of Negro life in Tuskegee, Alabama, Washington's educational vision for constructive learning through an integrated mix of industrial and academic subjects was perfectly appropriate and years later echoed in the *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education*:

Within the past few decades changes have taken place in American life profoundly affecting the activities of the individual. As a citizen, he must to a greater extent and in a more direct way cope with problems of community life, State and National Governments, and international relationships. As a worker, he must adjust himself to a more complex economic order. As a relatively independent personality, he has more leisure. The problems arising from these three dominant phases of life are closely interrelated and call for a degree of

intelligence and efficiency on the part of every citizen that cannot be secured through elementary education alone or even through secondary education unless the scope of that education is broadened. (Commission, 1918)

Washington's ideal of connecting education to the social life and needs of the learners for the purpose of enhancing the democratic prospect was powerfully unique and created a vision for future generations of educators. By synthesizing the concepts of social responsibility and educational growth, he would anticipate John Dewey's *magnus opus-Democracy and Education*-by over thirty years. Additionally, he would anticipate the form and function of the comprehensive high school during the time when less than 6% of all the high school-aged adolescents were attending high school (Tanner, 1972). His vision for vocational education would be validated by Congress' support for publicly supported vocational schools with their passing of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 (Tanner, 1972).

Beyond the vision that so clearly paved the way for progressive educational thought, Washington's tangible, and lasting, educational contributions are too numerous to

list in this writing. But a short list of his contributions would include the following:

1. The General Education Board (GEB) – the idea for the GEB was launched at Tuskegee. As a contemporary to many of its founding members, and as a beneficiary to John D. Rockefeller, Washington played an important role in the GEB's development. Created as a vehicle for the implementation of experimentalist and pragmatic educational ideas, the Board lasted for 60 years and provided funding for experimental projects that would reflect the advanced theories – by the best minds – of progressive education.

2. The Rosenwald Fund – Convinced by Washington to provide matching funds for communities that were willing and able to raise money for the construction of Negro schools, Julius Rosenwald provided dollar-for-dollar matching funds for the construction of schools throughout the South. By the 1940s over 5,000 schools had been built from the Rosenwald Fund (Mathews, 1948, p. 182).

3. Off Shoots of Tuskegee – Many of the graduates of Tuskegee went on to create schools throughout the South. The larger of the schools were the Robert Hungerford Industrial School, Eatonville Florida; The Snow Hill Normal and Industrial Institute, Snow Hill Alabama; Utica Industrial Institute, Utica Mississippi; and the Voorhees Normal and Industrial Institute at Denmark South Carolina (Washington, circa 1910).

4. Jeannes Fund -Anna Jeanes gave over one million dollars to the cause of training teachers to supervise Negro teachers in the rural areas. The stated purpose was to train teachers in the progressive educational method of connecting the schools to the activities of life. This gift was given in behalf of Booker T. Washington (Harlan, 1983: Mathews, 1948).

5. Demonstration Farming- Booker T. Washington received funding to create a traveling agricultural school. The Jesup Wagon as it was called was intended to teach farmers in the remote areas of Alabama the science of farming and other methods to increase their agricultural production. This method of demonstration farming was

instrumental in building the South's economy. Although the literature on demonstration farming gives credit to Seaman Knapp for creating the practice to fight the boll weevil, the written record shows Washington's ideas for demonstration farming -including the creation of the Jesup Wagon - developing at the same time. (Harlan, 1983; Mathews 1948).

Although, the Tuskegee curriculum was deliberately conceived as providing for vocational education at a level of less-than-college grade, by 1902-only 20 years after the opening of Tuskegee, the follow-up of graduates revealed that more than half had entered the professions of teaching, school administration, nursing and medicine or were in graduate school (Catalogue, 1902, 1904, 1905). This gives testimony to the fallacy that vocational education does not mitigate social and economic mobility. Equally significant was that graduates in the skilled trades were equipped to build; graduates in agriculture were equipped to engage in scientific farming and agribusiness; graduates in home management were equipped to provide for better nutrition and child care and a better family life;

graduates in business were equipped to enter fields that were unthinkable for African Americans .

If placed in a contemporary context, Washington's ideas could have profound implications for today's educational problems. There is a search in today's climate of educational reform to identify ways in which inner city children can learn and achieve academically. The focus has been on funding inequities with little emphasis on fundamental curriculum reform. Washington's method of teaching impoverished adolescents would be the ideal for students living in the inner cities with very little in the way of life experiences. The basic principle of connecting the curriculum to the needs and the nature of the learner could be the guiding philosophy. Following Washington's model, the life of the inner city could provide source materials for the curriculum. For example, the environmental ecology of city-life in terms of water, air quality and air pollution could be the basis to the science curriculum. The related political issues with the environment could serve as the social studies curriculum. The history lessons could derive directly from the history of the cities and their associated

immigrant patterns. The architectural designs of the old houses could be integrated lessons on architecture, history, geometry and urban decay. The industrialization of the cities could be lessons in economics and social studies. Following the immigration patterns of people moving in and out of the city could be an integrated social statistics course. Like Tuskegee, the communities would serve as the educational laboratories. Students could be involved in restoring abandoned houses and lots; they could learn the industries associated with those restorations and acquire salable skills. The most important aspect of a curriculum based around the life of a city would be an awareness of its problems and a sense of responsibility in trying to find solutions to the problems.

A unified curriculum modeled after the methods and ideals of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute would help the rising generation of urban youth to develop the social power and insight through career goals that would enable them to become fully engaged in the human community. It would require community support and a willingness to depart from the traditional models of

education. Giving due recognition to Booker T. Washington will not remedy the distortion and defamation of his work as chronicled in historical scholarship up to this time, but it will provide a better vision of possibility for the present and future of the rising generation of urban youth and the democratic prospects.

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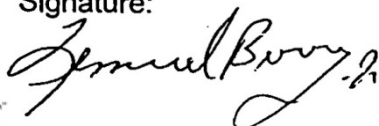
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