CHAPTER SEVEN

WHAT A DIFFERENCE AN IDEOLOGY MAKES: AN ALTERNATIVE PEDAGOGICAL ORIENTATION TO NEOLIBERAL VALUES IN EDUCATION

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> The neoliberal joke:
> Marxist: "The workers have nothing to sell but their labor power."
> Neoliberal: "I offer courses on How to Sell Your Labor Power Like a Shark."
>
> Paul Treanor

1. Introduction

Teaching in neoliberal times is becoming an exercise in coercion. At its most fundamental, it is a reflection of resource management within a framework of trickle down oppression whereby the supposed collective goals relative to a democratic approach to education are subsumed under a fast capitalist umbrella. Societies built on visions of democratic self-determination are being warped by the pride of the individual to attain and as a result teaching, too, is being transformed into a "teleological model of action [that] provides only for actors who are oriented to their own success" (Habermas 1977, 4). In neoliberal times is every student, teacher, and administrator for themselves.

Neoliberalism itself is the wild child of classical liberalism. A product of the 1980's Regean and Thatcher years, it has been an ideological coupling of liberalism with capitalist economic policies on a global scale,

emphasizing the free rule of the market, the cutting of public expenditures for social services, deregulation, privatization, and the virtual elimination of the concept of "the public good" or "community" (Martinez and Garcia 2000). It has radicalized individual liberty to include commercial liberty within a free market oriented to "the talented and their enterprises" (Thorsen and Lie 2006, 16). Unlike classical liberalism, which "equates self-interest with the general good and freedom with the pursuit of individual happiness" (Powell 1999, 61), the notion that economic liberty will bring about political liberty and therefore democracy are stripped away in the neoliberal world. Democratic ideals of egalitarianism and universalism have no purchase when the market has taken center stage to a citizenry of consumers (Giroux 2005; MacKinnon 2007). As a result, the individual's positioning in society is associated with his or her conformity to consumerist values, a revival of social Darwinism that puts a capitalist spin on the cultural and historical landscape, blurring distinctions between personal autonomy and group empowerment as the market becomes controller-comptroller for all human action (Purpel 1989; Treanor 2005; Rosanvallon 2006). In other words, neoliberalism is more than just economic policy or political philosophy; it is a highly saleable ideology that is building profit-oriented inroads into every aspect of our experience.

We can see evidence of the neoliberal influence in the manifestation of education policies, such as the United States' No Child Left Behind Act (2001), that are producing forms of schooling that (1) discount intrinsic motivation as superfluous to performance goals, (2) are indifferent to student and teacher interest relative to content objectives, and (3) abandon awareness and concern with regard to student and curricular diversity in favor of an official standard for who and what counts. It is the business of schooling where the profession of teaching is no longer a skill, an art or a calling but a fee for service to train and test children from a stunted, mind-numbing curriculum inextricably bound to socially and culturally constructed and constricted consumerist values that suffer under resource controls and institutional efficiency constraints.

It is the goal of this paper to begin to open the door to alternative principles and praxis for teachers by wedging a toe of possibility into teaching that can lay claim to a classroom with a view of teaching as a conjoined moment of teaching-learning from an ideological alternative to neoliberal values. I explore what it might be to reclaim a democratic stance towards teaching and learning and to look towards a fusion of teacher and learner horizons within the activity of teaching and learning. Consequently I revisit the Deweyan notions of democracy and participation, as well as his rebuttal to a Cartesian context for teaching that abdicates the role of

desire and interest, and I offer an emancipatory ideological perspective as an alternative to current neoliberal values. It is one that is complementary to a praxis that takes seriously learning as a social and cultural activity that begins in the company of the other and takes place within a shared form of communication. It is in this place of shared pursuit that both psychology and philosophy deepen our understanding of pedagogical activity by examining the learning process from the Vygotskian perspective of how psychological phenomena develop while applying Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy of human understanding. Here teaching-learning can be situated as a hermeneutic activity that takes place as a Vygotskian zone of proximal development emerges and a Gadamarian fusion of horizons for teacher and learner occur. It is an approach to pedagogy that tentatively positions teaching as a democratic-hermeneutic activity whereby the teaching-learning moment is viewed as a democratizing experience that is transformative for both teacher and student.

2. Neoliberal Technologies of Control: An American Example

An example of the neoliberal influence on schooling is in the technological control manifest through the United States' state mandated, standardized testing practices. A direct result of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) this federal education policy requires that the states conduct annual assessments of student proficiency relative to grade level content standards. These assessments are marketed as tools to ensure that "the law establishes accountability for results and improves the inclusiveness and fairness of American education" (U.S. Department of Education 2004; ii). For example, testing results are disaggregated for particular categories of children, "subgroups of those students defined by race/ethnicity, poverty level, disability, and English language proficiency", in order "to ensure that children who are performing poorly are not lost in averages of achievement results" (U.S. Department of Education 2004, 22).

However, disaggregated data can also ensure that scores for categories of students, particularly those who are expected to fail the commercially prepared demonstrations of banked knowledge, can be clearly excised from the overall results. Created by "producing specialized identities for disadvantaged learners" within "the new market-oriented 'performance culture'" (Muller et al., discussing Bernstein 2004, 5) this ability to adjust results takes on enormous importance as decisions regarding the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) of schools and thus the dissemination of public

funds rides on those scores. Schools not meeting the AYP accountability standards may be sanctioned fiscally—ultimately they may even be subject to federal interventions that can range from state takeover to school closure.

Consequently jobs are in jeopardy if scores do not reveal the appropriate bang for the buck. Indeed, individual teachers are being held accountable for student scores on these snapshot trials, changing the ethical fabric of the teaching profession. When one person is held liable for another's actions, responsibility shifts. And when this responsibility becomes linked to a rewards program such as the proposed Teacher Incentive Fund[1], a "strategy to reward teachers and principals for improving student academic achievement" (U.S. House, Education & Workforce Committee 2005), schooling begins to take on a corporate patina. Thus, these "high stakes" testing practices not only beg the question of who and what counts when it comes to accountability, but also who gets to benefit and how much.

Literally, the business of testing has become a testing business. The United States Government Accounting Office (GOA) has estimated that between fiscal years 2002–2008 the total expenditures for the tests themselves and their scoring will range between 1.9 billion and 5.3 billion dollars depending the way they are formatted and scored (GOA 2003). For the most part, these tests are being provided by privately owned multinational companies that deal in the manufacture and scoring of the tests. In 2005 CTB McGraw-Hill lead the pack with contracts in 23 states, Harcourt Assessment followed with contracts in 18 states, and Pearson Education had overtaken Riverside Publishing (12 contracts) with contracts in 13 states (Miner 2005). And if the names are familiar, they should be; there is not much corporate distance between *test* producers and

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[1] The proposed Teacher Incentive Fund is designed to stimulate closer alignment of teacher compensation systems with better teaching, higher student achievement, and high-need schools. The Fund would provide $450 million in State formula grants to reward effective teachers and to offer incentives for highly qualified teachers to teach in high-poverty schools. The remaining $50 million would fund competitive grants to State educational agencies, LEAs, and non-profit organizations for the design and implementation of *performance-based compensation systems* to develop effective models that other districts could adopt to improve teacher compensation systems. (U.S. Department of Education 2005; italics added).

text producers. Pearson Education, for example, is under the umbrella of Pearson, the "international media company" with "valuable brands in publishing" and over 8.5 billion dollars in total sales for 2006 and it has been rapidly expanding its school testing contracts: 20% + growth in this area for 2005 as well as "strong growth and continued share gains" for 2006 (Pearson 2007).

Not surprisingly purveyors of classroom texts are also competing to assemble textbooks to reflect the content of high stakes tests while also mapping—and thereby shaping—the education standards onto the text content (Gluckman 2002; Brantlinger 2006). Pearson Education, for example, also includes Pearson Digital Learning which sells SASIxp, a software marketed as the "*infrastructure for a completely integrated data-driven district*" and offers not only reports for administrators that "can validate district-wide performance and apply improvement programs at school, subgroup, and individual levels to increase AYP", but can bring state standards together with aligned content, offer lesson plans, test items, and other teacher resources that range from instructional supports to student monitoring tools for a "mastery prescription" to improve test results (Pearson 2007). Indeed, the entire test preparation niche has opened up as parents, teachers, and schools look to improve high school, middle school, and even elementary school students' scores on these high stakes, state mandated, standardized tests. As a result, it is little wonder "that capitalist controlled mass communication would publicize low scores, condemn teachers, construct students/workers as intellectually and morally inferior, and recommend business-oriented measures to correct problems they identify" (Brantlinger 2006, 210).

Business is booming as the schooling market is driven by the hysteria accompanying well-crafted crises in education. Education policies such as the No Child Left Behind Act are drafted and recrafted in a burgeoning global neoliberal environs that is fraught with "discourse technologies that place the producer firmly in the authoritative position" (Fairclough 1989, 222). Techniques such as rebranding by a "semantic sleight-of-hand" (Harper 2006) – consider the phrasing of "No Child Left Behind", the most recent reauthorization and renaming of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) - ply the public with a rhetoric of sincere concern while simultaneously subjecting this self-same citizenry to divisive and disruptive methods of control that terrorize through fear of failure and taunt with fiscal stick and carrot. It is not surprising that pedagogy in neoliberal times is less about teaching to promote children's development and self-empowerment than about sanctioning a form of narcissistic achievement through consumption and reproduction of prefabricated

curriculum. Under this cookie cutter approach to teaching and learning there is no connection between mind and activity, no social or cultural obligations beyond self and as a result "[m]isfortune in this discourse does not arouse the obligations of citizenship but is relegated to the status of an individual weakness" (Giroux 2005, 6).

As teachers, we can choose to digest this neoliberal dogma, to consume and be consumed ideologically, or we can bite back at the hand that feeds us by considering ways to uncouple from the underlying neoliberal values that necessarily play out in our classrooms. We can consider seriously the possibility for reclaiming an ethics of teaching.

3. Teaching Unplugged―Possible in Theory

Reclaiming an ethics of teaching in neoliberal times is about beginning a dialogue that considers real the possibility that teachers and learners can engage in ways of schooling that are not tied to an ideology based on free market values. Neoliberal ideology capitalizes on "technologies of governance [that] rely heavily on the market as the basis for, and logic behind, public policy. They are founded on the devolution of management from the state to local level, to local institutions; to classrooms and to the individual level" (Moos 2004, 3). That is, the hierarchy of the education system is subordinate to the drive of the market and therefore accepts the reproduction of market driven "language, rules, norms, symbols, and metaphors, and one's position in the division of social relations as natural, normal, and unquestioned" (Kanpol 1992, 9). As a result, schooling "reproduces the conditions for its own reproduction, that is, 'the conditions in which the reproducers were produced'" (Gallagher, discussing Bourdieu and Passeron's *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* 1992, 247) and teachers, as anonymous products of neoliberal manufacture, mechanically weave their students into the warp and woof of its social, political and economic fabric. And if this smacks of an objectivist, functionalist understanding of teacher and learner agency―it is. The neoliberal blueprint for the activity of teaching and learning is dogmatically clear suggests Giddens: "meaningful action is activity oriented to rules - where knowledge of those rules provides the 'reasons' for the conduct [to be] engaged in" (Giddens, discussing Winch 1984, 218) …and perpetuated.

However, possibility, indeed hope, can begin to emerge when we seek to go beyond *understanding* goal-oriented actions within teaching and learning activity, particularly as a relationship between observable

behavior and rules, and engage in seeking *explanations* that consider actions as embedded in teaching and learning activity, taking into account the links between mind, activity, and the external world (Leont'ev 1979; Minick 1997). In this manner, teaching and learning in neoliberal times can be investigated theoretically as teaching and learning activity in a Vygotskian-based sense. That is, teaching and learning that can be investigated as a hermeneutic activity, where hermeneutics is *the way* we understand—a concept that includes interpretation, understanding, and appropriation—rather than a hermeneutics as simply *a way to* understand or a method (Gadamer 1960/2004).

Briefly, Vygotskian inspired activity theory is a conceptualization of human activity which is manifold in nature. The origins of activity theory are to be found in the Russian cultural- historical approach to psychology originating early in the 20th century in the work of Vygotsky, Leont'ev and, later, Luria (Engeström and Miettinen 1999). Many have expanded on their ideas (e.g. Gal'perin 1976; Engeström 1987; Engeström and Cole 1993), but central to activity theory in general is its philosophical foundations in the work of Kant, Hegel, and, most importantly, Marx. Specifically, Marx laid the foundation for activity theory in his conceptualization of a dialectical relationship between the subject/person(s) and the object of interest wherein synthesis is achieved in practical-critical activity—literally labor—the actual human transformation of reality through goal-directed actions (Lektorsky 1977; Engeström and Miettinen 1999). That is, by orienting our understanding of human activity as transformative in nature we can consider the way we incorporate what originates as abstract and ideal en route to a materialization of our goals. This is not a restatement of cause and effect, rather it is a by no means guaranteed process of materialization that includes the object of our goal-directed actions—what it is we wish to change—and the tools we use to support our work—mediating tools such as language or even particular artifacts. Furthermore, we, the object(s) of change, and the mediating tool(s) are all culturally and historically infused. So, too, the practical and revolutionary process-activity in which we engage in is culturally and historically situated for if we pull back our lens, to take in the larger frame, all human activity can be considered from overarching cultural and historical contexts, being located in time and space (Davydov 1999; Lekorsky 1999); in the places of lived experience.

Adding a hermeneutic analysis of teaching and learning not only brings a conscious awareness of this cultural and historical quality of being but also includes, as necessary, an analysis of actions within teaching and learning activity that may be unexpected: those "unanticipated conditions

and unintended consequences" which may in turn be part of the "unacknowledged conditions of system reproduction" (Giddens 1984, 221–224). Thus, a hermeneutic analysis of the goal-oriented actions within teaching and learning activities can begin to explain the particular ways schooling is structured as an "unintended consequence of purposive actions" (Haugaard, on Giddens 2002, 148). The approach is one that seeks to "identify the different factors, including the epistemological, sociological, cultural, and linguistic factors, that condition the process of interpretation" (Gallagher 1992, 5) and give meaning to our everyday actions and activities. As a result, explanations of schooling structures can include the meanings that are played out by and through the structures, from the most mundane activities to the patently obvious. Consequently, if our actions are meaningful only insofar as they grant egocentric desires then, so too, are the structures given the same means-ends definition. Thus a hermeneutic analysis can direct our awareness of neoliberal values by drawing our attention to the importance of everyday ways of being that go unacknowledged by virtue of their everydayness (Giddens 1984).

Linking activity theory with hermeneutic analysis opens up possibilities to explore and explain the manifestation of neoliberal values in teaching and learning as they are unexpectedly revealed in motives linked to goal-oriented actions within the activity of teaching and learning. It can reveal a neoliberal consciousness that is played out via a variety of different factors in the external, practical activities of schooling where "external activities" are

1. inclusive of the self in the way that Garrison suggests of Deweyan activity theory, that there is an "essential unity of the self and its acts" (Garrison quoting Dewey 2001, 282) but
2. also, as Leont'ev states, the "transition of the process into a product" that is not limited to the subject view, but in fact "occurs more clearly form the point of view of the object that is transformed by human activity" (Leont'ev 1979, 49).

Hannah Arendt captures the unity that Dewey and Leont'ev seem to struggle with:

> Whatever touches or enters into a sustained relationship with human life immediately assumes the character of a condition of human existence... Whatever enters the human world of its own accord or is drawn into it by human effort becomes a part of the human condition. The impact of the world's reality upon human existence is felt and received as a conditioning force. The objectivity of the world - its object- or thing-character - and the human condition supplement each other; because human existence is

conditioned existence, it would be impossible without things, and things would be a heap of unrelated articles, a non-world, if they were not the conditioners of human existence. (Arendt 1958, 9).

Thus, in the case of teaching and learning, an awareness of our ideological orientation to praxis, how praxis is realized through that ideological frame, becomes of particular consequence to an ethics of teaching in neoliberal times. Accordingly to unplug from current teaching and learning practices, steeped in individual egoism and tied to rigid hierarchies of power, must be to consciously make a counterhegemonic choice for an alternative pedagogical orientation that takes seriously the role of ideology and how this ideology is connected to our everyday ways in the classroom. Further, I suggest that this is particularly bound in our language: the primary mediating means of our mode of being in the context of teaching and learning.

One alternative, then, is to return to an understanding of education based on a democratic ideology that includes genuine collaborative practice as a point of reference, one that effectively privileges neither teacher nor learner, and is also amenable to the plasticity of teacher and learner roles as unfixed and mobile in the dialogic and dialectical process of the teaching-learning moment. This "connection between the attainment of freedom and the consciousness of some larger, encompassing whole" is the basis of a teaching ethic that Greene (1988) suggests is "variously expressed most particularly in the work of Marxists (or those influenced by Marx) and of John Dewey" (Greene 1988, 40) and, I would add, in the work of the Hans-Georg Gadamer and other hermeneuticists such as Shaun Gallagher, Anthony Giddens, and Hannah Arendt.

This is not to say that there isn't much to debate on what is distinguishing and potentially even contradictory in the larger bodies of Marxist-influenced activity theory, Deweyan pragmatics, and Gadamarian hermeneutics. However, as Miettinen points our there appears to be fundamental compatibilities in Vygotsky and Dewey in terms of a "transformative ontology" (Miettinen 2006, 403) and, thereby, I suggest an understanding of epistemology that is under development. That is, it is an epistemology as McLaren suggests "that claims to unite theory and practice" provoking a dynamic understanding of knowledge where movement can generate a "transformation of existing social institutions" that could achieve greater freedom and justice (McLaren 1994, 308). Miettinen also suggests that both Deweyan pragmatism and activity theory have developed approaches that are dialogic in nature (Miettinen 2006, 403).

These elements, transformative ontology, dynamic epistemology and activity that is dialogic in practice are also foundational to a hermeneutic approach and are particularly compatible with Gadamer's conception of the fusion of horizons in dialogue―where the activity of meaningful linguistic engagement is simultaneously dialogic and dialectical in the struggle towards the achievement of understanding. This understanding, in turn, is appropriated and thus reveals the spiral of interpretation, understanding, and appropriation that characterizes the "hermeneutic circle" and which is imparted in the horizon of understanding that each brings to the activity (Gadamer 1960/2004). Miettinen argues that the Deweyan and Vygoskian "ethics of experimental, transformative projects can be contrasted to 'discursive ethics'" [and] the idea of ideal communication or dialogue" such as Gadamer's "dialogue for hermeneutic understanding" (Miettinen 2006, 401). She asserts that in these theories of discursive ethics there is no sense of why individuals might want to engage in dialogue, whereas in the work of Dewey and Vygotsky there is a sense of "shared, object-oriented enterprises" that is also connected to the larger cultural and historical framework of human activity. I think Miettinen misses the mark, however, at least in terms of Gadamer. Hermeneutic "activity" is what we engage in when we engage in dialogic and dialectical activity because our mode of being is expressed via language and, in this sense the question of *why* we might engage in dialogue becomes somewhat irrelevant. Furthermore, hermeneutics takes seriously context and, as such, invokes the cultural and historical embeddedness as the tradition that prevails in dialogic interactions. Indeed I would offer that the condition of human activity as cultural and historical in nature is perhaps one of the most crucial elements in the argument against Cartesian mind-body dualism―a project that Dewey, Vygotsky, and Gadamer each take up from different vantage points.

As a result, I suggest that there may be a basis for compatibility―not duplication―in the work of Dewey, Vygotsky, and Gadamer and that this compatibility is sufficiently congruent to construct an emancipatory ideological perspective of teaching-and-learning as a democratic-hermeneutic activity. Herein teaching-and-learning is conceptualized as a cultural and historical activity involving the company of the other that takes place within a shared form of communication. It is a shared pursuit and can be a democratizing experience that is transformative for both teacher and student. From Dewey we frame our broadest understandings of education as democratic and participatory, noting that there must be a relationship between mind and activity to bring to teaching a desire and interest. Taking this stance, we have the basis for engaging in a Vygotskian

zone of proximal development (ZPD), building learning experiences to promote the development of psychological phenomena. In addition, within the ZPD, human understanding from the hermeneutic circle of interpretation, understanding, and appropriation necessarily includes both the student and the teacher as a Gadamarian fusion of horizons occurs. This theoretical frame begins to offer an alternative to the neoliberal values pervasive in the current teaching and learning ethic… one that can also be revealed in practice.

4. Foundations for a Democratic-Hermeneutic Theory: Democracy's call...

> A large number of human relationships in any social group are still upon the machine-like plane. Individuals use one another so as to get desired results, without reference to the emotional and intellectual disposition and consent of those used.
>
> John Dewey, 1916

In the United States, the seeds of neoliberal moral disengagement in education were initially sown in the 1800's with the common school movement. Horace Mann, champion of this universal form of schooling, viewed the common or public school as an instrument for widespread dissemination of a shared ideology and morality, a collective framework for good living, and a general knowledge that would build unity and equality amongst the American people. However, Mann also saw that there was a fundamental contradiction that presented itself in the common school purpose for he believed, as well, that a democratic and "a free society concerns itself with individuals, not masses" (Cremin 1961/1964, 11).

John Dewey recognized that potentially inherent in this dilemma are relations between individuals and between groups of individuals that may rest upon the positions of power used for exacting certain ends and, as such, when it comes to schooling, how and what we teach may exclude particular people for particular ends. For Dewey, however, this dual nature was not so much a matter of inherent contradictions in the philosophical tenets of the nation but more a matter of the inherited Cartesian penchant for creating binaries. He observed that "mankind [sic] likes to think in terms of extreme opposites" (Dewey 1938/1997, 17) and that "these

various dualisms [can] culminate in a sharp demarcation of the individual minds from the world, and hence from one another" (Dewey 1916/1944, 291). In light of this, Dewey proposed that a democratic education should attempt to realize a vision that unites the seeming duality of a human organism that is a socially, culturally and historically responsive being with this American ideal of the free and uniquely individual citizen. Thus Dewey sought to build a foundation of educational purpose and practice in public education out of a larger consolidated framework for understanding being in nature.

This view did not materialize as a whole and singular philosophy, but evolved and matured. And while he recognized the central relationship between human beings, their material conditions and the social, cultural and historical nature of the interaction, Dewey's understanding of how to negotiate the changes wrought by industrialism was, initially, to impose upon the schools the responsibility of replacing the traditional family based, agrarian model of education. As a result, Dewey's progressive education has sometimes been understood as more of a precursor to vocational education. Yet his early work also included the germ of the more comprehensive and intertwined philosophy of life and education that was to emerge in his later works. As a response to what he likely saw as a social life that "had undergone a thorough and radical change under the impact of industrialism" Dewey espoused that "if education is to have any meaning for life, it must pass through an equally complete transformation" (Cremin, quoting Dewey from his 1899 work *The School and Society* 1961/1964, 17). In other words, "the learning in school should be continuous with that out of school" (Dewey 1916/1944, 358); education needed to evolve, become immersed and integrated within the theoretical context of the whole of lived experience. Hence a democratic education, for Dewey, may be understood as a framework for the teaching, learning and development of the child with regard to his or her lived experience of individual freedom as it is intrinsically bound to the social, cultural and historical positioning of one's being in nature.

This resonates with both Vygotsky and Gadamer. In terms of Vygotsky, the initial connection between Vygotsky and Dewey is most clearly established, as Langford (2005) suggests, via the influence of Hegel. If we harken back to Hegel, it will always be in community that the ethics of the individual person are brought into forming, for the individual person is but a part of his or her community, the community being the true individual (Hegel 1910/1967, 497). Herein, "[t]he individual [person] is *implicitly* universal" in so far as he or she is a part of the whole and the whole, or community, is the actual universal (Stace 1924/1955, 425) and

synthesis is arrived at in *becoming.* As synthesis, *becoming* is process and product that is socially, culturally and historically sustained. More to the point, if we consider the cultural and historical nature of being, wherein *becoming* is synthesis, the individual person can really never be accounted for outside of the historical process—which is material in nature. Hence the individual person is conceived of as always *becoming* in material circumstances *and all that this implies.* For Vygotsky, this synthesis is development (Vygotsky 1978, 73) and development occurs on the heals of learning for

> an essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment…once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement. (Vygotsky 1978, 90)

Thus the cognitive and affective development of the individual is a social achievement. It follows that education can be conceived of as a social, cultural, and historical process-activity, a living process-activity, involving teacher, student, and forms of mediation such that the educational process in fact becomes "tool-and-result". Tool-and-result is characterized by Newman and Holzman as tools that "are inseparable from results in that their essential character (their defining feature) is the activity of their development rather than their function" (Newman and Holzman 1993, 38–9). As Newman and Holzman suggest, it is not that the "tool-and-result" has no function; rather it is when tool-and-result is poached, so as to render the activity into its seemingly constituent parts, that the fundamental nature of the process-activity is lost; the activity becomes misrepresented as causal or functional in character rather than process oriented. As a result when education, the process-activity of learning and development within a schooling framework, is examined from a functionalist point of reference, the process nature of education becomes detached from the institutional goals of school. The resulting institutional casing becomes the functionalist end-product of an education wherein the process becomes somewhat irrelevant in a neoliberal ethic that is interested in results oriented schools where numbers are the bottom line. Thus a Vygotskian approach to schooling that sustains teaching and learning as a process-activity concerned with the engagement of teachers and students in the zone of proximal development is an integral part of a democratic education that is not bowed under the by stacks of test scores acting as final judge and jury of educational quality.

The connection with Gadamer is established in language. For Gadamer language is not merely functional, not merely a reflection of being, "rather, in language the order and structure of our experience itself is originally formed and constantly changed" (Gadamer 1960/2004, 457). Language is our social, cultural, and historically mode of being and it is the "bringing into language" that is our human experience (Gadamer 1960/2004, 456). This is similarly understood by Vygotsky in terms of the process that the student undergoes as he/she is able to verbally externalize only what has been internalized. In other words, interpretation, understanding, and appropriation is revealed in our language. From this perspective, it makes sense to consider Gadamer's horizons of understanding, those horizons that teacher and student each bring to the process-activity of teaching-learning for it is in the dialogic and dialectical nature of a teaching-learning engagement that is within the zone of proximal development that "something emerges that is contained in neither of the partners by himself" (Gadamer 1960/2004, 462). For Gadamer, this is a form of good will where both partners work towards understanding each other in conversation (Gallagher 2002). Here we see reflected Gadamer's conception of productive conversation or dialogue and "although they approach language from different positions, to understand language as necessarily participatory, as Dewey does, or as dialogical, as Gadamer does…bring[s] the two rather close together" (Schmidt 2000, 127).

To align this understanding of language further, particularly in the locus of teaching, is to challenge our traditional notions of teacher authority which forces us to confront the political nature of conversation and what, and therefore who, counts in classroom discourse; it is to accept that pedagogical authority is a social artifact (Gallagher referring to Bruffee and Trimbur, 1992). As such, in the democratic classroom authority does not disappear per se but "teachers retain their authority, not on grounds of traditional justifications (value, truth, proximity to great minds or authors), but as 'conservators *and* agents of change'" (Gallagher and Bruffee in Gallagher 1992, 314). This begins to dissolve the aporia seemingly inherent in a classroom conceived of as emancipatory and democratic yet somehow subjugated by an authority—for the learner is also an authority in this sense.

Nicholas Burbules clarifies. In reflecting on Plato's *Meno,* Burbules discusses aporia, a state akin to puzzlement that leaves us somewhat immobilized; we don't know where to go next. He adds, that for Socrates, this moment is "where a misconception has been exposed, stripped away, and where a clean terrain now exists for the reconstruction of true knowledge" (Burbules 1997). The concept of aporia here is doubly

relevant. First, in addressing what Gadamer would consider our prejudgments in our way of understanding what is possible *in* classrooms and secondly, in addressing our way of understanding what is possible for and between the teacher and the learner.

The former opens us up to the idea that sites of learning do not have to be foundationalist, but can be hermeneutic in orientation. That is, schooling does not have to be bound to deliverables such as big T truth and the-right-answer or, conversely, be damned to a form of relativism. Rather schooling can embrace a more hermeneutic stance that opens a door to learning in dialogue, integrating

1. a rich understanding of the limitations and possibilities of human understanding itself;
2. an informed but fallible conviction or (convictions) about how human understanding might now best be advanced; and
3. teaching as a way of life, [with] the integrity of education as a critical and constructive practice [as] distinguished from both theoretical and coercive undertakings. (Hogan and Smith 2003, 174)

This resonates with Dewey's definition of democratic education in terms of dialogue or participatory communication when he underscores that "a democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (Garrison, quoting Dewey 1916c/1980 cp.93, 1995, 730).

Dewey also stipulates that for the experience to be productive it cannot be beyond the realm of what is familiar: "[i]t is also essential that the new objects and events be related intellectually to those of earlier experiences" (Dewey 1938/1997, 75). Here "what is familiar" is not merely oriented to content but is also concerned with what learning has propelled in terms of psychosocial development. In other words, there must be an alignment to what has already been appropriated—the "condition of its possibility " (Gadamer 1960/2004, 472)—and an alignment to "those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation….the ""buds" or "flowers" of development rather than the "fruits" of development" (Vygotsky 1978, 86). As a result, the teaching- learning moment for Dewey, as for Gadamer and Vygotsky, is a culturally and historically saturated social process-activity wherein one of the goals is to further enhance the interconnectedness of the participants through and with the substance of the experience. Thus education is not an internal process nor is it simply a training of the brain, but it is psychosocial development through a form of connectedness that facilitates interpretation,

understanding, and appropriation such that learning promotes the development of mind.

Therefore the possibility of a *curricular authority* must also be attended to. This is not to deny or simply displace teacher knowledge and experience; rather it is to deny privilege to a rigid, static, content-driven practice that is replicated time and again irrespective of the lived experience of either teacher or learner. It is, again, to address a notion of schooling as tied to deliverables and it is to abhor "the vice of externally imposed ends" which denies teacher intelligence and experience, resulting in a rift that ripples across the classroom as the teacher in prevented from allowing "his[sic] mind come to close quarters with the pupil's mind and the subject matter" (Dewey 1916/1944, 108–9). This systemic distrust of the teacher is further absorbed by the student who disengages—though appearance may suggest surrender. Here Dewey's vision of classrooms shackled to the authority of the curriculum and merely filled with spectators to the content forespeaks of the neoliberal project. It is a form of schooling that denigrates teachers and positions learners as interlopers, as the routine of mechanized performances by the participants arrests any growth (Dewey 1916/1944, 53). Here it is important to distinguish a schooling experience from education, as "some experiences are mis-educative"; that is, not every experience in school is productive of development (Dewey 1938/1997, 25).

Consequently the teaching-learning moment must be cultivated with an accessible, adaptable, and adjustable curriculum in order for the shared experience to be conducive to growth. It must provide fertile ground for the mental developmental of *both* teacher and learner and therefore must be conducive to an experience that distributes the role of teacher and learner; teachers and learners functioning as learners and teachers. It follows, then, that the teaching-learning moment becomes transformational due to the integrity of the experience as fundamentally emancipatory in its foundation of equity and pragmatism. It demands that teachers engage in these teaching-learning moments in ways that apply affordances to the learner *and to themselves.* In this democratic, emancipatory form of education teachers must become historically self-conscious and epistemologically inquisitive at multiple levels, too, as they engage in the activity of teaching to develop student minds by preparing activities at a level where learning is "budding" (Vygotsky 1978), that is,

> within the range of existing experience that have the promise and potentiality of presenting new problems which by stimulating new ways of observation and judgment will expand the area of further experience. The

educator more than the member of any other profession is concerned to
have a long look ahead (Dewey 1938/1997, 75).

Thus the teacher must be ever cognizant "that the content of past time has
"a future reference and function" (Dewey 1922b, 46) and that "the true
object of a judgment *about* a past event may be a past-event-having-a-
connection-continuing-into-the-present-and-future" (Dewey 1922b, 43).
Indeed, it is to be mindful, to avoid the "banking" approach to content
(Freire 1970/2003) and strive for teaching-learning that deepens
psychosocial development as witnessed in transfer of abstract knowledge
across domains and as well the enriching the breadth and depth of
understanding within domains.

Accordingly, in terms of curriculum, it asks teachers to "place the
heritage from the past in its right connection with the demands and
opportunities of the present" (Dewey 1916/1944, 75). This is echoed in a
hermeneutic stance towards activity embracing curriculum and teaching-
learning as an instantiation of understanding, interpretation and
appropriation (Bernstein 1982, 823). As a result, it is a framework for
education that requires an ethic of courage that traverses through the
positioning of self as teacher for, in the context of a dynamically realized
curriculum, an enduring experience of self as learner is required.
Furthermore, it demands openness to the conceptualization of learners and
teachers as inquirers and interpreters within a horizon that fuses anew the
teaching-learning process-activity. For Dewey it is

> [t]he generous self [that] consciously identifies itself with the full range of
> relationships implied in its activity, instead of drawing a sharp line between
> itself and considerations which are excluded as alien or indifferent; it
> readjusts and expands its past ideas of itself to take in new consequences as
> they become perceptible. (Dewey 1916/1944, 352)

And it is this formative "organic connection between education and
personal experience" (Dewey 1938/1997, 25) where "education is a
development within, by, and for experience" (Dewey 1938/1997, 28) that
builds in the teacher the moral knowledge that teaching and learning are
not disengaged in experience.

However, as Dewey was later to emphasize, in the wake of laissez faire
approaches to education, freedom is power only insofar as it is the creation
of the power of self-control as a means towards framing purpose,
evaluating consequences, executing wise judgments, and selecting and
ordering means to ends (Dewey 1938/1997, 64). He lamented "the fact that
so many persons have callings which make no appeal to them, which are

pursued simply for the money reward that accrues" and as a consequence "neither [their] hearts nor their minds are in their work" (Dewey 1916/1944, 317). This proclamation reflects Dewey's deep concern for a separation of mind from activity, for such a dualism is reflected in a theory of morals and "takes the form of a sharp demarcation of the motive of action from its consequences and of character from conduct" (Dewey 1916/1944, 346).

And, in point of fact, it is this dualism that undergirds the neoliberal education project; it is a citizenship of disengagement in that it separates the teacher and learner from activity that is product oriented, "in a way which emphasizes simply the immediate thing tangibly done, irrespective of the spirit of thought and desire in which it is done, and irrespective therefore of its effect upon other less obvious doings" (Dewey 1916/1944, 350). It denies the continuity of experience and the interaction of the situation. It denies the promise of growth and development for both teacher and learner by removing their connection to and their interest in all that is encased in the teaching-learning moment, including each other. As a result, it elevates the authority of principles and curriculum in order to get the job done.

On the other hand, the true call to teach is one that is emancipatory in that it brings mind and activity together, promoting in the teacher the "freedom of observation and of judgment exercised in behalf of purposes that are intrinsically worth while" (Dewey 1938/1997, 61). It demands courage, however, the courage to learn in order to teach for it is to embrace with the learner the teaching-learning moment as an honest experience with common purpose and understandings, and not one in which there is a robotic end result. It is teaching that lives beyond the authority of an academic content that wool-gathers upon the sill of the mind; it involves learning as an extension of reason to the ridge of possibility rather than "the domination of thought by the inertia of immemorial customs" (Dewey 1922a, 323).

Thus Dewey saw teaching and learning as a democratic activity wherein teacher and learner interact with a dynamic curriculum in a way that begins to erase the traditional line between the teacher and the learner. Dewey proposed that "in such shared activity, the teacher is a learner, and the learner is, without knowing it, a teacher - and upon the whole, the less consciousness there is, on either side, of either giving or receiving instruction, the better" (Dewey 1916/1944, 160). However, this does not happen productively when the hierarchical power structures that may exist in *any* social relationship override the "sharing of purposes" (Dewey 1916/1944, 5). Therefore in the teaching-learning moment, as in all

relationships, there must be a leveling of the hierarchical roles—an equalization—in order to work towards a common horizon. That is, the opportunity for learning and development can only take place when the shared experience includes social humility and mutual respect.

5. What is This Teaching-Learning Moment?

When teaching is understood as a democratic- hermeneutic activity, the teaching-learning moment extinguishes hierarchies of traditional authority in an extension of the dialogic and dialectical process involving the fusion of horizons. Here, "understanding is already interpretation because it creates the hermeneutical horizon with which the meaning of a text [broadly construed] comes into force… [that is], to acquire a horizon of interpretation requires a fusion of horizons... [because] the text is made to speak through interpretation. But no text and no book speaks if it does not speak a language that reaches the other person" (Gadamer 1960/2004, 396–7). To be clear, this does not refer to learning per se, but "the concretion of the meaning itself" (Gadamer 1960/2004, 397), for [o]nly the support of familiar and common understanding makes possible the venture into the alien, the lifting up of something out of the alien, and thus the broadening and enrichment of our own experience of the world" (Gadamer 1976, 15).

As a result, the teaching-learning moment as a shared activity is one in which teacher and learner are dialogically and dialectically engaged, both poised to move forward in their cognitive and affective development. It is a process-activity enacted in the Vygotskian zone of proximal development where the ZPD is that difference between what the individual is ready and able to do on their own and what the individual is ready and able to do with another. More particularly, for Vygotsky, it is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky 1978, 86). Vygotsky tells us that the ZPD is revealed in practice "if we offer leading questions or show how the problem is to be solved and the child then solves it, or if the teacher initiates the solutions and the child completes it or solves it in collaboration with other(s)" (Vygotsky 1978, 85). This pushes the frontier of the child's development, with learning leading development (Vygotsky 1978, 89).

However, the teacher's development is also part of the moment as

he/she strives to learn the student. Through interpretation, understanding, and appropriation of the student's level of cognitive and affective development within the context of the domain specific instruction, the teacher is engaged in a form learning appropriate to his/her zone of proximal development under the guidance of the student as they collaborate in the process-activity of education. Here it is important to note that the fusion of horizons is not so much an agreement on the achievement of the student but more the achievement of authentic collaboration itself the results of which have moved both student and teacher forward. Thus the prerequisite to the Vygotskian role of learning must be a hermeneutic understanding for only in this way can the formative "organic connection between education and personal experience" occur (Dewey l938, 25). Recognition of this process builds in the teacher the moral knowledge that teaching and learning are not disengaged in the experience, becoming aware that

> [t]he generous self consciously identifies itself with the full range of relationships implied in its activity, instead of drawing a sharp line between itself and considerations which are excluded as alien or indifferent; it readjusts and expands its past ideas of itself to take in new consequences as they become perceptible. (Dewey 1916/1944, 352)

In other words, teaching as a democratic-hermeneutic activity is bound to the teacher's ZPD as well―not necessarily on the level of curricular content knowledge (although it may be included) ―but on the level of the teacher as pedagogue who, in learning about the learner, with the learner leading, develops.

6. What Could Teaching as a Democratic-Hermeneutic Activity Look Like?

Early in Spring 2006 I completed the data collection phase of a mixed methods research project that involved the participation of four elementary aged children with special needs in the piloting of a high stakes state mandated, standardized assessment of third grade reading and language arts that had been transformed into a dynamic assessment. Simply stated, a dynamic assessment teaches as it tests, promoting cognitive and affective development as learning takes place. Proponents of dynamic assessment agree (eg. Budoff and Friedman 1964; Carlson and Weidl 1978; Feuerstein 1979; Campione, Brown, Ferrera and Bryant, 1984; Palincsar, Brown and Campione, 1991; Spector 1992; PeNa 1992, 2000; Poehner and Lantolf

2003; Haywood and Lidz 2007), for the most part, that the foundation for their research emerges out of the work of Lev Vygotsky and the theory of the zone of proximal development. Thus at the heart of this dynamic standards of learning assessment (DSLA) pilot was the investigation of a process that could reveal how close a child might be to demonstrating grade level proficiency in reading and language arts and, more importantly, what that closeness could reveal about the level of the child's development and the kinds of calculated supports that may be needed to further cognitive development. To do this, the design of the study included

1. a shortened version of a high stakes test as a pretest;
2. the DSLA – an interventionist form of dynamic assessment[2] (videotaped);
3. a posttest (another shortened version of a high stakes test);
4. a reflection discussion - structured interview (audiotaped);
5. a follow-up tutoring session with sub-sessions conducted in interactionist dynamic assessment form (videotaped}; and
6. a final DLSA posttest (videotaped).

The tutoring session was originally included in the research design as part of the ethical responsibility to follow-up with budding points of development that may have been discerned during the DSLA. The session was split into three to four sub-sessions and involved the use of real world texts and several assessments tools.

The following reports some of the case data for Lawrence (pseudonym), one of the young participants in the research project. This case is particularly revealing in the transcription of a portion of the initial sub-session of the tutoring session.

Lawrence

At the time of the data collection portion of the research Lawrence, a male, was 8 years old and in 2nd grade. He had been identified as having an Other Health Impairment (as per the Individuals with Disability Education Improvement Act, 2004), reading and language delays, and auditory processing concerns. He was receiving speech therapy and has received other supports to assist in developing interpersonal skills. His father was working full-time outside the home; mother, a former teacher, was a full-time homemaker. Lawrence had one older brother in general education and

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[2] Interventionist mediations are pre-set whereas interactionist mediations involve the formation of the mediations during the assessment, see Lantolf and Poehner, 2004.

one younger brother at home.

Lawrence's responses to the pretest, DLSA, and posttest assessments, particularly the reading comprehension set of questions, indicated that he was able, with mediation, to demonstrate closeness to the mastery of the strategies that good readers use to consider the texts they are reading and, subsequently, to be able to articulate their understandings—in this case, understandings being structured by assessment questions on narrative elements such as main idea, locating information and prediction. Furthermore, there was indication of learning and development as the reduction of support needed to accomplish similar tasks in subsequent activities was apparent. Lawrence made progress during the research project. However, what was perhaps most striking was what Lawrence and I both learned during the first tutoring sub-session.

The first sub-session began with an exercise that involved articulating perceived simple concepts. I was using simple concepts as a warm up before working with real world texts to engage in strategies that would support an understanding of main idea as something that is common to a whole. In this case, the goal was to find a common something about a series of four somethings. That is, describing what several things had in common, for example: basketball, hockey, tennis, and football l- they're all sports (Jones 2004). I had chosen this activity as more of a warm-up, a fun way to orient to a session that would focus on main ideas and details, but I also thought it might give me insight into the sociocultural background each student brought to the research. The text I used was a static assessment, but I chose to work as much as possible in the child's ZPD thus using the interactionist form of dynamic assessment (Lantolf and Poehner 2004). For Lawrence and me, however, the first sub-session evolved from a warm-up to promoting his understanding of main ideas or common underlying concepts, to the astounding discovery that Lawrence did not realize the difference between guessing and thinking and, once he became aware of the difference, that Lawrence could control his thinking. It was a pivotal moment for Lawrence; he was able to grasp the notion that not only can he think, but he has control over his thinking. Until that point, Lawrence always assumed that answers to questions were guesses—hit or miss.

Lawrence: Guessing

This is an excerpt from the first tutoring sub-session where the assessment turned into a very profound process-activity for us both. This segment picks up near the middle of the assessment. As you read through an excerpt

of the transcript you will see italicized comments in brackets; this is my thinking―me considering what was going on during the activity, which I later added to the transcript as a sort of retrospective verbal protocol. You can see my prejudgments of Lawrence in my reactions and also my task orientation.

Emily: How about... Maine, Florida, Oregon and Utah?

I really don't expect him to know this.

Lawrence: States.
Emily: Yeah, awesome! I didn't know if you would know that one.
Lawrence: Knew it all the time.
Emily: Yeah, so there's some stuff you really know well.
Lawrence: It started in me when I was six.
Emily: You like the states, knowing about the states?

I'm ignoring what Lawrence is saying, staying focused on task-completion and… I'm not really sure what he means.

Lawrence: Yeah, I'm eight now.
Emily: Yeah, so you've been working on that for awhile...Do you know how many states there are?
Lawrence: [5 second pause] No, I don't know. Fifty?
Emily: Yeah! That's right! Fantastic!
Lawrence: That's, that's just my guess.

I've heard Lawrence and I want him to know that this is too coincidental to be a guess. But I am going to stay focused on task-completion.

Emily: You must have based it on some knowledge, something you heard before. Okay, here we go-
Lawrence: I was just going to say fifty-five, but I said fifty.
Emily: Ah, that's good-

I'm ignoring what Lawrence is saying again, staying focused on the task-completion.

Lawrence: Good thing I guessed.
Emily: See, I don't think that's a guess. I think you had it in your brain somewhere. And you found it.

He's beginning to get my attention now. (Note: I've wondered since if I should have said "mind" instead of brain, but I think brain was the easier concept for Lawrence.)

Lawrence: Oh.
Emily: Uh-huh. How about oak, maple, cherry, pine?

But I am still task-completion oriented.

Lawrence: Vegetables.
Emily: Vegetables.
Lawrence: Was it right?
Emily: Well that one actually is trees. But that's an interesting one
               because...
Lawrence: May I have... [unknown]
Emily: You knew it was plants, didn't you?

Whoops… I have overtaken Lawrence with this comment. I want to be in the ZPD now, but I have immediately dropped out of it, overtaking him. In point of fact, I'm now starting to think about this guessing-knowing conversation more. I need to slow down my own thinking and acting.

Lawrence: Yeah
Emily: Yeah.
[pause]
Lawrence: Was I close?

This comment by Lawrence makes me wonder if he is trying to get a sense of what he knows and also trying to see if being close counts.

Emily: Well you got, you got plants so that's a bit better
               than...uh... saying that they were...um..oh... airplanes.
Lawrence: Yeah, let's some more.

He is enthusiastic now. He seems to sense that he can participate in this activity in a different way.

Emily: Okay, here's another one. This is a hard one, though.
               Richmond, New York City, Dallas, and Los Angeles.

Again, I just don't think he'll know this but I also don't want to discourage him. I'm thinking less about task-completion.

Lawrence: Um... cities.
Emily: Yeah, yeah, I'm impressed that you know those things.
Lawrence: Is that the hardest one?

We're both impressed here. Clearly Lawrence knows things that I didn't think he would. And he, too, seems to be realizing that there is value in his thinking here.

Emily: Well, no, that's not the hardest one, but that's a tough one. Not everybody gets that one-
Lawrence: What's the hardest one?
Emily: You want the hardest one?

I'm still not convinced and I'm just going to get it over with.

Lawrence: In here.

He's showing confidence here… I can't believe it!

Emily: Okay. House, hospital, school, church.
Lawrence: Uummm towers...
Emily: That's-

I'm moving quickly because I have already decided that Lawrence just won't know this; it's just too hard. I'm ready to give him some sense of his closeness. I'm moving too fast.

Lawrence: Buildings.
Emily: -interesting.

I'm even talking over him here.

Lawrence: Buildings.
Emily: Buildings! Yeah! That's good!

I'm still thinking more about the answers and not paying close attention to the process that Lawrence is demonstrating, the way he is working now. I'm really surprised that Lawrence could come up with this one. And I do see that he has begun to think out loud, formulating his answer.

Lawrence: And in me-
Emily: That is the hardest one! Not everyone gets that-
Lawrence: I, I think-

(Note: I actually missed this during the activity, the switch to "think". I caught it in a review of the tape.)

Emily: Did you know that?
Lawrence: Did [another child] get that?

Emily: I don't know. I could, well, I can't really tell you what he
                got 'cause that's not really fair, 'cause you wouldn't want
                me telling him what you got, right? But I can tell you-

I know that Lawrence knows another child in the study and wants to compare - Lawrence perceives this child as "smart".

Lawrence: If I had it in my brain.
Emily: That you had in your brain and you pulled it right out. And
                that's awesome because I have grown-ups who didn't get
                that, do you know that? All kinds of-

I want Lawrence to know that he did a great job and should be proud, but I also realize that he is thinking about thinking now, rather than guessing. A shift has happened for Lawrence and I am just realizing it. I need to really slow down now and let the activity develop without worrying about task-completion.

Lawrence: How old were they?
Emily: Like, like people like me, my age. Like people in their
                thirties and forties who wouldn't know that. So that's pretty
                good stuff you've got in your head. You'd be amazed
                what's stuck in there. Got two more and they might be a
                little difficult for you. This one's tricky.
Lawrence: It, it's not the hardest one?
Emily: No it's not the hardest one. You got the hardest one.
Lawrence: Yeah.
Emily: Soccer ball, tennis racket, bat and glove.
Lawrence: That, I don't think that's sports or, no, that's not sports. I
                don't know.

Here the thinking aloud is really evident. Up until this sub-session Lawrence was either unable or unwilling to think out loud even though he had been instructed to do so during the DSLA. He seems confident in voicing his thought process now.

Emily: But you think it might be like sports? How could they be
                connected to sports? Soccer ball, tennis racket, bat and
                glove.

I am in tune with Lawrence's ZPD here - I had to adjust my preconceptions, my prejudices with regard to his understanding of the content, but more importantly I had to learn about his understanding of himself in this kind of activity. What I am attuned to now is his new confidence and awareness. He has discovered enough about himself to

believe that he can actually stop and think about what is going on. We are both more in tune now, our horizons have fused so to speak, as we have a complementary understanding of Lawrence's ability. I know we are working from a common place, each thinking and paying close attention.

Lawrence:	Uummm... basketball.
Emily:	A basketball would fit in there.
Lawrence:	Games...
Emily:	A basketball would be a good choice.
Lawrence:	Practice.
Emily:	So things you practice with... [long pause]. They're all sports things, sports equipment right? I'm really impressed that you came up with basketball... so you knew what these things were.

We've taken our time and Lawrence has gone as far as he is able so I offer him the final connection. That he is able to come up with an example to fit the common idea tells me that he understands.

Lawrence:	Did I get that one right?
Emily:	Well, you got the sports and then I was looking for, like, gear or equipment, but the first thing, you got part of it right, was sports.

Getting "part of it right" is huge for Lawrence. (Note: I've wondered since how much of Lawrence's schooling has been oriented around right and wrong answers.)

Lawrence:	I know, I know baseball is called t-ball.
Emily:	Yeah. But for you to come up with the word basketball was pretty amazing. Okay then, I have one more in this group-

I realize that Lawrence may be able to figure out the commonality by offering another example; I'm not sure if this is due to processing, environment, etc. I may need to give him more words but I want to draw out his understanding as much as possible.

Lawrence:	*Okay.*
Emily:	This is hard.
Lawrence:	Hard.
Emily:	French, Spanish, English, Swahili. What are they?
Lawrence:	U..mmm let me think, I may have that in my brain. Spanish words.

I really notice the use of "think" here… and "brain". He is trying to self-mediate. I'm going to pick up on what he says.

Emily:	Like Spanish words, French words, English and Swahili, what are they all?
Lawrence:	Uh...
Emily:	They're all different...
Lawrence:	Dif, different...countries.
Emily:	The countries and what else might they be?
Lawrence:	Dif...ferent... words that they say.
Emily:	That's right and you know what that word is-
Lawrence:	What
Emily:	-when different words and different countries? [pause] Languages.

Again, he is able to work through more, to think out loud. I didn't give him another example; he talked around the common idea, gave a definition rather than just another example.

Lawrence:	Did I get that one right?
Emily:	Well you got the idea right, yes. So now I'm giving you the word to call it which is languages. So you know, what you've got, is you've got all this information in your head but sometimes you don't have the exact word. But you've got it in your brain and that's the amazing part.
Lawrence:	You know who's on the one hundred dollar bill? I know him.

Lawrence went on to tell me that it was Benjamin Franklin and launched us into a lengthy discussion about Ben Franklin. This didn't come out of the blue as there was a text on the table, one we were going to read, that had lightning on the cover; the lightning is what he said made him think about Ben Franklin. At one point the discussion took a turn as he considered Franklin's long hair and compared it to Jesus Christ, querying me about my knowledge of men's hair styles from the past.

What became especially interesting during the rest of the study was the ease with which Lawrence began to talk about his thinking. The shift in the way he considered the last two problems of the warm-up reveals the difference in the way Lawrence began approaching the work we did together—he slowed down and gave consideration. As we worked together he was able to articulate his thought processes more and more clearly and even identify when he was, indeed, guessing. However, the research was

not simply about correct answers. By encouraging Lawrence to begin to talk about his thinking during the tutoring sub-sessions that revolved around conversations about real world texts, Lawrence became used to talking out his thoughts, making meaning of the stories, and demonstrating this by attempting to give warrant to his claims. This ability to articulate warranted assertions with regard to the texts we read was also applied to answering test questions about given passages. In our final meeting, during the DSLA posttest, Lawrence actually stopped me, in mid-mediation, because he not only knew the answer but could explain how he came to that understanding.

For my part, I found that I was much more cognizant of Lawrence himself and how we were interacting in our conversations about texts. It was clearly a giving over to the process nature of the activity rather than orienting to task-completion. It was a deliberateness, an acute sense of deep interest to remain within Lawrence's ZPD and be able to stay focused on moving him forward in his learning. As such, Lawrence's participation in the process-activity mediated my learning about him and in this way we were able to engage in a dialogic and dialectical teaching-learning activity.

7. Some Emerging Conclusions

What I suggest this excerpt reveals are the shifts that Lawrence and I needed to make as both of us worked within our respective ZPDs to achieve a fusion of horizons in the teaching- learning moment. This was, in point of fact, a humbling experience for me. It revealed to me, quite dramatically, the prejudgments I had made about Lawrence. And it gave me a glimpse into the possibilities that could be when we can come with purpose to recognize our prejudgments, wrestle with them, and set them aside. It really is to address the nature of one's authority in this process and recognize it for what it should be… guidance and service. This I was able to do with Lawrence's help. It was a collaborative achievement. However, this is an achievement that demands an ideological foundation that is not locked into the deliverables valued by a neoliberal approach to education as a commodity. As the transcript demonstrates, I had a hard time letting go of my task-completion orientation. This remained a struggle for me, particularly when the work became difficult and my energy flagged. To this end, I became more aware of what I was asking of Lawrence as well and it became apparent that there is a need to allow for the ebb and flow of energy in teaching-learning.

To me this is teaching that values engagement with curriculum,

learner, and self in fearless experimentation where "experimentation is something other than blindly trying one's luck or mussing around in the hope that something nice will be the result" (Dewey 1922a, 326). Rather, it is based on judgment as it arises out of experience for "[t]he nature of the past event is subject- matter required in order to make a reasonable judgment about the present or future" (Dewey 1922b, 43). Thus, for me the process of teaching-learning that Lawrence and I engaged in required that I bring all of who I am to bear upon the activity in much the same way that Lawrence, in his innocence, brought.

To do this is to shift the entire overarching framework of education towards a more democratic path wherein the teacher and student have equal status and value, their significance in the process-activity of education equivalent. This requires teaching from interest rather than merely acting on principle wherein the latter is to simply act according to what has become a cookie cutter model of teaching that has little to do with the who and everything to do with the what. In other words, it is to consciously oppose teaching based on a dogmatic adherence to a particular authority that is aside from experience and activity. This is not to say that the act of teaching from interest disregards such principles as emerge from tradition, but rather to embrace teaching-learning as a socially, culturally, and historically self conscious being. Indeed, Dewey cautions that a

> mistake lies in making a separation between interest and self, and supposing that the latter is the end to which interest in objects and acts and others is a mere means. In fact, self and interest are two names for the same fact; the kind and amount of interest actively taken in a thing reveals and measures the quality of selfhood which exists…bear in mind that interest means the active or moving *identity* of the self with a certain object. (Dewey 1916/1944, 352)

Certainly, my engagement with Lawrence demanded that I become more self conscious as both a teacher and a learner. To this end, I believe that the technique of dynamic assessment, one that focuses on activity in the ZPD, is an approach to teaching-learning that facilitates this way of being particularly if one is willing to embrace the minutiae of the teaching-learning moment from a hermeneutic stance. To do so, however, requires a willingness to turn away from self-interest and go beyond a functionalist model of schooling, to set aside the values that neoliberal times are rank with and to engage in education as a democratic-hermeneutic activity.

One teaches and learns who one is and who we are is what is taught and learned. When we have the courage to teach from interest, to guide rather than overtake, it is to practice judgment and to accept the call to

teach and learn that ever transforms as it nourishes the self. It is the courage to learn from a historically self-aware stance in that it reflects the "principle of continuity of experience [which] means that every experience both takes up something from **t**hose which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after" (Dewey 1938/1997, 35). Furthermore, it is to know that "all human experience is ultimately social; that is it involves contact and communication" (Dewey 1938/1997, 38). Thus the courage to teach and learn ethically in neoliberal times is to do so not apart from the learner, but with the learner; for "the wider or larger self...means inclusion instead of denial of relationships [and] is identical with a self which enlarges in order to assume previously unforeseen ties" (Dewey 1916/1944, 352). It is to embrace the "responsibility for understanding the needs and capacities of the individuals who are learning at a given time" (1938, 45–6). Including oneself.

Future research might include a close analysis of discourse to consider the language used in teaching from different ideological perspectives and how this is connected with praxis.

> Only children who have been educated differently from the majority today will support a policy that promises something other than a further increase in the GNP. (V. Hosle 2004)

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