

The Pragmatic Curriculum: Teacher Reskilling as Cultural Politics

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It is said that teachers can, and do, use curricula different from the standardized versions presented to them. The author argues that teachers are more than deskilled technicians and, using excerpts from three case studies, demonstrates that teachers apply cultural politics to create pragmatic curricula and to reskill themselves. The application of cultural politics alleviates oppressive, alienating, and subordinating relations in schools. It is suggested that, to transform themselves from deskilled technicians to reskilled practitioners, teachers question seriously the socio-political climate in which curricula function.

On dit que les professeurs utilisent des curricula autres que ceux qui, étant déjà standardisés, leur sont présentés. L'auteur de cet article soutient que les professeurs sont beaucoup plus que d'habiles techniciens. En utilisant des extraits de trois études de cas, l'auteur montre que les professeurs font preuve de politique culturelle bien précise pour des curricula "pragmatiques" et ainsi pour se réhabiliter. La mise en pratique de politique culturelle exerce les relations qui, dans les écoles, sont opprimantes, aliénantes, dominatrices. Pour passer d'un état d'habiles techniciens à celui de praticiens efficaces, l'auteur suggère aux professeurs de questionner sérieusement le climat socio-culturel dans lequel fonctionne les curricula.

In the educational critical social theory literature to date, the mood of growing despair concerning the reproduction of culturally oppressive symbols (such as race, class, and gender) has often eliminated any hope for a transformative agenda for schools. Teachers are not seen as budding transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988) whose "language of possibility" (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985) allows them to explore opportunities for cultural transformation; rather, they are both generally and narrowly conceived of as pawns or regulators of the state, mere technicians and masters of methodologies who, in the guise of professionals, act as regulators of inequities in our society. It has been cogently argued by Apple (1983) and others that the majority of teachers merely execute or reproduce others' demands and are not conceivers of their own internal, counter-hegemonic cultural logic. In short, they are deskilled.

Thus, it is of great interest to me that three authors published in recent issues of the *Journal of Educational Thought* described in detail the prevailing mood of technocratic domination (Hlebowitsh, 1990) as well as of state control and the text (Corrigan, 1990) simply as sources of cultural politics that in large part reinforce the dominant ideology (Apple, 1990) or the deskilling of teachers. I do not wish to undermine the increasing importance of such educational theory. If we are to advance the emancipatory agenda we must first understand the multiple blockades which impact upon it. Few studies or theoretical formulations, however, suggest how teachers can regularly, albeit similarly or differently, challenge technocratic "text" domination. Furthermore, in little if any critical social theory literature about teachers is curriculum construction examined through the notion of a *cultural politics*, or what I term *reskilling*. Put differently, and agreeing with Hlebowitsh (1990), there is a dearth of studies in the critical social educational literature that document what teachers do when they stray from their official standardized texts, from what I term an *official* curriculum to a *pragmatic* or repeatedly used curriculum based on predetermined knowledge.

If we are to understand the teacher's role as a transformative intellectual (one who connects education with power, culture with politics, and text with thought and meaning), it is vital that we deconstruct the potential emancipatory ramifications of a teacher movement from official to pragmatic curricula in the guise of cultural politics for a transformative agenda.

The notion of cultural politics has been a topic of concern for educational critical social theorists for quite some time (Apple, 1986; Giroux & Simon, 1989; Giroux, 1986; Giroux & McLaren, 1991). Cultural politics can be largely equated with the social, cultural, political, and economic dimensions of schooling; it refers to the notion of school personnel (for this paper, teachers are the prime source) being actively aware of the history and experiences of different ethnic populations in a school. Cultural politics involves teachers understanding interactions among various student groups (e.g., understanding their personal, family, and immigrant experiences). It also involves teachers' understanding of

and empathy with diverse student bodies, the dominant values inherent within their cultures, and the motivations that drive their gender, class, and race subjectivities and intersubjectivities (Kanpol, 1991, pp. 144-145).

Teacher-centered cultural politics seeks to understand what it means for teachers and students to be both similar and different: Certain questions must be asked and answered. For instance: How is a student culture both similar to and different from that of teachers and other students? How are these similarities and differences negotiated at the school site with students and staff members? How do these similarities and differences relate to relationships with students and curricular choice? How much should teachers promote or obscure their own values for the sake of mainstreaming multiple cultures into the dominant culture? For whom are these decisions made? How do they affect gender and racial concerns? Am I, as teacher, considerate of and fair to students with different cultural traits?

Cultural politics includes the teacher acting as both mediator and change agent. For example, a teacher cultural politician will seek to undermine inequities that may appear because of cultural differences. Such a change agent seeks to base decisions and policy concerns on the cultural differences that arise in schools. The teacher cultural politician has the ability to negotiate a viable and just society. This becomes *the* central concern for cultural politics.

Teacher cultural politics, then, is a movement by teachers toward a curriculum that doesn't deskill, but rather reskills. As opposed to deskilling, reskilling presupposes that teachers have control over the content (and values therein) that they teach. Additionally, reskilling places the teacher at the helm of transformative thought and counter-hegemonic pedagogy and logic. This reskilling within the context of a pragmatically driven curriculum opens the doors to teacher cultural politics in the most radical sense possible. Thus, the curriculum can be used as a pedagogical tool for teachers to become cultural politician change agents.

In this paper, then, I add to the body of critical social theory in education by describing, in three separate studies about teachers, instances where they were reskilled through a pragmatic curriculum. I use data from the three studies to depict practical teaching situations that differ in theory from those arguments made about deskilled teachers in the December 1990 issues of the *Journal of Educational Thought*. I then connect similarities to the differences between these accounts as I consider this question: What can straying from textbooks in the official curriculum mean in terms of teacher cultural politics?

Study One

Four eighth grade teachers were studied at Hillview Middle School in the 1985/1986 academic year (Kanpol, 1991, 1992).

One emerging theme in this study was the teachers' consistent refusal to teach only by state-mandated, official textbooks. In part, this happened because (a) students in this working class school could not reach the eighth grade level of state-mandated standardized curriculum objectives and (b) some teachers prioritized social issues as a pragmatic curriculum in the classroom. This deviated from the more objective state-mandated curriculum. Two examples illustrate this point.

Using eighth grade reading materials to teach children who had third grade reading skills was an impossible task and had to be dealt with pragmatically: Third grade literature needed to be used. Ms. A told her students that she would let them relax and read different types of literature. Thus, her eighth grade students talked about time, characterization, and place in *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* (not in the officially mandated curriculum). Students immersed themselves in the newer, spontaneous curriculum. Ms. A noted:

Now I can do more creative-type, pragmatic activities with my students rather than boring exercises in the regular curriculum We openly talk about things like drugs ... I decided that students gained nothing by doing exercises made by the other teacher and

even less by following a curriculum that is not on their intellectual levels.

A student responded to Ms. A's curriculum:

She lets us do things the other teachers don't. We don't take dumb tests She's good, lets us read what we want.

Ms. Y, the eighth grade social studies teacher and "activist" outside and inside the school among the eighth grade teachers, raised the complex issues of race and prejudice with her students and used this as a part of her curriculum. In part, this was the result of a sexual assault issue at the school through which Ms. Y and Ms. A were persuaded to challenge the school administration's handling of the situation. The issue of gender rights became the central concern for these teachers. This was based on their caring and attachment qualities. In some ways, the sexual assault issues led Ms. Y to change or modify her curriculum. Clearly, the official curriculum was the vehicle for the dissemination of factual knowledge. However, Ms. Y cleverly added supplementary material to raise students' awareness of their own prejudices. For example, after seeing the movie "Mask," Ms. Y asked if any of the students were prejudiced (Kanpol, 1991, p. 142).

Student (1): I guess, well we all have a few prejudices, I mean, um, do we like everything, um, and everyone in this school?

Ms. Y: What are some of your prejudices?

Student (1): I'm a hood. I don't like the preps. All they do is work; they nerds.

Ms. Y: What makes you better?

Student (2): He's not better. He's the same. We are all the same. We do things differently.

Ms. Y's "hidden curriculum" (in this case, her deviation from the official text-standardized curriculum) was concerned with the rights of students to be treated equally and with respect, regardless of race or sex.

Study Two

One teacher was studied during the 1988/1989 academic year at Parkview Elementary School (Kanpol, 1992). My central concern was to determine how Betty, a fourth grade teacher, would incorporate a global perspective into her daily social studies curriculum, even though global education (the cross-cultural study and awareness of both problems and issues concerning the economic, political, environmental, cultural, and technological aspects of other countries) had not yet been standardized.

Officially, Betty was supposed to follow the Instructional Television Program (ITV) for social studies purposes. Heavy reliance on ITV for art, music, and social studies, combined with a top-down decision structure in the school district, suggests the deskilling of teachers in this particular district.

However, as an act of resistance to the stringent ITV, Betty created curriculum autonomy for herself. Having been involved in a global education project for four years, she decided to create a three-week unit about different countries in order to help students learn about individual and cultural differences. Asked why she used this curriculum, Betty commented:

Some prejudice that I experienced made me want to know what others were like and why there's discrimination and so on. Our regular curriculum doesn't go into that stuff.

Concerning her use of a more practical curriculum, Betty said:

The ITV is just the tip of the iceberg. The real teaching comes when I connect peoples of the world with the ecology movement, for example. I will do more simulations that could be more political. For instance, we will learn about some countries' hunger problems, and why we must do away with that. At the same time, while we work on these ideas, we do them in groups, for the purpose of working together and sharing ideas, accepting and understanding different points of view, just being a community.

I observed how a three-week global education project evolved and became a shared group activity. The emerging themes of understanding different points of view, building empathy, creating community, and resisting individualism predominated in Betty's hidden and pragmatic curriculum. In a class exercise designed to introduce students to the notion of difference, Betty placed a number of items on a round table at the front of the class. The students listed everything they saw from where they were seated. After five minutes the class came together to talk about what they had seen.

- Betty: What did you discover?
- Student (1): I can't see from a distance.
- Student (2): That nobody's perfect.
- Betty: Would you like to have had a perfect list? How would you feel about not seeing everything? Good about it? Upset?
- Student (1): Upset. Cheated because some people saw different things and we were all sitting at different places.
- Betty: What would you have wished you had done?
- Student (3): I felt mistreated.
- Betty: How could you get all the information?
- Student (4): Look differently.
- Student (5): Look for different points of view.
- Betty: How many points of view are there?
- Student (6): Many, at least two. You can see different things if you stand in different places.
- Betty: Can you see everything when you are really close?

Students: Yeah.

Betty: What can you tell me about your point of view?
What can change your point of view?

Student (1): When you look different?

Betty: If I put more makeup on or dress differently,
does that change my point of view? What can
you do to change your point of view?

Student (7): Use your imagination.

Betty: Can you learn to like someone and accept their
point of view?

Student (8): Yes, by sharing with them your ideas, to take
them as your partners.

Student (1): Yes, by working with them.

Betty: How do you feel about different points of view?

Students: Good.

Betty then asked for similarities and differences between and among people. After the students had listed a number of similarities and differences, the conversation continued:

Betty: Are we the same?

Student (9): We all work.

Student(10): Poor people don't.

Student (5): We all have some money.

Betty: Do we all have money? I want to know similar
things, not that all people have money.

In all, Betty taught that members of different groups have different points of view and that people in different countries have different customs and habits. In closing she commented:

You need to pat yourselves on the back, support and encourage everyone, and say you're doing a good job. Remember, in this exercise we learn about different points of view, different countries. We don't just memorize the different facts about the countries. We must be on task and check our feelings, that everyone is feeling good about themselves. You all have important jobs to do. Let's get to work and do our research on different countries.

Study Three

Five teachers were studied at Chapel High School during the 1989/1990 academic year (Kanpol, 1992). I found that the teachers used an expanded pragmatic curriculum, one that constantly deviated from the official standardized version; the ensuing problems of gender, empathy, difference, inequities, and understanding others (those who are marginalized and oppressed in society) were emphasized. Often, this pragmatic curriculum took precedence over the official curriculum.

The building of empathy with student similarities and differences was a major emphasis in this curriculum. Two instances are described below.

Joan, an English as a Second Language (ESL) as well as an English teacher, developed empathy in two ways. First, she never shied away from telling her students about her own life story — how as a child she faced situations similar to theirs and how she had to "work hard to achieve as well." Second, she placed a great emphasis on understanding the "other." In a class discussion emanating from the official text about civil rights and handicapped persons Joan commented:

Slaves had no rights. Just imagine yourselves ... coming home and one of your family was sold. It's unbelievable to think that happened.

Then Joan asked, "What is a handicap?"

- Student (1): Something mentally wrong.
- Joan: Yes, it could be something mentally or physically limiting. What are some of the handicaps?
- Student (2): Can't talk or hear.
- Student (3): When you can't speak English.
- Joan: Yes, when you are in a country and can't speak the language ... something you are all faced with when you come to this country.
- Student (4): Right.
- Student (5): Yeah.
- Joan: I'm going to have to think in a room alone. Just try to cover your eyes and walk the room to the other side to get the feeling of limitations and what others may feel.

Joan followed the official texts to provide relevant factual information. However, her reconstructed curriculum led students to her moral and social message. This became her teaching theme, her pragmatic (or hidden) curriculum. Joan was trying to, as she said, "create democracy."

Sarah, a native born Egyptian, is also an ESL teacher. She stringently followed the official curriculum guidelines and used the suggested texts. However, she did not believe that curriculum ends with official texts. On the contrary, Sarah commented that her "other curriculum is her interaction with her students both in and out of the class." In a discussion on the concept of "home," related indirectly to the poem, "All Alone," which was read aloud in class, she said to the students:

Let me share something with you now that you are just new immigrants. A home is never the same once you leave it. Finding a new home is like transplanting a plant. This is what happened when you left Mexico and I left Egypt. Everything would look different to me. It doesn't mean you are going to be different.

Don't forget your good qualities. Choose the good things America has to offer you. Then you'll be unique. This is how I feel. Just because you are different doesn't make you worse. We are richer because of our differences.

This deviation from the official curriculum as a way to penetrate her students' feelings and thought structures was further amplified in a discussion on conflict based on *The Lady or the Tiger*, a story that was part of an official text for this ESL class.

Sarah, who believes that conflict must be related to students' personal lives, commented:

I give them a conflict situation before we read on conflict such as if we have a small house or my two ways of solving conflict are presented — fight or flight. So I say it's better to work things out and fight out conflict. They have many of the same conflicts as when I came from Egypt. I am a role model for them. I also suffered just like these kids. I was in a similar situation — had to make a choice — fight or flight. I know what they went through. I interrelate personal conflict with the general conflict they face every day. As immigrants they will always have these conflicts.

Much of the official curriculum that Sarah chose had to do with potential conflict situations. The following discussion is based on *The Lady or the Tiger*.

Sarah: What is the meaning of conflict?

Student (1): A problem.

Sarah: A problem that arises from what?

Student (2): A difficult decision.

Sarah: Very good, a conflict that arises from a difficult decision.

Sarah: There's one thing very important about this story. What is it?

Student (3): She's an individual.

Student (4): She's independent.

Sarah: Oh, wonderful, yes, she did what she wanted. She was disobedient to her father.

Student (3): The king didn't approve of the relationship ... his daughter and the slave.

Sarah: So what conflict do we have here?

Student (5): Inner conflict.

Students were beginning to understand the nature of inner conflict. A week later, Sarah connected this understanding to theory.

Sarah: What is a theory?

Student (1): An idea.

Sarah: Is the idea always correct?

Student (6): No!

Sarah: Yes, someone has to prove it's right or wrong. Let's see, Christopher Columbus had a theory.

Student (7): Yes, the world goes around.

Sarah: Did people believe him?

Student (8): Not everyone.

Sarah: Then we have a conflict between what's right and wrong.

It is clear from the three case studies that teachers are much more than just technicians — simple minded, narrow, efficient, only concerned with and committed to the book. Thinking teachers like the ones described in the three case studies are faced with an enormous cultural political battle.

Emerging Themes

Two interrelated themes, *voice* and *similarity and difference*, emerge from these studies.

It has been argued elsewhere (McLaren, 1989; Giroux & Simon, 1989; Kanpol, 1992; Giroux, 1986; Fine, 1988) that the concept of voice is central to the notion of cultural politics. First, voice is meaningful dialogue, where teachers *make/create* meaning from their cultural history and prior experiences. Second, voice is an "internalized, private discourse that is both deliberated and shaped in some way by the symbols, stories, narratives, and social practices of the culture in which it is formulated" (McLaren, 1989, p. 229). In this case, voice is used by both students and teachers to interpret personal experience, in particular as it relates to one's own oppression, subordination, and alienation. Third, a more abstract notion of voice "shapes reality within historically constructed practices and relationships of power" (McLaren, 1989, p. 230), where each voice is shaped by its owner's particular social standing (status, expected role, and norms that accompany that role). Thus, we comprehend voice more effectively when we can understand how cultural artifacts such as dress, language, history, stereotype, race, and gender make up diverse school cultures and when we can discern how these artifacts symbolize the often hierarchical teacher-student and teacher-teacher relationships.

The findings of these studies reveal that teachers take seriously the concept of voice. As they personalize the curriculum, they move from an official to a pragmatic one, from unquestioned acceptance of information to a critical view of knowledge construction. For example, Ms. Y seriously questioned students' personal prejudices. This became the basis of students' personal race and gender reflections. Ms. A created a newer and more spontaneous curriculum that allowed students to understand their own sense of voice, including an understanding of personal time, characterization, and place.

Betty insisted on building a pragmatic curriculum that centered on *difference* as a tool to better understand student (peer) voice, a difference

centered on tolerance, empathy, and care. Joan built empathy by adding to the official social studies curriculum. She emphasized handicap as a social phenomena. Her message was that students can and should find the capacity to understand different people — the marginalized, oppressed, and alienated. Sarah instilled in her students the desire to question hierarchical authority (patriarchy). Thus, students interpreted conflict within the context of their own social standing (voice). Sarah personalized her own history and experiences of alienation and oppression and compared them with her immigrant students' history and experiences. Her message was that students can come together through similarities even though obvious differences exist between them.

There may be many reasons for deviations from the official curriculum; these include time constraints, boredom with the curriculum, and student and teacher apathy. However, it is clear that many teachers are dissatisfied with an official textbook-only curriculum as the major source of knowledge development. They have a natural ability to create and implement a curriculum that has as its core a social message, promulgated, at least in part, by the teacher's personal history. A creative and pragmatic curriculum can guide teachers to new sources of knowledge for students, knowledge that taps into students' and teachers' similar and different voices.

It is through creating this curriculum that teachers are reskilled within the context of cultural politics. The teachers described above made decisions — albeit alone. They allowed students to explore social/cultural agendas that challenged various aspects of the dominant culture (such as patriarchy and prejudicial relations). These teachers cannot simply be depicted as only storers and disseminators of bits of knowledge who develop only narrow basic skills (Hlebowitsh, 1990). Rather, they attempted to find a happy medium between the official aspects of a curriculum that by and large deskills teachers and students and a pragmatic curriculum that reskills both teachers and students to challenge creatively the culture in which they reside.

Conclusion

Hlebowitsh, Corrigan, and Apple have masterfully portrayed the varying systematic weaknesses that have historically been found in teacher work. Clearly, state-mandated and controlled standardized curriculum and standardized testing imply that teaching exists in a socio-political climate where the ideology of the curriculum and instruction division work to deskill teachers. As a result teachers are obligated to consent to being technicians or regulators of state control and manipulation.

If teachers are to be reskilled rather than deskilled, educators will have to consider seriously other avenues of curriculum usage. That is not to say that official curricula must be totally abandoned as wrong or not having legitimate claims to knowledge. Rather, standardized curricula must be examined for their claims to truth and objectivity.

Critical social theorists in education have the potential to expose the gaps and crevices of a potentially emancipatory curriculum by asking questions and searching for answers. Why and when do teachers deviate from official curriculum usage? What do they do when this occurs? Is this deviation conscious or unconscious? How do teachers relate their curriculum to other teachers? Where is teacher group solidarity created concerning curriculum use?

Only when these kinds of questions are explored in depth will educational researchers, theoreticians, and practitioners be able to build curricula that are concerned with student and teacher realities. This will involve serious consideration of creative and critical reflection about curriculum. Only then will teachers be able to reskill themselves and become the transformative intellectuals that Giroux (1988) has described.

Note: The names of schools and teachers in this paper are fictitious.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Gorham, E.B. (1992). *National service, citizenship, and political education*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 282 pp., \$49.50 (hardcover).

Professor Gorham's original and provocative book deserves to be far more widely read than, at U.S. \$49.50, it probably will be. Its relevance has been enhanced by the accession of the Clinton administration in the United States, which campaigned strongly for a program of National Service — while some five years ago the Democratic Leadership Council, the source of Clinton's basic policies, developed the Nunn-McCurdy Citizenship and National Service Bill (SR3-1989), some form of which may well have been passed before this can be printed.

In his introduction, Gorham asserts:

This book is not really about national service. It is about ideology, discourse, and political organization In November, 1990, President Bush signed into law the National and Community Service Act of 1990, but it contains only the rudimentary structures and funding of various programs that could affect the lives of thousands of people Many criticize the program, but much of this criticism is well-worn: National service violates freedom or rights, it is a costly government program, it presages a draft, it threatens union jobs, etc., etc. While these are powerful critiques of the program, all fail to grasp what I take to be its fundamental nature: An institutional means by which the state uses political discourse and ideology to reproduce a postindustrial capitalist economy in the name of good citizenship. (p. 1)

Indeed, this seems self-evident when you think about it. But it isn't; academics rarely analyze a social process in terms so pejorative to pervasive mainstream values. Gorham provides the evidence needed to advance his

argument. His book comes as an epiphany, releasing a flood of insight and grim memories.

Elderly American readers like myself will recall President Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps and its quasi-military discipline designed to forestall controversy, of which Gorham gives a full account. Canadian readers will be reminded of our hopes for Katimavik and of Senator Jacques Hèbert's desperate 1986 fast in his unavailing effort to save one of the few programs of national service to which Gorham's criticism does not apply and which the Federal Government abandoned after nine successful years precisely for that reason.

Gorham deplors the probable erosion of citizenship by the very programs of national service that claim to develop it but deny its members the right and the opportunity to govern themselves, explore how their community actually works, and participate in its controversies. His fundamental concern, however, is more moral than political. He is a professor of political science at Loyola University of New Orleans which perhaps accounts for the rather Jesuitical tone of the work: for example, his elaborate distinction between coercive and compulsory programs (p. 34). Some readers who might prefer to dismiss his analysis as Marxist may well be confounded.

A Marxian analysis, though consistent with Gorham's, would convey less sense of outrage. Gorham's indignation at the dishonest and exploitive character of national service programs that would send young men and women as "volunteers" to do the dirty work in highly profitable nursing homes is both appropriate and refreshing. But it also seems naive or at least inconsistent with his own insights. This inconsistency is especially apparent in the chapter in which he considers existing social institutions, including schools, as possible instruments of citizenship education and finds them wanting. The section (pp. 172-177) on schooling is a superficial fragment that never recognizes that schools, too, are *supposed* to mystify their students about the sources of public policy, just as national service programs are.

The final chapter of *National Service, Citizenship, and Political Education* offers suggestions for some kinds of community service that might actually help those involved to become better informed and more aggressive citizens. The preceding chapter concluded with an extended and rather technical dissuasion of "Casuistic Reasoning" as a useful if treacherous analytical tool. Well it might:

In my more idealistic moments, I might pursue national service as political service, but I doubt that those who reside within and around the northwest quadrant of the District of Columbia would do the same. I doubt that even if they did agree with the following suggestions (much less the entire thesis of the book), they could transform it into a nonbureaucratic participatory reality. I offer the following, then, as food for thought rather than as detailed policy advice and I advise those who share my concerns to fight the very idea of national service as the federal government is devising it. Service to a nation of individualists, instrumental reasoners, corporate interests, and large bureaucracies is not in the best interests of the nation Good citizens need to resist this sort of good citizenship. Therefore the following tasks are practical, if currently impracticable, ways in which service workers and participants can become good citizens. (p. 198)

These include establishing an alternative newspaper and television station, providing literacy education à la Freire, and combatting urban decay by lobbying against real estate interests, among other things. As they say in New Orleans, "*Que les bons temps roulent!*" And watch out for Ross Perot.

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Howard, V.A. (1992). *Learning by all means: Lessons from the arts*. New York: Peter Lang, 158 pp., \$19.95 (softcover).

It is always pleasant to pick up a book by V.A. Howard and *Learning by All Means* is no exception. Howard's style is easy to read and simple (but not simplistic) and the issues he addresses are important. Here he presents a modern philosophy of education and the novelty is that it is specifically based on the aesthetic aspects of learning (rather than teaching). As he rightly says, the literature of the philosophy of learning is miniscule. The most recent philosophers of learning skate across psychology, sociology, anthropology, and semiotics but Howard's focus is clear and, commendably, he keeps to it.

His introduction reveals his perspective to be post-Deweyan and he declares that he is concerned with the "clinical aspects" of learning and education generally (p. xiii): "the place of controlling values in learning to learn" (p. xiv). Others important to his line of thought are Michael Polanyi, understandably, and Gilbert Ryle, oddly (considering Ryle's extreme positivism). Howard also addresses the domain of "getting to know" (pp. xiii) but curiously omits the advances recently made by A.J. Greimas.

Part 1, "Educating the Imagination," begins with a nice piece that reenacts Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* in a contemporary form which will be very useful to students (pp. 3-8). He then moves to imagination where he has some plain but important things to say about how it gets developed, how it is expressed by artists and how images, imaging, and imagination relate. In this part he reveals some unstated subtexts. First, through examples like a master class by Birget Nilsson and an interview with Alfredo Kraus, Howard deals mainly with arts education for the few (programs for artists) rather than for the many (programs for everyone else in the general program of studies). There are clearly differences between the two but post-Deweyans rarely acknowledge them. Second, by restricting himself to the philosophy of education Howard omits the significant work on imagination and learning by E.J.

Furlong, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Otto Weininger, among others. Third, by omitting the literature on dramatic education, Howard's discussion of "From Image to Action" is inadequate (pp. 47 et seq.). But his sections on useful imaginings (pp. 14-19), expression (pp. 27-37), and heuristic imagination (pp. 43 et seq.) should be recommended to all graduate students of education.

Personally I find part 2, "Ways of Learning," less interesting. This is not to say that other readers will agree with me for it is coherent and linked to the whole. My attitude, I suspect, is due to Howard's separate discussions of learning by instruction, practice, example, and reflection. My own inclinations are specifically holistic and, if I am eating a cake, I like it to be unified and not in lumps.

Finally, the publishers are to be congratulated on the overall presentation of this volume. It is not usual in the economics of the recession to find a significant, softcover, nonfiction book given plenty of "air" around the type and spare pages for reader's notes. These qualities help to make the book "a really good read."

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Pratte, R. (1992). *Philosophy of education: Two traditions*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 326 pp., \$58.75 (hardcover).

Professor Pratte has attempted to unite certain features of Ordinary Language Philosophy (one type of analysis) with certain features of Normative Philosophy. The first set of features he calls a "bag of skills"

and the second a "bag of virtues" (p. xxii). He makes it clear that he is not examining the history of the traditions represented by these features but rather he is working within them (p. xii). He does so mainly by using an analytical methodology related to normative aims and purposes of education and first order moral principles. He stresses clarification of concepts and justification of beliefs, with emphasis upon reason or rationality and with respect for persons. He is of the opinion that clarification of fundamental concepts occurs both logically and practically prior to understanding the normative tradition and justifying policies and practices in education. He is aware that some may object to his strong emphasis upon reason, but he insists that teachers, to be effective, must become skilled in the uses of reasoning techniques (pp. xx-xxii).

The book is divided into four parts. The first is termed "Philosophy," the second "Virtues," the third "Education," and the fourth "Issues." Philosophers of education and practical educators will find much that will be both interesting and challenging in all four parts. For those who are not well acquainted with Ordinary Language Analysis, part 1 will need to be carefully studied. The same can be said for part 2 for those who may not be acquainted with certain normative matters. Part 3 deals with education, schooling, and indoctrination, needs, interests, and discipline. Part 4 is devoted to such issues in education as authority, power, freedom, paternalism, privacy, and rights. These issues are clarified and placed in social and educational contexts.

The first part is divided into chapters on "Clarification Procedures of Clear Thinking," "Statements: Claims and Disputes," and "Justificatory Strategies for Clear Thinking." Pratte may bore some readers with excessive attention to numerous and often minute linguistic and/or logical distinctions. The distinctions are not those invented or even explicated by the author. They are rather standard ones in Ordinary Language Analysis. One technique that is often employed for testing logical (necessary) relations of concepts is termed "A with or without B" (pp. 16-18). For example, if A is used for teaching and B for learning, can there be teaching without learning? Conversely, can there be learning without teaching?

One can find numerous cases where the two are not necessarily related and some where a nonnecessary or contingent relation can be found.

Most readers will not find much to object to in what is said about language uses and concept analysis. The author does, however, follow an older work by Israel Scheffler too closely in what he says about definitions (pp. 22-27). He discusses descriptive definitions without first discussing ways in which things can be described. He does not show how to analyze and test such definitions. He discusses stipulative definitions rather well, but he fails to show adequately that programmatic definitions can be prescriptive, emotive, and propagandistic. In a controversial field such as education it pays to examine definitions to find if they are partisan or propagandistic and to reveal what is implicit in them. Other forms of definitions, especially contextual ones, could have been shown.

The second chapter is devoted to "Statements: Claims and Disputes." A statement is what is asserted by a sentence (p. 35). Statements asserted for general acceptance stake claims (p. 36). Pratte identifies six types of statements which he calls imperatives, preferences, value judgments, empirical statements, analytical ones, and metaphysical ones. Some philosophers, however, may only consider truth functional propositions to be genuine. Sentences, as opposed to statements, serve other purposes in language. Imperatives, value judgements, and some metaphysical remarks may not be true or false in the usual sense. Pratte believes that metaphysical sentences are about a supernatural realm of existence, have no agreed-upon meaning, and cannot be verified (pp. 55-58). He does not consider the possibility that some metaphysical sentences could be about conceptual frames of reference rather than about supernatural existence. Finally, the distinction between real and verbal disputes is explored and the role of statements in teaching is discussed.

In chapter 3, "Justification Strategies of Clear Thinking," Pratte finds justification to be "one of the most daunting and vexing of any [problems] facing someone writing a philosophy of education book" (p. 63). He easily distinguishes justification as giving good reasons for acts as opposed to offering excuses (p. 66). He finds reason giving to be within a social

context (p. 67). Some reasons may be empirically true or false and some may be value judgments but reasons cannot be mere rationalizations (p. 66). He sees school rules as cases where justifications may often be required. The typical form of justification is that of argument in which reasons are offered to support conclusions. Although he exhibits a deductive argument form (pp. 72-74), he favors practical arguments as described by Stephen Toulmin and others in terms of grounds, backing, and warrants for conclusions (pp. 76-77). Normative arguments of this kind are not valid or invalid, but rather are more or less convincing depending upon the strengths of the grounds, backings, and warrants.

In chapter 4 Pratte turns his attention to human dignity, personhood, and respect for persons which he allies with tolerance to provide an "ethical ideal" (p. 89). He admits to a kind of Kantian normative position (p. 89). Unlike Kant's categorical imperative, Pratte holds that there are no universally valid moral principles (p. 90). Yet he speaks of moral duties to help victims of society at home and abroad (p. 90). Pratte admits that what he advocates may not be the dominant normative view (p. 90). He attempts to justify his view and speaks of a major aim of education as enhancement of the moral life of society (p. 91).

Human dignity is justified, he believes, by documents such as the U.S. Declaration of Independence and the U.N. Universal Declaration of Rights. He falls back, however, on Kant's imperative to treat persons as "ends in themselves" (p. 93). This seems odd, if one rejects universally valid moral principles while claiming that an effective and viable moral code will have universalizable requirements or principles which apply irrespective of persons (p. 94). Perhaps a simple example can be used to clarify the oddity. If stealing is wrong, then it is wrong no matter who does it or how much is stolen. In this case, application of a principle to all is universal. On the other hand, Pratte advocates care, concern, and tolerance (p. 90). How much care, concern, or tolerance can be justified? Do we become tolerant of thieves? How about scoundrels and tyrants? Can we honestly respect mass murderers? The answer is that we respect them as persons while deploring their immoral acts. We punish thieves and murderers but we do so with concern and benevolence (pp. 107-109).

Although Pratte goes to some length to explicate such concepts as "person" and "respect" (p. 101) he seems to agree with W.B. Gallie that some concepts, especially normative ones, are essentially contested (p. 101). Applying moral principles with concern and tolerance and striving to make punishment fit the circumstance of the offense raises questions of fairness. Can unequal treatments of whatever kind be rationally justified? Pratte cites the U.S. Public Law 94-142 called Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 as a case of unequal treatment. He does not consider the educational benefits or educational faults of the act but only justification for it in terms of least restricted environment (p. 111). Finally, he uses the distinction between respect and esteem to show that educators should respect all persons but bestow esteem only where it is due (pp. 118-122).

The mediating factors in moral life for Pratte seem to be concern, caring, and toleration. These are the topics, along with self-development, that comprise chapter 5. The theme is that teachers need to be reasonable, concerned, caring, and tolerant people if they are to cultivate these same dispositions in their students (p. 123). It seems that "modelling," as Pratte calls it, is fundamental to teaching moral dispositions. In short, as long believed, morals are best taught by example and by doing rather than by formal instruction or moral preachment. Nevertheless, Pratte strongly advocates an ethical ideal, not merely for personal life but for social life as well. This ideal, he believes, is best illustrated in prosocial behavior and community service (pp. 147-155). In this regard, he attempts to unify what he believes are disparate normative traditions, individual morality, and social justice (p. 155).

In the third part Pratte attempts to use analytic methodology and values in dealing with education. He explicates the meanings of "education," "schooling," and "indoctrination." There are, of course, different meanings in different contexts of use. There are also a number of justifications for each context. Pratte does not critically examine definitions of concepts to show partisan uses or meanings but he goes to some length to justify education. He analyzes the concept of "schooling" and notes that the actual conduct of schooling was compulsory, sequential, and selective

(p. 174). He could have noted bureaucratic management and political control of public schooling. He does speak of a public school monopoly (p. 175). He does notice some of the failures of recent school reform efforts (p. 177).

Whatever schools may be or do, their central features are teachers, students, and a curriculum. Using A with or without B, Pratte shows that there can be education without schooling and schooling without education (pp. 180-189). He also points out that schooling often includes indoctrination. Pratte, like many philosophers of education, expresses his dislike for implanting religious or political views in students (p. 183). He does admit, however, that indoctrination is a form of teaching that is not always a bad thing, however indefensible indoctrination would be (p. 184). Pratte does not make clear when indoctrination is defensible or just how and when it should be avoided. His further analysis of the concept centers upon beliefs, especially disputatious ones (p. 186). Finally, he seems to think that students are not indoctrinated if they remain open-minded about issues, no matter what the teacher intended (pp. 188-189). On the other hand, he clearly believes that indoctrinators are "betrayers of the young" (p. 190).

From indoctrination the author leads his readers into old questions about meeting student needs, utilizing interest, and maintaining discipline. By analysis he distinguishes "needs" from "wants" (pp. 197-204) and identifies a normative and a psychological meaning for the concept of "interest" (pp. 206-208). Using A with or without B, he shows where "interest" and "attention" are and are not logically related in each of the two senses of "interest" (pp. 208-212). The concept "discipline" is analyzed to show its different meanings such as good order, punishment, and control as well as "discipline" as subject matter and as self-imposed regulation (pp. 217-227).

From discipline the author moves into chapter 8 entitled "Authority, Power, and Freedom." Again analysis of concepts precedes discussion of their uses in education. How authority, power, and freedom are used in schools has moral or normative consequences. This leads to further

consideration of human dignity, respect for persons, concern, caring, and tolerance. Authority, power, and freedom bring to mind questions of authoritarianism and indoctrination. Pratte uses distinctions between being *an* authority and being *in* authority and between expert authority and authoritarianism in discussing the role of teachers and school personnel (pp. 239-240). The role of teachers in relation to students and to administrators is examined.

Authority in paternalistic institutions such as schools follows from the functions of authority and power with regard to child care and schooling of the young. Pratte analyzes concepts such as "paternalism," "privacy," and "rights." The problem of justifying paternalism with attending restrictions of freedom and curtailing rights turns about the immaturity of school children and the inherent imposition of schooling by uses of authority and power of school personnel. Privacy is called an important aspect of personhood and self-development (pp. 283-286); however, schools as custodial institutions do not often respect privacy of individuals. Pratte explores both the moral and legal right to privacy which leads to analysis of other rights and to the role of teachers in respecting rights of students.

Viewing the book as a whole, it is a large and detailed work in philosophy of education, even a textbook on one kind of philosophy of education. It is, however, a book that teachers, school administrators, and school board members should study. Pratte has brought many years of experience and a thorough knowledge of philosophy of education to bear upon schooling.

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