Looking Back to Move Forward: Understanding Progressive Education in the 21st Century

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Abstract

In recent decades, pedagogical techniques reestablishing the relevance of higher education to communities, students, and potential employers—particularly those with an experiential or applied focus—are increasingly popular. Yet, the discourse in higher education seems to isolate pedagogic approaches, and subsequently, the concept of progressive education remains unclear. The purpose of this paper is to offer a thematic organizing framework for synthesizing pedagogies that characterize progressive education in the 21st century. The identification of five major themes of contemporary pedagogies bounds the many pedagogical approaches that exist in today's educational landscape. Definitions of such pedagogical approaches will be included, and implications of the framework will be discussed.

Key words: Progressive education, contemporary pedagogy,
              experiential learning, applied learning

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In recent decades, pedagogical techniques that aim to reestablish the relevance of higher education to communities, students, and their potential employers are increasingly popular. At the local level, universities and professors implement techniques that aim to enhance student engagement, while on a structural level, organizations such as the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) encourage the adoption of such practices into the core values of educational institutions (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012). These "new" forms of education are intended to increase student readiness for the job market while simultaneously increasing the relevance of the curriculum to the needs of a changing society.

Although these techniques draw from the work of theorists from the later decades of the 20th century, their roots can be traced to the progressive education movement of the late 19th to early 20th centuries. The original progressive education movement was largely focused on primary and secondary education, emphasizing the education of "the whole child," and "learning by doing" (Redefer & Hymes, 1975). This approach is in contrast to "traditional" or "didactic" forms of education such as the lecture. During the early progressive education movement, the often repeated dichotomy of passive versus engaged student gained popularity (Redefer & Hymes, 1975).

Today, scholarly literature outlines pedagogies that seek to move beyond the traditional approach that privileges active lecture and encourages passivity on the part of the student. Each pedagogy exhibits distinguishing characteristics by focusing on a particular aspect of learning that would fit under the umbrella of ideas known as progressive education. However, each approach to learning is largely theorized in isolation. In the process of championing particular pedagogical techniques, the connections between various approaches are left understated. Synthesis of these various approaches is needed to highlight the common, underlying themes and clarify the direction progressive education provides as an organizing force behind these approaches. The purpose of this paper is to synthesize the various pedagogies that characterize the landscape of progressive education in the 21st century. Using progressive education as an organizing concept, this paper will outline major themes that contemporary pedagogies hold in common. A broad sample of pedagogies, rather than an exhaustive list, will be described and used as examples in the course of explaining the major themes of progressive education. The themes provided are not intended to be understood as mutually exclusive, but the choice of pedagogy for exemplifying a theme is meant to explain the role of that theme in the activity of learning, and in some cases, to underscore that pedagogy's emphasis on one theme over others.

History of Progressive Education

John Dewey is regarded as the central theorist of progressive education. By the beginning of the 20th century, Dewey established himself as a respected theorist of education, and he remained a part of conversations around educational reform until his death in 1952 (Moyer, 2009). His numerous books and articles articulated the need for education reform and emphasized the importance of a well-rounded education that focused on the needs of individual students as well as the broader needs of society (e.g., Dewey, 1902; 1938). Dewey's ideas influenced the early decades of progressive education, which involved holistic approaches to classroom teaching as well as more experimental endeavors situating the school as an important center and source of community (Moyer, 2009).

The phrase *progressive education* is regarded as deceptively generalizing, encompassing numerous developments in US education in the early 20th century (Moyer, 2009). The contributions of various influencers of early progressive education have been categorized by such concepts as child-centeredness and social reconstructionism, but much overlap

exists between those associated with each camp (Kliebard, 1987 as cited in Moyer, 2009, p. 532). Despite such delineations, the conversations emerging from those strands of thought that appear under the umbrella of progressive education undoubtedly reshaped approaches to education in the US, ranging from that of early childhood to postgraduate studies (Redefer and Hymes, 1975; Champagne, 2006).

The child-centered approach emphasized the importance of teaching "the whole child," accounting for developmentally appropriate tasks that incorporate experiences beyond rote memorization, which was the standard primary and secondary approach to teaching at the time (Redefer & Hymes, 1975, p. 27). Marietta Johnson, a representative author of this perspective, sought to strengthen education by drawing from a belief in the innate curiosity of children. Her writings profoundly influenced the Progressive Education Association (PEA), an organization active from 1918 through the 1940's. In an interview from 1975, Frederic L. Redefer, former head of the PEA, explains the name of the association came about because "the idea of 'progress' was in the culture of the times," and thus, the word was applied to the movement in education under which the association was founded (Redefer & Hymes, 1975, p. 27). As the diversity of concerns related to progressive education became more widely pronounced, the language shifted from a focus on "the child" to encompass students of all age groups (Redefer & Hymes, 1975, p. 27-28).

Those who preferred to emphasize macro-level social philosophy in education can be contrasted with those of the more individualized, micro-level approach of child-centered authors. By the 1930's, this divide had come to characterize progressive education, with early social reconstructionists like George S. Counts criticizing members of the PEA for being "romantic sentimentalists" who eschewed the project of social change (Moyer, 2009, p. 543). Counts, whose writings influenced what came to be known as *critical pedagogy*, believed that the major weakness of progressive education was the failure to address social problems associated with race and poverty as well as unwillingness to address contradictions of American individualism in favor of patriotism and corporate interests (Moyer, 2009). During this time, long-echoed calls to "keep progressive education progressive" began to gain prominence (Ayers and Schubert, 2012; Redefer and Hymes, 1975).

By the 1950's, the progressive education movement had declined. War, McCarthyism, and decentralization of interests contributed to the silent years of progressive education in the US in the mid-20th century (Redefer and Hymes, 1975). Consequently, progressive education became associated with communism in the minds of many Americans, an association that continues to stifle discussion of the phrase today. Yet, renewed interest in critical pedagogy, exemplified by the works of Paulo Friere, inspired a reemergence of progressive education in the 1970's.

By the mid-1980's, a language shift had occurred among those concerned with progressive approaches to education. Theories of psychological development, an avoidance of politicized vocabulary, and the demands of a changing and globalizing workforce fueled the emergence of new forms of education, such as Kolb's model of the experiential learning cycle and Revan's model of action learning. However, in their elaboration of new approaches to learning, these scholars concede the basis of their ideas to have origins in decades past (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Revans, 1982). The expression of ideas, rather than the ideas themselves, is what can truly be considered new. As most sources cited for contemporary progressive pedagogies fail to date further back than 1980, the era of this language continues today.

The proliferation of pedagogies that exist today are descendants of the perspectives expressed throughout the history of progressive education. Similar disagreements and competing interests continue to present themselves in pedagogical discussions; some examples include the role of politics in pedagogy, how to reconcile local and global concerns, and the relevance of individualized versus community needs to the mission of institutions. Nevertheless, the mixing of ideas has preserved common themes that are indispensable to any efforts to maintain the relevance of education to current social needs.

Progressive Education in the 21st Century

Progressive education originated in an era of rapid economic growth that was characterized by radical changes in the social order of the early 20th century. Changes resulting from the explosion of technology and reliance on the internet for communication mirror the adoption of cars for transportation and the use of radio and telephone for communication in the early 20th century. In both of these contexts, concerns about the distribution of wealth and access to opportunities for social mobility connect to concerns about what strategies of education would best serve

an increasingly diverse democracy (Ayers and Schubert, 2012). Herein lies the continued importance of progressive education for responding to the needs of a changing society.

The term *progressive education* is worth preserving as an organizing concept for the myriad of terms that have gained momentum since the 1980's. These "new" forms of learning are inspired by the work of Dewey and other early progressive educators, and preserve key themes such as educating "the whole person" (Kolb and Kolb, 2005, p. 205), "learning-by-doing" (Revans, 1982, p. 20), democratic responsibility (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012), and "real-world" application (Hmelo-Silver, 2004, p. 239). For this reason, the nuances between these pedagogies often overlap and can be characterized by hair-splitting differences that likely arise simply because the bodies of literature describing individual terms develop in isolation despite appearing to draw from many of the same philosophical underpinnings.

Progressive education today is constituted by the continued discussions and concerns focused on prioritizing learning through experience (Kolb and Kolb, 2005), student-centeredness (Hmelo-Silver, 2004), and community engagement (Champagne, 2006). The success of prior educational theorists from Dewey through Kolb is displayed by the presence of the concepts they championed in recommendations by major accrediting bodies (such as the AAC&U) and the mission statements of individual institutions. As such, it can be more difficult to find areas in which some form of progressive education isn't taking place; shifting the conversation from whether or not progressive approaches *should* be adopted to *how* and *which* approaches should be adopted for particular contexts and goals.

Pedagogical literature today is inclusive of innumerable types of learning. These types of learning are usually named for the process by which certain outcomes are achieved and characterized by differing degrees of specificity. However, each type of learning exhibits the characteristics that follow, albeit at times with greater emphasis on some more than others.

Characteristics of Progressive Education

As the purpose of this paper is to synthesize the various pedagogies that characterize the landscape of progressive education in the 21st century, primary pedagogies and approaches are defined in Table 1. These

pedagogies may be best understood in the context of five organizing characteristics: experience, temporal, action, participation, and reflection. The qualities presented apply to all of the pedagogies considered within the progressive education movement; examples of how pedagogies represent these characteristics are provided throughout the discussion of each characteristic.

Experience

For progressive education, experience serves as the source from which knowledge emerges. Because progressive education is concerned with the emergence (as opposed to transmission) of knowledge, the learner must undergo a transformative experience. The nature of the transformation lies in the way the learner is changed by knowledge gained and the way that existing knowledge is changed through the learner's contributions. Experience pertains to individual learners as well as teachers and collectives. Inner experience will be discussed later in terms of reflection, while experiences among other people will be discussed later in terms of participation.

While experiential learning focuses specifically on the aspect of experience as the conduit of knowledge acquisition, other forms of learning focus on particular types of experience for the production of specific outcomes. Borthwick and colleagues (2007) identify three types of authentic learning: the apprenticeship model, wherein authenticity comes from actual workplace experience; the simulated reality model, wherein authenticity comes from the simulation of "real world" conditions, which is often associated with the term *situational learning* (Hewitt, 2008); and the enminding model, wherein "authenticity comes from the connection between the student's experiences and the disciplinary 'mind'" (p. 16). For each type of authentic learning, a certain kind of experience is key to affirming its authenticity, whether through direct field experience or drawing connections from one's own life experiences.

The theme of experience is also central to pedagogies of *applied learning*. Defined loosely as "learning experiences that take place outside traditional classroom settings," the phrase captures a wide variety of approaches to teaching and practices for learning (Schwartzman & Henry, 2013, p. 3). However, the common thread among applied learning approaches is the opportunity to *apply* what has been learned, in the classroom or elsewhere, during an experience that will allow the learner to build upon their knowledge base. Beyond simply transferring theory

into practice, applied approaches intend to provide the opportunity for learners to develop new knowledge from the experience of application; unforeseen achievements or setbacks are examples of how new knowledge is cultivated through *experience* in applied learning settings.

Temporal

One way of understanding the reason for the phrase "progressive education" is the notion of progression of thought when learning something new. Didactic forms of learning assume that a body of knowledge is relatively static and can be passed from teacher to learner through discipline—what Paulo Freire (2005) refers to as "the banking concept of education" (p. 72). Accordingly, the roles of teacher and learner remain dichotomous and hierarchical, in service of the assumption that the unchanging world requires the disciplining of uneducated students in order to fit into the world in which they find themselves.

Table 1. Primary Pedagogies of Progressive Education
Pedagogy

Pedagogy	Definition	Characteristics/Practices
Action Learning	"…learning to pose fresh questions rather than to copy what others have shown to be useful already…" (Revans, 1982, p.23).	Group work; learning-by-doing; sharing perspectives on a problem's origins and paths to solutions; emphasized in management education
Active Learning	In contrast to passive approaches, "students must process content themselves in order to learn (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Powner & Allendoerfer, 2008)" (Carr, 2015, p. 174).	A constructivist approach to learning; learning-by-doing; student-centeredness; use of technology to facilitate student engagement in and outside the classroom; interpersonal interaction
Applied Learning	"…refers to more of a spirit or movement in education than to a definitively bound subject matter…" (Schwartzman & Henry, 2013, p. 6). The practice of applying knowledge to practical ends.	Augmenting one's knowledge of a subject through the movement from theory to practice; service learning; independent research
Authentic Learning	"Going beyond content, authentic learning intentionally brings into play multiple disciplines, multiple perspectives, ways of working, habits of minds and community" (Lombardi, 2007, p. 2-3).	A focus on student's interest and real-world relevance; simulations; student-created media; peer-based evaluations
Coactive Learning	A practice which involves learners working on projects simultaneously, while helping each other in the process (Schoor, Narciss, & Korndle, 2015).	Group-work; interpersonal skill development
Collaborative Learning	"…a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together" through a "truly joint effort" (Dillenbourg, 1999, p.1).	Group-work; interpersonal skill development
Cooperative Learning	"…a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together" where "the labor is divided in a systematic way" (Dillenbourg, 1999, p.1-2).	Group-work; interpersonal skill development
Critical Pedagogy	A philosophy of education that views empowerment as the central aim of education (Moyer, 2009, p.544).	Focus on social justice; critiquing hegemonic narratives; emphasizing the learner's role in the construction of knowledge

Didactic Education	A structured approach to imparting knowledge from teacher to student (Johnson and Hayes, 2016).	In-class lectures; teacher-centered; student as passive learner
Experiential Learning	A type of learning whereby "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984; as cited in Kolb and Kolb, 2005, p.194).	Learning as process; activities where learning outcomes reside in the results of student reflection and critique of an experience.
Interdisciplinarity	"A process of answering a question, solving a problem, or addressing a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline or profession… [It] draws on disciplinary perspectives and integrates their insights through construction of a more comprehensive perspective (Klein and Newell, 1998, p.393-394; as cited in McMurty, 2013, p.79).	Connecting ideas between disciplines; employing the perspectives of multiple fields of study to address the understanding of an issue.
Interprofessional Collaboration	"…concerned with integration of professional practice and 'does not imply the development of new professions, but rather a means by which professionals can practice in a more collaborative or integrated fashion'" (D'Amour and Onadasan, 2005, p. 9; as cited in McMurty, 2013, p.79).	Coordinating efforts to address concerns across multiple professions.
Participatory Learning	Forms of learning that focus on participatory aspects of the learning process emphasize the importance of community partnerships and the socio-political dimensions of learning techniques.	Examples include Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR), and instances of other forms of learning that emphasize community building (Zuber-Skerritt, 2015).
Problem-Based Learning	"…an instructional method in which students learn through facilitated problem solving" (Hmelio-Silver, 2004, p.235).	Group work; development of problem-solving techniques
Problem-Posing Education	"In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves." (Freire, 2005, p. 83).	Mostly synonymous with critical pedagogy; coined by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*
Project-Based Learning	"…an active student-centered form of instruction which is characterized by students' autonomy, constructive investigations, goal-setting, collaboration, communication and reflection within real-world practices." (Kokotsaki, Menzies, & Wiggins, 2016, p. 267).	Group work; culminating "in an end product" (Kokotsaki, Menzies, & Wiggins, 2016, p. 268).
Reflective Learning	"…the process of internally examining and exploring an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self, and which results in a changed conceptual perspective" (Boys and Fales, 1983; as cited in Furman & Sibthorp, 2013, p.19).	Encompasses multiple approaches to learning in which reflection is a key component.
Self-Regulated Learning	"…the way in which learners control their thoughts, feelings and actions in order to achieve academically" (Cassidy, 2011, p.989).	Reflection; planning; self-monitoring; emerged from the field of cybernetics
Service Learning	"…combines educational objectives with community service needs…in a way to benefit both the students and community" (Furman & Sibthorp, 2013, p.19).	Integrating community service projects into a course or curriculum.
Situational Learning	"…an umbrella term which encompasses a number of different teaching methodologies, including simulations, scenario-based learning and case studies" (Hewitt, 2008, p.87).	Learning about concepts through the study of a real or hypothetical situation.

Conversely, progressive pedagogies treat knowledge as a moving target, situated by context, and emerging through the learning process. Progressive education assumes that what is learned is not predetermined because discovery plays a central role in the learning process. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2006), Friere states that humans exist "as beings in the process of becoming—as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality" (p. 84). Acknowledgement of the role that duration plays in the development of knowledge is a hallmark of progressive education—this factor is what sediments progressive pedagogy as a necessary approach for maintaining the relevance of what is taught, and the skill development necessary for learning.

Both didactic and progressive forms of education have their place—didactic pedagogies may be most useful for establishing a knowledge base, while progressive pedagogies are useful for developing personal skills while expanding one's knowledge. In some cases, a careful balance of the two approaches may be necessary to meet the objectives of a particular course (Kokotsaki, Menzies, & Wiggins, 2016, p. 273). Johnson and Hayes (2016) describe this contrast as "learning to learn as opposed to mastery of a particular body of knowledge" (p.7). Freire (2005) explains *problem-posing education* as "Education is thus constantly remade in the praxis. In order to *be*, it must *become*. Its 'duration'…is found in the interplay of the opposites *permanence* and *change*" (p. 84). Didactic education emphasizes permanence, while progressive education emphasizes change and the interplay between the two opposites as it occurs in "the dynamic present" (Freire, 2005, p. 84). The learning process is thought of in terms of the shared project of naming the world that exists for humans in order to re-construct a milieu that brings our vocabulary into greater congruence with our experience.

Many educational theorists make use of models that describe a learning cycle. While Kolb's experiential learning cycle is among the most widely referenced, other learning cycles follow similar trajectories. Underlying the idea that learning cycles can be modeled and used to improve teaching is the belief in the value of individual experience. Knowledge is created through a process of discovery and cannot exist in a vacuum apart from the experiences of learners—atemporal knowledge is not knowledge at all. That is to say, all knowledge exists for humans and is relevant to a particular context. With this point, an assumption about the nature of knowledge that is fundamentally different from didactic education emerges—not only is discovery important for the individual adapting to the world around them; discovery lies at the basis of any particular field or discipline: knowledge is constructed on the basis of connections made to prior experiences (Johnson & Hayes, 2016).

Kolb and Kolb (2005) describe the experiential learning cycle as consisting of four steps: concrete experience, reflection, formation of concepts based on reflection, and testing those concepts. The last step leads to the cycle beginning anew; testing new concepts leads to new experience, and so on. Like other progressive educators, this theory of experiential learning is grounded in processes that are intrinsic to the

lived experience. Kolb and Kolb (2005) claim that "learning results from synergistic transactions between the person and the environment" (p. 194). By conceptualizing learning as process, progressive educators acknowledge the historicity of knowledge and seek to construct pedagogies that avoid alienating subjects from the world with which and in which they exist (Friere, 2006, p. 83). Under this framework, learning transforms both the subject as learner and their object of study.

The *problem-based learning* (PBL) cycle displays another temporal trajectory from which knowledge emerges and is one instance of a more focused development within the experiential learning milieu. Hmelo-Silver (2004) describes problem-based learning as "experiential learning organized around the investigation, explanation, and resolution of meaningful problems" (p. 236). Similarly, Freire (2005) explains "problem-posing education" as starting in "the here and now" and as a humanizing approach to education insofar as learners are engaged in the process of inquiry rather than being alienated from it (p. 85). Although studies indicate no significant difference in the knowledge acquired by students using PBL versus traditional learning methods, research shows PBL enhances skills related to critical thinking, communication, and the application of knowledge to new areas (Johnson & Hayes, p. 7).

Action
"Learning by doing" is a central characteristic of progressive education. Although learning is a valuable end in itself, action remains key to both the learning process and learning outcomes. The final step of progressive learning models generally involves putting new knowledge to use. When this is achieved, the action taken also represents a critique of prior knowledge, allowing participants to bring new perspective to that which was already known while adding to that body of knowledge. The characteristic of action preserves the value of understanding knowledge development as continuous engagement, rather than a static commodity exchanging hands. That is, understanding knowledge as always already existing for human subjects, rather than existing apart from human subjects awaiting discovery by remote observers.

Revans (1982) describes *action learning* as an inherently mutual endeavor, pointing out that "recognized ignorance, not programmed knowledge…is the key to action learning: men start to learn with and from each other only when they discover that no one among them

knows but all are obliged to find out" (p. 21). For Revans, the key quality setting action learning apart from other forms of "learning-by-doing" is the focus on the unknown, rather than the known. For instance, accounts of collaborative learning often focus on the shared knowledge of a group, or the differences in existing knowledge that individuals bring to the table. Action learning, in contrast, involves learning that begins with the recognition of what is not yet known, and the project of learning occurs through the mutual endeavor to solve a problem (Revans, 1982).

Similar to Kolb's conceptualization of experiential learning, Revans (1982) grounds action learning in the "very nature of organic evolution" (p. 28). As progressive education emerged as a critique of the sequestration of learning by educational institutions to the classroom, grounding alternatives to traditional education in natural processes became a means of breaking down barriers between institutional approaches to learning and learning as a naturally occurring process of socialization. Further, grounding action learning in the discovery of that which remains unknown represents the progressive notion of knowledge development as a forward movement rather than a reproduction of established formulas. Herein lies a connection to the temporal characteristic of progressive education: time is required in order for action to take place. The goals of action learning are particularly necessary for preparing students for a dynamically changing economy and job market, where the need exists to possess the skills and flexibility to continue learning while on the job (Wade & Hammick, 1999).

Progressive educators propose that learning outcomes must include the development of civic-minded individuals in order to preserve values that uphold democracy. These proponents posit that while learning is a valuable end in itself, a progressive approach is necessary to ensure that education serves the functioning of democratic values like cooperation, civic and political engagement, and appreciation of a diversity of perspectives. The AAC&U identifies civic learning and democratic engagement as an "undisputed educational priority" for universities, which are considered critical "architects of a diverse democracy" (Campus Compact, 2012, p. 2). Service-learning centralizes these values in its approach to learning and education. Different forms of service learning exist on a continuum, from instances where the school offers services to the community to settings that are fundamentally community-based that offer opportunities for students to earn academic

credit from participation. The AAC&U emphasizes the need to ensure mutuality in all efforts to form partnerships between educational and community institutions (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012). Mutuality ensures that educational institutions respond to the needs of the surrounding community, and that the community has a say in the way services are conducted.

Service-learning represents another means by which the borders of educational settings are made more fluid and permeable by allowing students the opportunity to learn through practice and the surrounding community to benefit from the work based in educational institutions. Champagne (2004) indicates three philosophical basis underlying service learning that are present in the writings of John Dewey—experience, reflection, and reciprocal learning. Reflection in the field setting allows students to gain understanding of a subject matter in a way that is superior to gaining knowledge of the subject matter. Learning in this way is reciprocal insofar as teachers learn from students' experiences, and student experiences are mutually beneficial to the community in which their learning takes place (Champagne, 2004). At its core, service learning puts knowledge into actions that serve the community and that serve the development of knowledge itself.

Participation

The human condition is characterized by being with others, and as such, people come to understand themselves and the world through relationships (dialogue) with other people. Because of this, knowledge discovery and creation cannot be thought of as an individual endeavor. What is known must be comprehensible, and comprehensibility is achieved through connection to other existing bodies of knowledge. Freire (2005) explains "no one can say a true word alone—nor can she say it *for* another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words" (p. 88). For this reason, the pursuit of knowledge is necessarily understood, in a humanistic sense, as a global and cooperative endeavor. When this is successfully translated to a teaching strategy, the learner becomes a stakeholder in, and a part of, the subject matter.

One means of realizing the vision of learning through participation is the shared responsibility of learning by teacher and student. Progressive approaches to education challenge the strict teacher-learner dichotomy by utilizing knowledge from life experience, emphasizing the ability of teachers to learn with and from students, and prioritizing the student's

interests and creativity in the learning process (Berilia, 2016). Student participation means that students share authority over the direction of learning with the teacher—e.g., taking classroom time to address the questions of students and inviting other students to provide responses (Oyler and Becker, 1997). A spectrum of authority exists between the teacher and student—the traditional lecture on one end and independent study on the other, with different forms of interactivity situated in the middle.

Paralleling the shared authority between teachers and students, different fields of study must share authority in advancing understanding of the world. Herein lies the importance of incorporating multiple perspectives into the curriculum—to maintain the dialogical nature of learning as a continuous process of development; always moving toward understanding without acceding to the notion that the process is complete. The inclusion of outside perspectives prevents the formation of silos within fields of study. *Interdisciplinarity* and *interprofessional collaboration* are two ways this is accomplished. Interdisciplinary studies are concerned with issues that require knowledge from multiple disciplines in order to be understood (McMurty, 2013). Sometimes, this can result in the birth of new areas of study and syntheses between fields. Interprofessional collaboration refers to the creation of teams of professionals to address a common issue. While interdisciplinarity encourages dialogue between disciplines, interprofessional collaboration ensures that different facets of an issue are appropriately addressed in practice.

Forms of learning that focus on multiple learners sharing ideas cultivate an appreciation for the concept of participation in the learning process. *Participatory learning* is described by Missingham (2013) as a way to "enable a kind of deliberative democracy in the classroom—a collective and interactive process" (p.37). A variety of techniques and pedagogies fall under the rubric of participatory learning. Kokotsaki and colleagues (2016) note that "the focus in both [problem- and project-based learning] is for participants to achieve a shared goal through collaboration" (p. 268). Kokotsaki, Menzies, & Wiggins (2016) differentiate *problem-based learning* from *project-based learning* because the former focuses on the learning process, while the goal of the latter is "to culminate in an end product" (p. 268). Although participation with others is demonstrated through both, project-based learning allows students to display in concrete terms the fruits of their collaborative efforts.

Problem- and project-based learning utilize forms of cooperative, collaborative, and *coactive learning*. Significant overlap exists in the literature between these three types of learning, all of which emphasize the theme of participation. Research in this area investigates the ways individuals function in groups and vacillates between a focus on individual psychology, group psychology, and socio-cultural influences on the learning process (Dillenbourg, Baker, Blaye, & O'Malley, 1996). According to Dillenbourg (1999), cooperative learning refers to learning that is characterized through shared effort. Differentiated from cooperative learning, collaborative learning involves the division of tasks among members within a group (Schoor, Narciss, & Korndle, 2015, p. 98). Coactive learning occurs when different students are working on separate projects "but at the same time, so they can help each other" (Schoor, Narciss, & Korndle, 2015, p. 98). These pedagogies encourage community building skills on the level of the classroom, campus, and community at large, which is necessary for cultivating responsive and responsible citizens in an increasingly diverse society.

Community engagement remains a core tenant of progressive education and has a renewed relevance given the concerns of institutions of higher education today. The accountability of universities to communities has come under question in recent years, in regards to both the communities in which they are geographically located and the communities which they serve through teaching and research. Participation is the means to bridge this gap and the concept to which the AAC&U refers when it calls for greater commitment to community engagement based on mutuality (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012). This is the goal of *participatory action learning and action research* (PALAR), which seeks to move beyond the unidirectional idea of colleges providing services to communities by sharing authority for determining the direction of projects with community stakeholders (Zuber-Skerritt, 2015).

Reflection
Although reflection is described here as a separate theme, it should not be misunderstood as an endeavor that takes place separate from other aspects of progressive education. Some descriptions of the concept of reflection are criticized as being overly rationalist, encouraging a separation of mind from body, and extraction of emotion from experience (Jordi, 2011). Likewise, some readings of experiential learning models interpret the step of reflection as inhabiting a separate time and space

from other steps in the cycle. This misses the point of reflection (and progressive approaches as a whole) by reintroducing borders between appropriate and inappropriate learning styles and settings as well as positing that learning occurs only within a particular moment in a larger process (Jordi, 2011, p. 189).

Reflection deservers its own discussion because this concept encourages individual engagement with the learning process through which a "process of integration" occurs wherein individuals or groups place new knowledge in the context of past and present experience (Jordi, 2011, p. 185). This process of integration allows for "the organic emergence of conscious meaning" from pre-conceptual feelings or intuitions (Jordi, 2011, p. 185). In contrast to traditional forms of education that seek to discipline students in particular ways of knowing, reflection is key to the progressive nature of these pedagogies. Reflection empowers the individual to take agency in the production of knowledge and ensure that knowledge is made relevant to the individual in the contemporary world.

Self-regulated learning focuses on the internal mechanisms by which students adapt to the learning process. Cassidy (2011) describes self-regulated learning as referring "to a self-directed process through which learners transform mental abilities into task-related academic skills" (p. 990). Self-regulation is essential to student success, whether experienced consciously or unconsciously by the student. Cassidy displays the self-regulated learning cycle as consisting of three phases: forethought, performance, and self-reflection (Cassidy, 2011, p. 991). Because internal processes are the focus of self-regulated learning, reflection (as opposed to action or critique) is the impetus for the cycle's repetition. During the reflective phase, students perform self-evaluation in order to adapt what they have experienced to the way they comport themselves in future endeavors.

In setting up his discussion of dialogue as a participatory endeavor characterized by the shared quest of humans naming the world, Freire (2005) describes reflection as praxis: "Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed—even in part—the other immediately suffers" (p. 85). Without proper attention to action, the word becomes empty verbalism, unable to transform the world. When reflection is neglected, the word becomes activism, "action for action's sake," rendering dialogue

impossible (Freire, 2005, p. 88). This concept lays the basis of learning cycles which encourage praxis through autocritique, eliminating the separation of theory from practice: "Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a *new naming*. Human beings are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection" (Freire, 2005, p. 88).

Conclusion

The extant article aimed to synthesize the various pedagogies that characterize the landscape of progressive education in the 21st century. Using progressive education as an organizing concept, the authors identify five common characteristics of contemporary pedagogies: experience, temporal, action, participation, and reflection. As the concept of progressive education is at times seemingly elusive, a targeted review of this body of literature benefits educators and professionals invested in supporting an intentional trajectory for higher education—one that is informed by both relevant history and a clear picture of current trends. Commonly championed pedagogies and approaches such as applied learning and interprofessional collaboration can be described through the prism of the five unifying characteristics, punctuating the overarching role of progressive education in the 21st century. Further, a clearer articulation of the landscape of progression education supports intentionality in future pedagogical innovation.

One obstacle to promoting progressive education is the phrase itself. Although some theorists of progressive pedagogies may identify as politically progressive, this approach to education need not be considered inherently political. While some may argue that it should be, the aim of progressive education is to increase the efficacy of teaching methods—a non-ideological goal. The political connotations of the word "progressive" may, in fact, be a reason for the proliferation of vocabulary used to describe non-traditional teaching methods in order to forge new ways of promoting effective teaching styles that disidentify with politically-charged language.

Although many educational theorists of recent decades have shied away from using the phrase "progressive education," the phrase is helpful as an organizing concept, no matter one's political outlook. As it stands, a stark contrast has appeared between those who embrace the phrase in the hopes of maintaining the liberatory potential of these pedagogies (such as Bill Ayers (Ayers, 2012)), and others who seem to search for

any other means of describing education that espouses essentially the same values. This divide is unnecessary for two reasons. First, denying or ignoring the rubric of "progressive education" results in newer theorists claiming to reinvent the wheel, doing a disservice to history. When the historical connections between today's pedagogies and ideas from the past are located, a rich and diverse legacy emerges with the capacity to ground current efforts to move forward. Progressive education has always existed as an umbrella term for a number of currents in pedagogical thought, and the phrase is worth preserving in order to ensure continued dialogue between those with differing goals and priorities. This both makes the movement as a whole stronger through a diversity of perspectives and helps ensure against the development of similar ideas developing in isolation.

Second, distancing from the word "progressive" due to its political connotations is unnecessary, as a common goal of these pedagogies is advancement of the effectiveness of teaching and learning methods. In this sense of the word, progressive education refers to a philosophy of the educational process, one that can be adopted and utilized by anyone, no matter their politics. Preserving the current divisions in vocabulary choice sends an implicit message that only those with politically progressive attitudes are capable of executing progressive pedagogies. This is an incorrect assumption. Asserting the alternate meaning of progressive as a forward movement in education ensures that certain concepts (such as learning through emergent and immersive experiences, as opposed to "the banking concept of education") remain useful organizing forces for bringing together differing approaches that share common interests.

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