



On the Need to Live Educational Foundations

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I recently retired from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) where I was a faculty member since 1975. My field is known as Curriculum Studies, which I consider to be a kindred spirit with Foundations of Education. I feel that I gained immense sustenance from the study of educational foundations throughout my life in education.

As I continue to write and to be active in the field, I continue to live educational foundations. However, I can pick and choose meetings to attend, and thus select very few. More importantly, I can decide what I wish to ponder and reflect on it as long as I wish. Almost invariably this involves basic questions of philosophy, history, culture, and socio-economic life—the basic issues of life. Good foundational teaching assumes that such issues should never be fully settled. I am convinced that we need to teach this today more than ever. In *Modes of Thought*, Alfred North Whitehead elaborates on the never-ending character of philosophical endeavor: “Philosophy begins in wonder. And, in the end, when philosophic thought has done its best, the wonder remains.”¹ This unending philosophizing has made the wonder more meaningful and my life more fulfilling. One of my heartfelt wishes is to continue pondering sources of meaning in my educational life.

It occurs to me that this pondering began long ago, perhaps when I was a child. Indeed, I have been reflecting on the foundations of education since long before I knew they were the Foundations of Education. Sadly, the Foundations of Education are being pushed toward the precipice of extinction. The same is happening to its cousin, curriculum studies—particularly curriculum theory—my major educational concern since I was an elementary school teacher. Opposition exists, and I want to offer a brief autobiographical portrayal of my life in education as but one illustration of resistance to potential extinction. I urge others to do so, too, for there must be solidarity of efforts to revive deep foundational and curricular concerns. I am convinced that such a revival is absolutely necessary. We must resist the tendency to diminish or extinguish foundational courses and departments, including curriculum studies, in colleges and universities. We must simultaneously be ready to teach foundational questions in whatever courses we are obliged to teach and in every opportunity we have to engage with teachers, school leaders, educational policy makers, and the general public.

I have lived through many attacks on foundations of education, so I begin here with a brief diatribe against a prominent attack of today: the furor surrounding STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). It seems that every college of education is falling head over heels to acquire STEM funding as if it were the pinnacle of educational pursuit. Ever since post-Sputnik curriculum *reform* the federal government (in league with the military, corporate, and other private interests) has taken over research and policy through the kinds of grant opportunities it provides for educational researchers and schools. Only a few have resisted the lures of

1. Alfred North Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (New York: Free Press of Macmillan, 1938), 168.

grants and continue to pursue their own scholarly interests in foundational matters. Today, the university job market in education is replete with STEM positions. Similarly, so many grants are about STEM.

While I agree that we need expertise in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, it is clear that we need much more. We need something to nourish STEM. What good are stems without roots and seeds? Educational foundations provide roots in the seedbed of philosophy, history, anthropology, economics, sociology, political science, geography, ecology, psychology, and more. Foundations provided a range of paradigmatic thinking (normative, analytic, critical, and postmodern). Some of us stated this need in the first set of Standards of the American Educational Studies Association (AESA) Task Force on Educational Standards of 1978. As a young assistant professor, I was grateful to be invited to participate on that Task Force. Just as we were trying to broaden and deepen narrow and oppressive educational reform efforts of that period, some today cry for ways to broaden STEM. We hear calls for STEAM, wherein the “A” refers to arts. Clearly the arts are necessary and neglected. They water the imagination that supplies nutrients to the roots and, thus, to the stems. Others call for STREAM. The “R” stands for relationships. Who can deny the need for improved human relations, much as nutrients course throughout the xylem and phloem in a process that makes leaves, flowers, and fruits flourish? A stem by itself withers, has no purpose, and dies. To consciously cultivate one’s roots gives a continuously evolving basis for living. To not realize this opportunity is inhumane and inhuman.

The current STEM fetish is but one of many rootless events that I have lived through during my life in education. It is emblematic of attempts by non-educators to oust or ignore educators and thus prevent the kind and quality of questioning or wondering that has strengthened me, and doubtless others, to move through the vicissitudes of this veil or vale of tears and joys called life. So, I will relate some snapshots of my life in education with commentaries on educational endeavors that I could address more effectually by living the foundations of education.

Born slightly before the baby-boomers, I reeled without realizing why from World War II. I did not know that my father, a school superintendent, teacher, and coach (all at once) was one of the few men remaining in the small Pemberville, Ohio school system, having been rejected from the Army Intelligence Corps because his father was an immigrant from Germany from before World War I. I knew celluloid (not plastic), liked Olio (not butter), collected Ration Coins, and my favorite toy was a wooden spool in a baking powder can—a home-made rattle. I had not yet learned to ask the basic curriculum question, at least explicitly: what is worthwhile? Nonetheless, I was working on it as babies invariably do.

Franklin Roosevelt had passed away. We moved to another small town, about 60 miles west on U.S. 6 (Butler, Indiana) where my Mother had grown up on a farm and my Dad became superintendent, principal, shop teacher, commercial teacher, and coach of all sports in a tiny school called Scott Center, which had no town—just a collection of small farms. Dad’s basketball teams were like mini-*Hoosiers*, referring to the rendition of Milan was recreated in the popular movie, *Hoosiers*. Basketball became worthwhile to me, referring again to the perennial curriculum question. There is a book called *Hoosier Temples* that shows the uniquely adorned *forts* (gymnasiums) of small towns in Indiana where the local knights (teenagers) strove to defend the honor of each local community by jousting in basketball. *Hoosier Temples* provides data showing that 15 of the 16 largest high school gyms, based on seating capacity, were in Indiana.² My heroes were on Dad’s team that made it to the sectional finals against Auburn in 1952, a regular

2. Donald E. Hamilton, *Hoosier Temples: A Pictorial History of Indiana’s High School Basketball Gyms* (St. Louis, MO: G. Bradley Publishing, 1993), 4.

in the upper echelon of the state tournament since their appearance in the final four 1948. There were no classes to differentiate different high school populations in those days, and when little Milan won in 1954, all small schools thought it was a possibility for them—akin to winning the lottery. My pretending as an only child on a rather isolated farm, doubtless a precursor of my interest in educational foundations, was about playing championship basketball. Like many Hoosiers I thought prowess in basketball, even pretend prowess, was a defensible response to the “what’s worthwhile” question.

Schooling was back to basic—the back to “nuts and bolts” (basics) phenomenon that seems to happen in education after major or alleged catastrophes. It was assumed that patriotism had to be assured, so schooling was dominated by traditionalists. No one mentioned the five-volume *Eight Year Study*³ that demonstrated the potential superiority of variations on Deweyan progressive education over traditional education, and the value of maintaining an experimental that saw education as exploration, focusing on student needs, within the crucible of democratic theory and practice.⁴ Despite this, President Eisenhower supported the warning that the problems of education at the time could be laid at the doorstep of John Dewey, saying in a letter of March 26, 1959, “Educators, parents and students alike must be continuously stirred up by the effects in our educational system. They must be induced to abandon the educational path that, rather blindly, they have been following as a result of John Dewey’s teachings...I should like to see a return to fundamentals in both high school and indeed in the higher grades of the elementary schools.”⁵ Those who perpetuated such a return to *basics* were called *Ax-Grinders* by Mary Anne Raywid (1963) and included such writers as Rudolf Flesch, Admiral Hyman Rickover, and Arthur Bestor.⁶ I experienced this emphasis on basic in my school days of the 1950s and 1960s.

By the end of my junior high experience, Sputnik had been launched, and the world would be forever different. From the 1890s through most of the 1950s, educators were part of the educational policy-making scene, principally through the National Education Association (NEA) and its noted committee and commission reports. With the 1957 launch of Sputnik, however, educators were ousted, replaced by experts in the disciplines (forerunners of STEM) and psychologists, such as Jerome Bruner, were tapped on matters of learning and development.⁷ My mother was a math and social studies teacher and had to attend workshops on how to teach *new math*, inquiry methods, and more. In conversation with Ralph Tyler (evaluation director of the *Eight Year Study*, respected scholar, and adviser to six U.S. presidents) told me in the 1980s that U. S. governmental and corporate leaders had long awaited an event that would help them circumvent the *U. S. Constitution’s* relegation of educational policy-making to states and communities.⁸ Yes, this is the same Ralph Tyler who is often maligned by curriculum scholars who see him as mechanistic, recipe-oriented, behaviorist, and uncritical. Granted, Tyler did set forth a set of questions that others framed as recipes,⁹ but it is he who told me that Sputnik gave the opportunity (an excuse) to make schooling a problem of defense, rather than a problem of education, and could thus and thereafter be a matter of federal control, so long as it was kept in the sphere of

3. See Wilford Aikin, *The Story of the Eight-Year Study* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1942).

4. John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916).

5. Dwight David Eisenhower, “Letter of March 26, 1959,” Source: Center for Dewey Studies, Carbondale, IL. [From Professor Otto Krash, President, Philosophy of Education Society to: To whom it may concern, 1959.06.10 (17858) in *The Correspondence of John Dewey, 1871-2007, Vol. 4: 1953-2007*, edited by Larry Hickman (Charlottesville, Va.: InteLex Corp., 2008)].

6. Anne Raywid, *The Ax-Grinders* (New York: Macmillan, 1963).

7. Jerome S. Bruner, *The Process of Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960).

8. Ralph W. Tyler, “Personal Communication,” 1980; Ralph W. Tyler, William H. Schubert, & Ann Lynn Lopez Schubert, “A Dialogue with Ralph W. Tyler,” *Journal of Thought*, 21 no. 1 (1986): 91-118.

9. Ralph W. Tyler, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949).

defense.¹⁰ Following the launch of Sputnik, indeed, there was the quick creation of the *National Defense Education Act* of 1958, and all of the iterations and permutations of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) that followed are well-known...leading all the way to *No Child Left Behind*, *Race to the Top*, and, of course, STEM. During the past half century, educational policy-making has been kept out of the hands of educators, and government and corporate foundation collaboration has created a multiplex of educational policy through covertly designed RFPs that push research in one direction or another, usually under the guise of making the nation or nationally based corporations more competitive in the world market.

As a high school student affected by and yet unaware of such policy machinations, I sought sources (as do most teens) to reflect on the life I might lead. School did not seem to be the place, even the newly consolidated, comprehensive high schools that James Bryant Conant convinced school boards throughout the U. S. to create by securing substantial funding from Carnegie, which enabled him to widely distribute copies of *American High School Today*.¹¹ While I enjoyed most aspects of high school, I usually did not think of it as about *composing* my life (as Mary Catherine Bateson so nicely phrases the pervasive project of education).¹² For my project composing a life I initially turned to family, friends, and popular culture, mainly movies and television, religion, and sports—especially basketball, already established as a kind of religion in Indiana. The other kind of religion was not of the church my family and I attended, i.e., a Methodist church that catered to the business and professional crowd in town. Instead, it was the more prevalent Christian fundamentalism that dominated beliefs of more of the population. Most of my brightest high school classmates held fundamentalist beliefs. Hardly any of my classmates went to college; however, my close friends Nathan, Sheldon, and Wilson attended fundamentalist churches. All three of us completed undergraduate school and both during and after high school, we often talked about “the great events and mysteries of life,” without using Ulich’s language.¹³ Wilson and I talked a lot about unexplained natural phenomenon and possibilities of intelligent alien life; he became a mechanical engineer; Sheldon asked provocative questions that often created dissonance one feels in a media interview; he became a journalist; and Nathan and I tried rather directly to figure out the purposes and meanings of life and how to compose our own lives. Nathan and I continued our quest into philosophy, both eventually focusing on pragmatists. Nathan Houser ultimately became one of the leading experts on Charles Sanders Peirce and long time director of the Peirce Edition Project.¹⁴ My publications in curriculum derived much from Dewey, later I became president of the John Dewey Society, and more recently authored *Love, Justice, and Education: John Dewey and the Utopians*,¹⁵ a riff on a *New York Times* piece in which Dewey told about meeting “utopians” who had overcome the *acquisitive society* to practice an even more radical educational extrapolation of Dewey’s proposals than Dewey himself imagined until he allegedly *saw* them in practice amongst the Utopians he visited.¹⁶

10. Tyler, “Personal Communication.”

11. James Bryant Conant, *American High School Today* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959).

12. Mary Catherine Bateson, *Composing a Life* (New York: Penguin (Plume), 1990).

13. Robert Ulich, “Response to Ralph Harper’s Essay,” in *Modern Philosophies of Education*, Fifty-fourth Yearbook (Part I) of the National Society for the Study of Education, ed. N. B. Henry (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 255.

14. e.g., Nathan Houser & Christian J. W. Kloesel, eds., *The Essential Peirce, Volume I: Selected Philosophical Writings (1867-1893)* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992) & Nathan Houser & Christian J. W. Kloesel, eds., *The essential Peirce, Volume II: Selected Philosophical Writings (1894-1913)* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998).

15. William H. Schubert, *Love, Justice, and Education: John Dewey and the Utopians* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2009).

16. John Dewey, “Dewey outlines utopian schools,” *New York Times* (New York), April 23, 1933.

In addressing life's mysteries and events as teenagers, Nathan and I largely sought answers in fundamentalist Christian interpretations; however, as we became immersed in small liberal arts colleges we attended, even though they were religiously affiliated, our perspectives were broadened through studies of liberal arts, humanities, social and natural sciences. We compared notes throughout college and still do, as the process of seeking meaning extends throughout the lifespan. For me, at Manchester College, I recall pondering literature, philosophy, and other subjects and concluding undergirding each was a deeper level of the *conversation* that I had begun as a teen, or earlier. I began to see study and reflection in academe as a continuous construction of who I was (am) becoming. As a college senior, I took an interdisciplinary seminar on conceptions of human nature and also a Philosophy of Education elective, taught by Russell Bollinger, who used John Brubacher's *Modern Educational Theories*.¹⁷ Bollinger through Brubacher, pushed my reflection back to fundamental philosophical categories of metaphysics, epistemology, axiology (including ethics and aesthetics), and politics. This was my first formal acquaintance with Foundations of Education, and I embodied these essential categories into central structures of my becoming. Similarly, the interdisciplinary seminar opened my consciousness to contributions of literature, theology, political economy, psychology, arts, and sciences to my process of composing my life.

While I have diversified extensively over the years, in the mid-1980s, I still chose to organize my presentation of philosophical foundations for students of curriculum studies in the 1980s.¹⁸ Without yet knowing Harry S. Broudy, with whom I would come to know during doctoral studies I was committed to living the title of his book, *Building a Philosophy of Education*.¹⁹ I saw building a philosophy of education, broadly and deeply, as building a philosophy for my own education in life and as a potential teacher, which I anticipated becoming. At first I resisted becoming a teacher, mainly out of teenage rebellion. My parents were highly regarded educators in the local communities in which they taught; however, I wanted to be different. Nonetheless, when I realized the power of a liberal arts education in shaping my own life, I changed my mind. I wanted to help others practice a similar realization, so I amassed certification requirements to become an elementary school teacher, thinking that the process of composing a life should begin early.

Following undergraduate school, Sheldon and I decided to attend Graduate School at Indiana University (IU) in Bloomington in the Summer Session of 1966. Sufficiently impressed with the philosophy of education course at Manchester College, I decided to register for three foundational courses: Philosophy of Education, History of Educational Thought, and Curriculum. The History and Philosophy of Education Department was a marvelous place at the time. The Philosophy of Education course was taught by A. Stafford Clayton, a noted Dewey scholar who had contributed to the 90th birthday celebration that honored John Dewey. His first course used a text by Philip G. Smith's, the Department Chair, text who was best known for the Hullfish and Smith *Reflective Thinking* book,²⁰ along with books on philosophy of education by Philip Phenix and John Brubacher, among others.²¹ I instantly felt at home. The History of Educational Thought was taught by a brilliant, young visiting scholar from Australia named Malcolm Skilbeck. He had just finished his Master's Degree at the University of Illinois at Urbana, and stopped at Indiana University to gain graduate teaching experience and presumably funds for a

17. John S. Brubacher, *Modern Educational Theories* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962).

18. William H. Schubert, Chapter 5, *Curriculum: Perspective, Paradigm, and Possibility* (New York: Macmillan, 1986).

19. Harry S. Broudy, *Building a Philosophy of Education* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1956).

20. Henry Gordon Hullfish & Philip G. Smith, *Reflective Thinking* (New York: Dodd/Mead, 1961).

21. Brubacher, *Modern Educational Theories*.

ticket to England, where he pursued his doctorate at the University of London. Skilbeck's course was a tour of educational ideas from Plato and Augustine to Montaigne and Dewey that inspired my lifelong interest in educational ideas. I still have the paper for Skilbeck's class in which I attempted a modern version of one of Plato's Socratic dialogues, starring myself as Scott Delver. The curriculum course provided readings from sources I had not met previously, though I felt deeply connected to them. The most influential was a book B. Othanel Smith, William O. Stanley, and J. Harlan Shores called *Fundamentals of Curriculum Development*.²² Little did I realize, then, that in a mere seven years Shores would be my Ph.D. adviser at the University of Illinois. Through the good word of Clayton and Smith, I was offered an assistantship with Stanley E. Ballinger, a pioneer of the transition of Educational Foundations into Educational Policy Studies, and I took an advanced course with Clayton that focused wholly on Dewey's *Democracy and Education*.²³ After I realized that the "Summary" section of each chapter was an extrapolation not a summation, I read more deeply and realized that my pursuit of self-education must be constructed and reconstructed with others in democratic community. Dewey said it so well: "education...[is] that reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience."²⁴ Ballinger, Clayton, and Smith took me to my first scholarly conference in 1966, the Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education Conference, in Columbus, Ohio through a blinding snow storm and asked me to drive!

The following Spring Semester when I was about to complete the Master's Degree, I was thrilled to be invited by Professor Smith to enter the Ph.D. Program in History and Philosophy of Education on a full ride via one of the relatively new grants from the NDEA of 1958. Little could I anticipate the future impacts of the NDEA through the many iterations of the ESEA, noted earlier, that devolved to NCLB and indirectly to STEM. With the precedent of Dewey in mind, how he created a Laboratory School at the University of Chicago as a place to study and imagine educational ideas and practices, I realized that I could not accept Professor Smith's generous offer. How could I engage in what Alfred North Whitehead called "the imaginative consideration of learning" with educators if I had not experienced being a teacher?²⁵

So, I looked for teaching positions in or near major urban areas in the Midwest, since I had learned to love city life when Nathan and I got jobs working in Washington, DC, for Senators Birch Bayh and Vance Hartke of Indiana in the civil rights legislation summer of 1964, when we were twenty. In any event, in the summer of 1967, I left Indiana University to begin a teaching career in Downers Grove, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. I taught elementary school students first in self-contained classrooms and then in a new open-space school that I helped design. Despite the fact that we had unusually high quality professional development programs with noted scholars or practical projects such as developing curriculum for the open space school, I realized that it was necessary to develop my own personal in-service educational project. For this project I continued to study foundations of education along with my continued forays into what Robert M. Hutchins, Mortimer J. Adler, and Clifton Fadiman called *the great conversation*.²⁶ At

22. Bunny Othanel Smith, William O. Stanley, & J. Harlan Shores, *Fundamentals of Curriculum Development* (London: World Book Company, 1950).

23. Dewey, *Democracy and Education*.

24. *Ibid.*, 76.

25. Alfred North Whitehead, *The Aims of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), 93.

26. Robert M. Hutchins, *The Great Conversation: The Substance of a Liberal Education* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1955).

another pole of liberal arts advocates, Maxine Greene,²⁷ exemplifies amazing capacity to draw upon literature and the arts to find the deepest dilemmas of life, such as those identified above by Robert Ulich.²⁸

Thus, with friends, colleagues in teaching, and especially students I grew to realize, with Deweyan inspiration, that if education was to be truly worthwhile *for* students, it must be *of* and *by* them as I later wrote.²⁹ Realizing that Dewey (1938) actually related this conceptualization to the phrase in Abraham Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address* which calls for *government of, by, and for the people*,³⁰ I struggled to challenge autocratic governance of schools and classrooms—much to the chagrin of some of the teachers and administrators with whom I worked! With students and a few thoughtful colleagues I strove to reflect on Dewey's admonition:

No one of these, *of, by, and for*, names anything which is self-evident. Each of them is a challenge to discover and put into operation a principle of order and organization which follows from understanding what educative experience signifies. It is, accordingly, a much more difficult task to work out the kinds of materials, of methods, and of social relationships that are appropriate to the new education than is the case with traditional education.³¹

So, my study, discussions with respected others, and experience of the arts and culture became an ever-changing eclectic repertoire of experience that added meaning in to my acts of teaching. My life in education was well-characterized by Joseph Schwab through his advocacy of practical inquiry, drawn from both Aristotelian and Deweyan roots, that flourished in arts of eclectic that strove to balance curricular commonplaces of teacher, learner, subject matter, and milieu in the ever-changing moments of teaching and learning.³²

I wanted to share these endeavors with other teachers or those who prepared to be teachers by becoming an education professor, and learned that I could pursue a Ph.D. by taking a sabbatical from my school district. So, I looked for universities, and discovered that my love for educational philosophy and history would need to be re-framed as educational policy studies. Somehow *policy*, even though I had worked on some aspects of policy studies with Stanley Ballinger at I. U., did not seem so interesting. I had trouble removing the image of *insurance policies* from my mind; and more importantly I responded somatically against the cooption of foundations with *The Establishment*, which I fervently opposed in the 60s and 70s. So, I embraced curriculum theory as a practical instantiation of philosophy of education, and sought that as my Ph.D. focus. Since the sabbatical paid half of my salary plus benefits and retirement contributions, and since I had a young family to support, I looked for a university that had both scholars I had read and funding. I found both at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. A fellowship and an teaching assistantship plus the chance to study with the likes of J. Harlan Shores, Harry S. Broudy, J. Myron Atkin, Bernard Spodek, Frederick Raubinger, Louis J. Rubin, Kenneth Henderson, William F. Connell, Joe R. Burnett, Hugh Petrie, James Rath, PeterShoresman,

27. *Exclusions and awakenings: The life of Maxine Greene*, directed by Markie Hancock (1999; New York: Hancock Productions, 1999, DVD; Maxine Greene, *Releasing the Imagination* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1995).

28. Ulich, "Response."

29. William H. Schubert & Ann Lopez Schubert, "Toward Curricula that are of, by, and therefore for Students," *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 3, no. 1 (1981): 239-251.

30. John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: MacMillan, 1938), 29.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Joseph Schwab, *The Practical: A Language for Curriculum* (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1970).

Ian Westbury, and others was a remarkable opportunity. I prepared assiduously through an immense amount of independent study while teaching during the year before the sabbatical, and when I arrived, I was determined to study continuously, take over-loads, practically living in the library, and I never tired of the process. Harlan Shores enabled me to tailor a program for my particular interests in curriculum theory. I decided that my elementary teaching and self-designed in-service education had taught me that the greatest resources of teaching resided in my own emergent philosophy and imagination. Cultivation of my philosophical imagination helped me, and I thought could help educators with whom I would work, to imagine possible courses of action in any situation, project likely consequences, decide a course of action, act, and imaginatively perceive myriad consequences, gain understanding from the process and continue again in subsequent situations. This, I felt, would help balance the commonplaces as Schwab wrote.³³ I tried to characterize this process and how it could be communicated through my dissertation which I wrote (after a year and two summers at Urbana) while studying as a Traveling Scholar at Northwestern University through the Big Ten's Committee on Institutional Collaboration as I contributed my last year of teaching for Downers Grove in a junior high school to fulfill my sabbatical contract, for which I was most grateful.³⁴

For the next 36 years I pursued a professorial career in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Illinois at Chicago. I am convinced that I loved the experience so much because I could spend most of my time pondering what I consider to be the central question of curriculum studies: what's worthwhile? Broadened—what is worth knowing, needing, experiencing, doing, being, becoming, overcoming, contributing, sharing, and just plain wondering about?³⁵ The *overcoming* part of this question is significant, in that it is what makes others nervous, because it asks whose knowledge and values are to be perpetuated and who benefits from them. It might be characterized by obverse-reverse extrapolations of the oft-asked and all-too-tired curriculum question of subject matter coverage: what is worth covering and uncovering, doing and undoing, believing and disbelieving, knowing and un-knowing? In curriculum and in life, I subscribe to John Lennon's advice to his son, Sean (in *Beautiful Boy*) to understand that "life is what happens when you are busy making other plans."³⁶ As a teacher, inundated by requests to write measurable behavioral objectives for every move, I became devoted to becoming a scholar in curriculum theory so I could do away with planning. By this I meant to overcome predominance of preordained, written lesson plans, which I almost always thought were outrageously puerile and oppressive. In academic life, I felt similarly about annual reviews, vision and mission statements, and strategic planning. I thought and still think that one should live life in such a way as to anticipate the multiplicity of possibilities and then imaginatively shape them for the betterment of all involved in the barrage of surprises each situation brings. During such process I have felt that perspectives from foundations of education (and liberal arts and sciences as well as everyday experience) enable me to reflect in and on action, as Donald Schon has shown with acuity,³⁷ having been influenced by Dewey's aesthetic sense of inquiry.³⁸ Now, I see this captured in the idea of

33. Ibid.

34. William H. Schubert, *Imaginative Projection: A Method of Curriculum Invention* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1975).

35. See William H. Schubert, "What's Worthwhile: From Knowing and Experiencing to Being and Becoming," *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy* 6, no. 2 (2009): 21-39.

36. John Lennon, *Beautiful Boy (Darling Sean)*, Double Fantasy, Jack Douglas, Producer (Santa Monica, CA: Geffen Records, 1980).

37. Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

38. John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Minton, Balch, & Company, 1934); *A Common Faith*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1934); *Logic, the Theory of Inquiry* (New York: Henry Holt, 1938).

exile pedagogy originated by Ming Fang He, when she says: “Exile pedagogy is international, transnational, and sometimes counternational. Exile pedagogy, with its interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity, and counterdisciplinarity, thrives with diverse paradigms, perspectives, and possibilities...”³⁹ In essence, she has captured what I was striving to do throughout my teaching career but could not as fully articulate.

When curriculum theory was reconceptualized⁴⁰ and prioritized in works by Maxine Greene, James B. Macdonald, Dwayne Huebner, Paul Klohr, Ted T. Aoki, Louise Berman, Herbert Kliebard, and others I was in doctoral studies in the early 1970s. Having been on the periphery of the field of curriculum development, these and other scholars were brought to the center of the curriculum field by a new generation of curriculum scholars.⁴¹ Still reeling from the protest (civil rights and peace) movements of the 1960s, the (then) newer generation of curriculum scholars began a series of conferences in 1973 (referred to as the Bergamo Conferences since 1982). Together these scholars advocated new sources of curriculum inquiry. They saw curriculum as a larger social, political, cultural, spiritual, and philosophical area of study that needed to fully address how human beings could cultivate themselves and this earth more fully.

The purpose of such study was to re-focus curriculum on the meanings that empower human lives, as captured in Dewey’s definition of education quoted above.⁴² Thus, focus centered on educational processes that enabled individuals to study their own lives by excavating the present through understanding their past more fully, pondering their future, discovering their aspirations, and composing the kind of life they want to live as well as aspects of the past to discard. This regressive, progressive, analytic, synthetic process is characterized *currere* verb or fluid counterpart of the noun *curriculum* is depicted through autobiographical inquiry by Pinar and Grumet.⁴³ As the curriculum field was reconceptualized it became more akin to a living of educational foundations, and evidenced a huge variety of orientations to scholarship. In efforts to do so curriculum scholars from the 1970s and onward drew upon a wide range of literary and artistic sources,⁴⁴ critical theory;⁴⁵ phenomenology and hermeneutics;⁴⁶ radical psychoanalysis;⁴⁷ feminist studies;⁴⁸ teachers themselves;⁴⁹ that departed considerably from the practice of many curriculum leaders of previous decades who engaged largely in curriculum development to facilitate initiatives of the government-corporate-military complex under the assumption that such initiatives had been arrived through democratic processes. Intriguingly, President Eisenhower

39. Ming Fang He, “Exile Pedagogy: Teaching In-Between,” in *Handbook of Public Pedagogy: Education and Learning Beyond Schooling*, edited by Jennifer A. Sandlin, Brian D. Schultz, & Jake Burdick, 469-48. (New York: Routledge, 2010), 469.

40. William F. Pinar, *What is Curriculum Theory?* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2004); “Curriculum Theory Since 1950,” in *Handbook of Curriculum and Instruction*, edited by F. Michael Connelly, Ming Fang He, & JoAnn Phillion, 491-513 (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications); William Pinar, et. al., *Understanding Curriculum* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995).

41. See William F. Pinar & Madeleine R. Grumet, *Toward a Poor Curriculum* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1976) & Pinar, et al., *Understanding Curriculum*.

42. Dewey, *Democracy and Education*.

43. Pinar and Grumet, *Toward a Poor Curriculum*.

44. See George Willis & William H. Schubert, eds., *Reflections from the Heart of Educational Inquiry: Understanding Curriculum and Teaching Through the Arts* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991).

45. See Michael W. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum* (New York: Routledge, 1979/2004) & Henry A. Giroux, *Ideology, Culture, and the Process of Schooling* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981).

46. George Willis, ed., *Qualitative Evaluation* (Berkeley, CA: McCutchan, 1978); Max van Manen, *The Tone of Teaching* (London, Ontario: Althouse, 1986/2002).

47. Deborah P. Britzman, *Novel Education: Psychoanalytic Studies of Learning and not Learning* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006).

48. Janet L. Miller, *Sounds of Silence Breaking* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005).

49. Janet L. Miller, *Creating Spaces and Finding Voices* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990); William H. Schubert & William Ayers, eds., *Teacher Lore: Learning from our own Experience* (White Plains, NY: Longman, 1992).

warned against corruption of democratic practices in his January 17, 1961 *Farewell Address*, wherein he said, “We must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.”⁵⁰ Ironically, this is the same President Eisenhower, we shall recall, who wanted to lay all problems of education after World War II at the doorstep of John Dewey, thus, negating much of the value of learning from the Eight Year Study.

In my years at the University of Illinois at Chicago, I have progressively strived to create spaces where undergraduate, graduate, and particularly doctoral students could pursue their quests for meaning and direction in education and in life. I have tried to understand what they have learned from their experiences that they would like to share, and then to introduce them to sources in curriculum studies and educational foundations (as well as from the broad array of arts, humanities, and sciences—especially philosophy and literature). I have learned much from from sharing the paths on which they journeyed. My major concern is how to keep such learning alive when the forces that tout a kind of rigor that smacks more of *rigormortis* than of thoughtful, precise, nuanced, caring, and disciplined inquiry.

In a sense, it is John Dewey’s doorstep to which the curriculum field has returned. It is the same doorstep that I have found educational foundations. This is surely not to say that we are worshipers of Dewey. On the contrary, it is the spirit of Deweyan inquiry that I advocate. It has guided me well through the days of trying to find meaning and direction as a teenager and undergraduate (before I could name it), a master’s student, an elementary teacher, a doctoral student, in the long trek of professorial life, and now in retirement. Its continuance and extrapolation in curriculum studies and educational foundations has nurtured me, many of my closest colleagues, and many students during the past 30-plus years. It has led to participation in organizations such as AESA, Bergamo, Curriculum & Pedagogy, American Association for Teaching and Curriculum, Professors of Curriculum, American Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies, International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies, The Society for the Study of Curriculum History, Society of Professors of Education, John Dewey Society for Education and Culture, World Council for Curriculum and Instruction, and congenial corners of American Educational Research Association (AERA). Many of those who were interested in a foundational approach to curriculum found collegiality in AESA; however, we also thought AERA needed to be opened to a foundational orientation to curriculum—something that dealt with seeds and roots and not stems of technique via curriculum development and design alone. As Harry Broudy taught us, there needs to be attention to *arete*, not just *techne*.

When Bergamo was the only other scholarly curriculum conference besides AERA in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and when Division B of AERA was called *Curriculum and Objectives* (which had been clearly spawned by social behaviorist factions of the curriculum development era), many of us who attended Bergamo conferences found a congenial corner of AERA in the Special Interest Group (SIG) on Creation and Utilization of Curriculum Knowledge which had been started by Edmund C. Short, George Willis, and others.⁵¹ In the late 1970s this SIG’s population grew to nearly 400 and began to influence Division B (Curriculum Studies) to the extent that by 1983 it changed its name to *Curriculum Studies*. Meanwhile, the SIG name morphed into *Critical Issues in Curriculum* and later to *Critical Issues in Curriculum and Cultural Studies*. Proponents of objectives-based, and much less critical, curriculum development mostly con-

50. Eisenhower, *Letter*, 728.

51. See Edmund Short, G.H. Willis, & William H. Schubert, *Toward Excellence in Curriculum Inquiry: The Story of the AERA SIG on Creation and Utilization of Curriculum Knowledge* (State College, PA: Nittany Press, 1985).

gregated in the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, which by the 1990s was populated mostly by school principals, curriculum directors, supervisors of instruction, and central office curriculum leaders, who turned to a new breed of *profiteers*⁵² for advice, i.e., to corporate consultants. ASCD no longer had a *radical caucus* that kept critical questions alive in the 60s and 70s, and Professors of Curriculum (an honorary association of curriculum scholars which was initiated in 1950 at ASCD) eventually moved from ASCD to AERA for its major annual meeting. Meanwhile AESA and other smaller organizations noted above turned to inquiry that was interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and counter-disciplinary and looked to those in cultural studies as allies.⁵³

It was quite an accomplishment for educational foundations and curriculum studies to keep alive questions about what human beings are and can become, and as R. Freeman Butts taught me, how they can live together in this world. I still vividly recall an AESA conference in Milwaukee in 1983. I recall a young Joel Spring and a young Cleo Cherryholmes presented and in the questioning period, Butts asked them about the fundamental question they were addressing. None of us knew what he was driving at. Later, I happened to be in an elevator with Butts, so I asked him his own question, and he responded with straight forward assurance and acuity: “How can we live together?” I received the distinct impression that this was what he considered the most important question for the survival of humanity.

I know that I have been privileged to live a life in educational foundations and to pursue the basic curriculum question (what’s worthwhile?) and all of the questions that lead up to and flow from it; yet, I do not think we humans have made much progress on the matter of how to live together. I reflect on our world that so long has been filled with oppression, suppression, depression, repression, alienation, colonization, and untold frustration since time immemorial. I think, too, of how scholars who have devoted careers to matters of democracy, collaboration, dialogue, and compassion—many who have written brilliantly on these and related topics—often cannot get along with one another and engage in seemingly endless bitter squabbles. The same is the case in the realm of eloquent talkers in political realms. We need to strive to forget partisan quibbles and seek solidarity or we will be engaging in *philosophical and oratorical fiddling* while the world (bigger than Rome) burns. The adages “we can’t practice what we preach” and “physician heal thyself” come to mind. Some who would rather evade or avoid such admonitions shrug them off, saying, “Don’t be so naïve; it’s just human nature,” and walk away. We can walk away, though we should not. In fact, the problems are so severe that we will not walk far, for in avoidance we will surely perish. We must strive to live well together. And to this assertion, my doctoral student, Rachel Harper asked, “What does it mean to live *well* together? I responded: “*Well*, it is to be determined by actually making it a priority to be determined—and then by realizing the need to always keep *determining*, because it cannot be fully determined.” I realize that participatory democracy and its human relationships are matters of struggle, and we are in dire need of solidarity among exemplars of education that grows democracy through collaboration, dialogue, caring, compassion, and yes, love.⁵⁴ There are no easy answers, yet we must imagine, decide, and act in situations.

Returning to my earlier critique of the symbolism of mindless acceptance of STEM without context, I reiterate that attending to *stems* without nurturing *seeds, roots, leaves, and flowers* leads to a garden of draught and destruction. Today’s pundits of propaganda, like Edward

52. A term coined in class by Chris Esposito, a former Ph.D. student, at University of Illinois Chicago.

53. He, “Exile Pedagogy.”

54. Schubert, *Love, Justice and Education*.

Bernays in the early 20th Century,⁵⁵ have convinced popular media, politicians, and business leaders who make educational policy (along with too many educators and much of the general public) that educators have failed from pre-school through the university. They have conjured the belief that corporate competitiveness (masked as national patriotism) is the goal of education. So the looming answer that these spin doctors provide is that the public and its educators need to be replaced by privatized forces. It should not be ignored that upper echelons of the market place estimate that the world-wide market of education (if taken out of public spaces) would yield hundreds of billions of dollars in revenues.

As I enter retirement, the foundations are very much with me, and one of the foremost purposes of all of my scholarly projects (whether through writing stories or scholarly papers, guest teaching, consulting, or everyday interacting) is to help keep alive foundational and curricular questions. Seedbeds of foundational questions give us roots that dare not be ignored: what is worthwhile? Who says? Who should say? What should be overcome? How shall we live together? The foundational questions should not only be asked, but lived. As lived experience they can never be fully answered. Living such asking in all of life's situations, I am convinced, is what we need to teach whenever and wherever we can. A project that continues to inspire my scholarly life, and I hope that of others, is to explore and portray historical and contemporary precedent of those who have dared to courageously challenge the debased tendency to colonize and globalize.

So, I end on a positive note that opposes the *acquisitive society* about which Dewey assiduously warned.⁵⁶ I do not believe that the pervasive tendency of education to define worth in terms of commodity has to persist. The worst aspects of corporate culture sadly translate educational accomplishment or achievement into *bottom line* equivalents such as test scores, grade point averages, attendance rates, and diplomas acquired. Instead, educators must call persuasively for educational experiences that cultivate personal and public meaning, edification, inspiration, wonder, self-realization, participatory democracy, solidarity, humor, aesthetics, and imagination. We need to uncover and portray myriad instances of opposition to attempts of colonialist (today, globalist) promotion of corporate-military-state desires as *educational*. I want to have confidence that we can cultivate the better tendencies of human beings. Such cultivation involves focus on seeds and roots, not merely stems, and it is fostered by living foundational questions.

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55. Edward Bernays, *Propaganda* (New York: Liveright, 1928).

56. Dewey, "Dewey Outlines;" See Schubert, *Love, Justice, and Education*.

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