

POSITIVE RESTLESSNESS: RECLAIMING LEARNING FOR DEMOCRACY

Agenda Week 5: October 28, 2008

- 6:00 *Evening's agenda, class housekeeping, and check-in*
- Optional writing conferences with faculty
 - Other items: questions/comments/announcements
- 6:30 *Exploring the complexity of Paulo Freire's "banking conception of education"*
Continuation of work begun last class/review of posters & notes.
- Individual journal writing based on selected quotations from Freire
 - Work group: Listening round followed by discussion
 - Plenary of the whole: questions/comments
- 7:00 *The Schools Our Children Deserve: Moving Beyond Traditional Classrooms and "Tougher Standards" (Alfie Kohn)*
- Examination of specific practices and school structures in relation to Freire and Kohn's insights about education
- 7:45 BREAK
- 8:00 *Group/class check-in: Current ideas for Integrative Papers*
- 8:20 *Getting started on reading John Dewey and tracking his argument through note-taking*
- 9:00 *Can We Talk About Race? (Beverly Daniel Tatum)*
- Conversation circles (around 5 classmates)
 - round robin (one-by-one circle members read the text they selected for their Reading Response papers and briefly summarize "why" they made this selection)
 - circle members agree on starting point for conversation
 - conversation circle discussion
 - in-class writing: emerging insights/questions/puzzles
 - Plenary
- 9:55 *Adjourn*

No class next week Optional conferences with faculty

⇒ please turn over page for this week's Journal Topics

JOURNAL TOPICS: for weeks of Oct 28 – Nov 11: two weeks' worth

(Please note that your journal is due in week #6, either at your writing conference or by some other arrangement with Gillies or Lester)

Because these topics apply to two weeks of journal entries, this list is longer than usual. In addition, we wrote topics that we hope will support and extend your reading of Dewey (ch. 1 and 2) during the two-week interval. The first few topics involve interpreting and responding to specific passages in the Dewey readings.

- In a paragraph describing what he calls “traditional education,” Dewey writes, “The main purpose or objective is to prepare the young for future responsibilities and for success in life...” (18). Clearly Dewey rejects this as a primary purpose of education. What could he object to in such a purpose? What do you think of his argument?
- To oppose the purpose stated above, Dewey suggests the following principle: “...the fundamental unity of the newer philosophy [of education] is found in the idea that there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education” (20). Later Dewey refers to “the organic connection between education and personal experience” (25). What do you think Dewey might envision by such a “unity” between “experience and education”? If you looked into a classroom and saw this “unity” in operation, what might that look like?
- In opposition to the “unity” Dewey envisions, he says, “Any experience is mis-educative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience” (25). What do you think Dewey has in mind with this reference to “arresting” and “distorting”? Think back to the specific teaching practices that Kohn criticizes in last week’s reading. How could those be said to be “arresting or distorting the growth of further experience”? In what ways can Dewey’s description be applied to experiences in your own educational history?
- In the two paragraphs beginning at the bottom of page 26, Dewey focuses on the specific quality of experiences that students (and teachers) find in schooling. Dewey writes of a child’s experience in school, “Everything depends upon the *quality* of the experience which is had” (27). What do you think about Dewey’s emphasis on the *quality* of educational experiences? Is this idea useful to you as you evaluate your past and present educational experiences, or as you look ahead to future ones?
- Dewey mentions two aspects of the *quality* of an educational experience: the “immediate aspects” and the “effects” (27). Later in that paragraph he writes that “every experience lives on in further experiences.” Locate in your educational history one or two specific times when the *quality* of your educational experience seems valuable in the ways implied by Dewey’s comments. Write about those experiences, and focus on describe and evaluate the *quality* of the experience within the framework Dewey outlines.
- In what ways do Dewey’s ideas apply to the principles and practices you have encountered at Evergreen?