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# Generative Community as a Regulative Ideal: The Moral Assessment of Educational Aims and of Educational Policies and Practices

Christopher Allen Peckover  
*University of Iowa*

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**GENERATIVE COMMUNITY  
AS A REGULATIVE IDEAL:  
THE MORAL ASSESSMENT OF  
EDUCATIONAL AIMS AND OF  
EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES**

by

Christopher Allen Peckover

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the  
Doctor of Philosophy degree in  
Educational Policy and Leadership Studies  
(Schools, Culture, and Society)  
in the Graduate College of  
The University of Iowa

August 2013

Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor Christine McCarthy

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Graduate College  
The University of Iowa  
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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PH.D. THESIS

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This is to certify that the Ph. D. thesis of

Christopher Allen Peckover

has been approved by the Examining Committee  
for the thesis requirement for the Doctor of  
Philosophy degree in Educational Policy and  
Leadership Studies (Schools, Culture, and Society)  
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To my family,  
a generative community

Now more than ever, we need vigorous...dialogue about the aims of education so that we might subject present educational policies to critical scrutiny. However, in the U.S. no such serious dialogue seems to be occurring among educators, legislators, policy makers and other informed citizens.

- Michael S. Katz

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## INTRODUCTION

### The Problem

#### *The Lack of Attention to Educational Aims*

Educational reform movements in the United States have often focused attention on accountability (Biesta, 2009; Cohen, 1990; Mathison, 2004; Peterson & West, 2003; Smith & O'Day, 1990). In an attempt to develop accountability systems, discourse on educational reform has focused on the development of standards and objectives that can be measured through high-stakes standardized tests. Biesta (2009) raises the concern that we are not measuring what we value, but, instead, are valuing what we can measure, simply because it is amenable to measurement. Educational standards and objectives are important but a problem arises when educational leaders and the general public become so preoccupied with standards and measures of performance that dialogue about how those standards and performances aid in the achievement of larger educational aims is neglected (see Standish, 1999).

In the field of educational philosophy, the problem of framing and justifying broad underlying educational aims has received only intermittent attention. Walker & Soltis (2004) discuss the work of major educational philosophers who have addressed the problem of the conceptualizing of high-level educational aims. Plato, for example, held that an important aim of education was the recollection by the Mind of Absolute Knowledge, which would enable the production of a just state. Rousseau, in contrast, held that the chief aim of education was to develop individual human beings who would have the freedom and capacity to realize their natural selves. Dewey (1916/2009) considered the chief aim of education to be "...to enable individuals to continue their education... the object and reward of learning is continued capacity for growth" (p. 117).

Since the rise of analytic philosophy, a type of philosophy focused on the analysis of specific concepts, the focus of attention of educational philosophers has shifted away from the question of educational aims. Peters (1966) concludes: "Few professional

philosophers would now think that it is their function to provide such high level directives for education...” (p. 15). Questions such as, What are the aims of education?, What ought to be the aims of education?, or, What are the “right” aims of education?, are seldom considered in the current literature.

The current dearth of attention to educational aims is a major problem, for the following reasons. The system of education is often regarded as a social institution that has profound influence on the future conditions of society. In our current social condition we face an increase in economic inequality, climate change, cultural diversity, and technology, to name but a few. What we aim for in education affects how we think about and address those issues.

It is also important to focus on the aims of education because the concept of education is neither settled nor static. Harris, in “*Aims! Whose Aims?*” (1999) makes the point this way: “...education is a changing and often personalized, historically, and politically constructed concept (with no absolute correct meaning to retreat to)...” (p. 3). Conceptions of education are linked to a broad array of equally difficult conceptions, such as the conception of human nature, of mind, of virtue, or of the good society, to name but a few. These fundamental conceptions have differed radically in different places and times. The conceptions of education are variable; given this, it is critically important to maintain a social dialogue about which educational aims ought, at this time, to guide the system of education. Even if, at some point in time, firm decisions had been reached as to what the aims of education ought to be, the need for dialogue about aims would not have ended (Ravitch, 1995). Ravitch (1995) asserts that “[i]f the schools are to regain their efficacy as *educational* institutions, their *educational* purposes must be given highest priority” (p. 99). Ravitch (1995) uses the term ‘purposes’, which in context has the same meaning as the term ‘aims’.

To act rationally one must have an end or an aim one works to realize. This means that to make rational decisions about which educational aims ought to guide a

system of education, we must start with the “end” in mind. That is, we must begin with some idea of the ideal state of affairs that we hope to realize. Giroux (1992) urges educators to ask questions such as, “What kinds of citizens do we hope to produce through public education? What kind of society do we want to create?” (p. 8). Answers to these questions take the form of value judgments. This makes clear the fundamentally ethical nature of education and of educational aims.

### **Ethics and Educational Aims**

Decisions about educational policies and practices have profound effects on human lives (Green & Griffore, 1980; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Given this, the educational aims that guide such decisions must be justified ethically. To do this, I argue, requires reference to an overarching regulative ideal. The lack of attention given to the moral justification of the educational aims that guide the development of policies, and practices is a problem because policies and practices (when not randomly and arbitrarily selected) are directed by values, whether or not those underlying values are critically examined or even recognized. Rosenbaum (2011) provides a philosophical treatment of values as conceived in philosophical Pragmatism. Rosenbaum (2011) has conceived values as intimately connected to accepted institutionalized cultural practices. “All institutions of human culture function to convey, to exhibit, to sustain, or to undermine our values; values just are, functionally speaking, the vicissitudes of human institutions as they wax and wane in their cultural settings” (p. 17).

Rosenbaum’s conception of values is problematic in one respect. His conception of values as institutionalized cultural practices rules out the possibility that individual values might exist which are in conflict with those practices. Conflict between individual and institutional values, however, can and does occur. For example, if standardized testing is valued institutionally, it is nevertheless possible for an individual member of the institution to disagree, and to oppose actions following from the institutionalized value. It would seem that a set of values precedes the institutionalization of them. It is

important to clarify and justify such a set of values prior to the development of institutional policies and practices. Those values can then be used to assess and critique the existing institutional policies and practices. It is thus problematic if the values that inform the selection of educational aims, and the policies and practices that constitute a system of education, are left unexamined. In this dissertation, I focus attention on intellectual problem of the moral justification of educational aims, policies, and practices that constitute the U.S. system of education.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

The most general purpose of this study is to contribute to contemporary U.S. educational discourse by developing a regulative ideal that can be used to assess the moral value of educational aims that guide the U.S. system of education. This regulative ideal can also be applied in the evaluation of specific policies and practices in the U.S. system of education. Formal education is the largest social enterprise we engage in, and is a major determinant of the social structure. The system of formal education plays a large role in determining the future well-being, or lack thereof, of the children whom it is intended to serve. That well-being, or lack thereof, in turn profoundly affects the future form of society. Because of this, scholarly work on the ethical nature of education is of practical importance. The understanding gained through such an ethical assessment gives educational leaders, sociopolitical elites, and the general public the ability to more intelligently guide the system of education.

There is no such thing as an educational panacea, and to ethically justify a set of educational aims, policies, and practices to guide the U.S. system of formal education will not bring one into being. The current project can, though, serve to generate more inclusive public communication about the moral nature of education, about the moral justification of current policies and practices, and about the educational aims we commit ourselves to. This communicative interaction is a fundamental aspect of human life. It is through such communication that we, a community of human beings, direct our growth

as a society. It is through communicative interaction that we collectively decide who we want to become.

### **The Nature of the Study**

The nature of this study is philosophical, in the field of ethics. Four general categories within the field of ethical philosophy can be identified. Fesmire (2003) describes the four categories as “descriptive ethics (neutral descriptions of moral thinking and behavior), metaethics (analysis of the central concepts of ethics), normative ethics (formulation and justification of basic moral values), and applied ethics (application of normative ethics to specific areas of activity)” (p. 4). In this study, I begin, in Part I, with work in the category of normative ethics, in formulating the concept of generative community and positing this as a regulative ideal to be pursued. I then, in Part II, engage in the work of applied ethics, by using the concept of generative community in the moral assessment of particular educational aims, policies, and practices. This applied work is intended to illustrate the use of the proposed regulative ideal as an ethical standard of judgment. It is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of U.S. education.

It is, in practice, impossible in any one work to begin at the literal “beginning”. In any particular project one must have a starting point, a plausible well-warranted groundwork on which one builds. In this dissertation, I find this groundwork in the philosophical pragmatism of John Dewey. Dewey’s philosophy is selected as the result of a prior evaluative assessment of the merits of Dewey’s philosophy. It is beyond the scope of the study to give a lengthy treatment of the merits of Deweyan philosophy, in comparison to all other possible philosophical positions. It is, however, possible and important to set out the principal merits that I see in Dewey’s work, that warrant the use of his work in this dissertation.

### **The Merits of Deweyan Philosophical Pragmatism**

In this dissertation, I employ insights from the philosophical work of John Dewey. To justify this, in this section I explain several of Dewey’s basic conceptions and their

merits. I conclude that these merits constitute strong reasons for employing Dewey's philosophical approach. In the course of the dissertation, I build on Dewey's conceptual work, in the process of developing and arguing for generative community as a regulative ideal that can be used in the assessment of an educational system.

### Reflective Reasoning

The central core of Deweyan pragmatism is Dewey's conception of the nature of the reasoning process. Reflective reasoning, in Dewey's view, is a wholly natural process of evaluation. In Deweyan pragmatism, reflective reasoning is a process that requires, first, assessment of current existent conditions, and second, an envisaged ideal state of affairs. The assessment of current existent conditions begins when current conditions are seen as problematic. The current conditions, that is, constitute a "problem situation", to use Dewey's (1929/1958) term. The second step, the envisaging of an ideal state of affairs, requires imaginative, creative thought. The idea of an imagined future state of affairs that is generated is "ideal", in the sense that it does not yet exist. The ideal is a state of affairs that is to be brought into existence, if possible.

Having identified a problem situation, and having imagined an improved ideal state of affairs, the task of the reasoner is to find a practical means to transition from the current state of affairs to the ideal state of affairs. (Once the ideal state is achieved in fact, it ceases, by definition, to be an "ideal" state). Dewey sometimes refers to the ideal state as an "end-in-view". To find the needed transitional path, the reasoner forms a hypothesis. The hypothesis is a proposition which claims that if, under the current existing conditions, particular actions are taken, the envisaged ideal state of affairs will be realized, i.e., it will become the new existing state of affairs. The reasoner then must take those actions, and observe the results. The results of action are used in critically assessing the hypothesized causal relationships. It is through this critical evaluation and refinement of hypotheses that moral knowledge is developed. The process of developing moral knowledge is essentially the same as the process of developing any knowledge.

The process of reflective reasoning is iterative. The newly achieved (formerly ideal) conditions can be expected, sooner or later, to lead to the development of a new problem situation, and the reasoning process begins again. Dewey sometimes refers to this reasoning process as the process of intelligence; those who engage in this Deweyan reasoning process are acting intelligently. One of the merits of Dewey's philosophical pragmatism is this conception of intelligent reasoning.

Another of the merits of Deweyan pragmatism is the fact that knowledge is conceived as revisable, rather than as absolute. Dewey considers knowledge to be a body of well-warranted statements about relationships in the world. The body of knowledge is always open to revision and improvement through continued experimentation. Intelligent reasoning may not always lead to success in achieving the ideal end-in-view. But it can be reasonably expected to lead over time to the expansion and improvement of knowledge.

### Moral Reasoning

In Deweyan pragmatism, moral reasoning about ethical matters is the same as reasoning in any other context. Knowledge develops as a result of the attempt to act in the world in such a way as to bring into existence a valued state of affairs. Conceptions of valued states of affairs play an important role in the Deweyan reasoning process (see Dewey, 1901/1991; 1908/1996).

In Deweyan moral theory, for one's action to be morally defensible, one must engage in a particular process of moral reasoning, which Dewey calls "reflective morality" (Dewey, 1908/1996). Moral reasoning is not simply a matter of orienting oneself to a set of transcendental duties or obligations. Moral reasoning is a process of reasoning that is akin to the process of scientific reasoning. Moral reasoning, like scientific reasoning, always occurs in a context of the emotional and cognitive features of one's self and the cultural and historical place and time of one's community. Engaging in a process of moral reasoning does not guarantee that one's ideas or conclusions are free



from error. Moral reasoning, like scientific reasoning, is fallible. Both scientific and moral reasoning are iterative processes that require assessment of current conditions, imagination of anticipated future states, hypotheses, action, and reassessment of the resultant states of affairs.

Recognizing the position of reasoning within the human condition means that moral knowledge is not something that is given *a priori*. In other words, moral conclusions are not defensible except by reference to experience and reasoning based on experience. For one to choose morally good actions, one's moral thought must be continually reassessed and reconstructed through a process of inquiry based on experience. Just as continuing scientific inquiry overturns common knowledge with conclusions that are better warranted, moral reasoning overturns moral habits with actions that are more defensible. This process of reasoning is rooted in empirical reality. Dewey (1929/1958), who describes himself as the empirical philosopher, describes philosophical reasoning as a "vine of pendant theory" that, to be well-warranted, must be attached at both ends to the empirical pillars of human experience.

In Dewey's (1920) empirical form of philosophy, moral theories must originate in response to genuine problems and lead to the development of practicable plans of action. In other words, ethical inquiries ought to originate in real problems and lead to real and practicable solutions, which, having been implemented, can then be judged or evaluated. For these reasons, I work from Dewey's (1920) empirical method of philosophy, and focus my attention on the ethical nature of the problems of contemporary education in the United States.

### **The Organization of the Dissertation**

There are two parts to this dissertation. Part I is titled "Developing a Regulative Ideal for Educational Aims, Policies, and Practices".

In Part I, Chapter 1, I first explicate the concept of education that I employ. Second, I examine the scholarly literature in the field of educational philosophy on the

subject of educational aims. Third, I set out the ethical theory of Dewey's reflective morality and critically assess its merits. I conclude that Deweyan reflective morality is a well warranted moral theory and can serve as the means to reach morally justifiable decisions.

In Part I, Chapter 2, I first discuss the multidimensional notion of the "Good Life" as an ultimate aim of education. I draw on Dewey's notion of "moral happiness" to give definition to the concept of the Good Life, and argue that society is best enabled to approach the Good Life if its decision making processes conform to a Deweyan form of reflective moral reasoning. Given this, a morally good education must provide conditions that are conducive to a) the occurrence of reflective morality and b) the realization of moral happiness and the Good Life. I then develop a conception of a state of affairs that would constitute an ideal, in the Deweyan sense, such an ideal being necessary for the Deweyan process of reflective morality. This is the concept of *generative community*. This concept is intended to serve as a regulative ideal.

Part II of the dissertation is titled "Using Generative Community as a Regulative Ideal to Assess the Moral Value of Educational Aims, Policies, and Practices.

In Part II, Chapter III, I select and explicate six educational aims that have figured prominently in the U.S. system of education. I then assess each by reference to generative community as a regulative ideal. These aims are: 1) to disseminate knowledge; 2) to increase economic efficiency; 3) to achieve individual self-realization; 4) to promote cultural assimilation; 5) to promote the growth of democracy; and, 6) to advance social justice.

In Part II, Chapter IV, I select and explicate six prominent and politically important cases of educational policy and practice in the United States. The first three cases of educational policy and practice exemplify features within the current system of education that conflict with generative community. The second three cases exemplify

features within the current system of education that align well with generative community.

Finally, in the Conclusion, I provide a summary account of the work that has been accomplished.

**PART I**

**DEVELOPING A REGULATIVE IDEAL FOR EDUCATIONAL  
AIMS, POLICIES, AND PRACTICES**

# CHAPTER I

## THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATION AND THE MORAL IMPLICATONS OF EDUCATIONAL AIMS

### Developing a Concept of Education

How should the concept of education be understood? It is tautologically true that every rational being who uses the term ‘education’ has some conception in mind, more or less well articulated, of the meaning of the term. Philosophers of education have developed well articulated conceptions of education (Carr, 2010). The problem is that the various conceptions can be and often are inconsistent. Given this inconsistency, it is important that those who engage in the discourse on educational aims take care to clearly articulate a well-warranted conception of education which will be employed. I develop here a particular conception of education, a conception that draws upon insights developed in the tradition of Dewey’s philosophical pragmatism.

### *Experience and Growth*

Dewey conceives education as a process of growth in experience. In Dewey’s work, both ‘growth’ and ‘experience’ are technical terms, which I explain in this section. Each individual person uses his or her prior experiences, and the understandings developed therefrom, in an effort to understand the meaning of his or her current experiences, and to guide actions leading to future experiences (Dewey, 1916/2009). For example, consider a child who puts his or her hand on a hot burner. That painful experience becomes educative when the child is able to connect his or her prior movement to the pain he or she experiences as a consequence of the movement. In Dewey’s (1916/2009) words, “To ‘learn from experience’ is to make a backward and forward connection between what we do to things and what we enjoy or suffer from things in consequence” (p. 116). As the set of an individual’s educative experiences enlarges, he or she acquires an increasingly reliable basis by which to direct future experiences.

Some experiences are mis-educative, because of the content of the “lessons” that are learned from the experience. For example, the child who is punished for raising questions is having a mis-educative experience. The connection between the action of raising questions and its consequence is likely to be made, i.e., learning occurs. But, the effect of the learning is to curtail the possibilities of future educative experiences.

In general, experiences that lead to the development of indurated habits of thought, and that thus lead to rigid and inflexible patterns of conduct, are mis-educative. Such fixed habits of thought and conduct are problematic because the world itself is not static, rigid or inflexible. New and unique situations are continually emerging. Successful action in new situations requires a flexibility and creativity in thinking. Some of the newly emerging situations are so markedly different from the norm that Dewey terms them “problem situations”. Problem situations are situations in which the individual’s existing habits of thought and conduct are strikingly inadequate to the requirements of the new situation. Reliance on the existing habits fails to resolve the problem, i.e., fails to bring about an improved future state of affairs. That is, such reliance fails to permit the individual to successfully pursue his or her goals.

Educative experiences are those experiences that are conducive to the critical, thoughtful re-forming of one’s existing patterns of thought and action, in response to altered situations. On a personal level, education provides the individual with the capacity to literally re-form his or her self, in order to better pursue, and perhaps realize, his or her goals. On a social level, education provides society with the capacity to continuously re-form cultural customs, mores, associations, and institutions in order to better pursue and perhaps achieve a community structure that allows individual and collective pursuit of goals.

For Dewey (1916/2009), the educative process is a natural feature of human life that occurs through experience, for the purpose of expanded and enriched future experience. This expansion and enrichment of experience is what Dewey refers to as

“growth”. Dewey calls for a continuous process of growth. Dewey (1916/2009) states, “...the object and reward of learning is continued capacity for growth” (p. 84). Dewey (1938/1963) refers to this as the principle of continuity, or, the experiential continuum.

But, what is meant by the term ‘experience’? Some would conceive experience as constituting a “veil” between the mind and the genuine reality of nature (Locke, 1690/1959). This view has a long history in philosophy and is still influential today (Walker, 1994). Experience, in this sense, hinders the development of knowledge of the real nature of events. This conception of experience can be found in the work of philosophers as diverse as Plato, Locke, and Kant, to name but a few.

Dewey (1929/1958), however, radically re-conceived the nature of experience. Experience, in his view, is itself an entirely natural interaction, a *transaction*, between and among dynamic things that are thoroughly and genuinely real. Some of these real, dynamic, interactive things are human beings, others are non-human living beings, and still others are non-living interactants, such as molecules, or galaxies. Experience is the particular type of interaction that begins to occur in living beings, as their increased complexity permits sensitivity to surrounding interactants. More complex experience occurs when living beings reach a sufficiently high degree of organismic complexity that permits the development of expectations about future interactions, and anticipatory responses to expected events. Human experience begins to occur as organismic complexity increases to a level that permits meta-level thinking, an intentional examination and critique of oneself as interactant, which permits the deliberate re-forming of one’s existing habits of thought and interaction (Dewey, 1929/1958).

It is through engagement in interactivities that human beings are enabled to come to know the nature of that with which they interact, and of themselves. Dewey (1929/1958) puts it this way:

...experience is *of* as well as *in* nature. It is not experience which is experienced, but nature – stones, plants, animals, diseases, health, temperature, electricity, and so on. Things interacting in certain ways are experience; they are what is

experienced. Linked in certain other ways with another natural object – the human organism – they are *how* things are experienced as well (p. 4a).

It is through the natural process of experience that human beings can understand nature, know its interactions, and use that knowledge to direct and enrich future experiences. The enrichment of life does not need the guidance of external authority. Experience itself is the source of values, aims, and ideals. It is because of what we learn through experience that we come to value certain conditions, and subsequently develop ideals and aims with the hope of creating the conditions that we have come to value. Every experience is thus both an effect of past experiences and a factor in the shaping of future experiences.

Human beings' diverse sets of experiences have an important role in influencing the direction of a society's future growth. The growth of society is intelligently directed to the extent that we draw on the experiences of all human beings' within society. In the United States, the system of education is a primary social structure intended to effectively prepare individuals so that they might intelligently develop and direct the future social structure. For this to occur, there must be aims directing the system of education.

### **Educational Aims: The Debate**

As far back as the 1960s, philosophers of education have noted the lack of attention to educational aims in the scholarly literature. Sichel (1969) remarks on the unfashionable nature of educational aims; and in the title of her article asks, *Are Aims of Education Suffering from a Case of Rigor Mortis?* In the current discourse on education, there is little that focuses directly on the conceptual development and assessment of educational aims. Discourse has been primarily on the meta-level, centered largely on the question of whether or not there is a need to develop and assess educational aims. Rarely does the discussion shift from the meta-level to the normative level, where educational aims themselves become the principal focus of attention.

White (2010) asserts that philosophers of education have been wary of engaging in a normative level of discourse on educational aims, first, because of the 'ought' that is



embedded in the query, What aims should be pursued?, and second, because the recent “job description” of educational philosophers has been limited to the second-order clarification of concepts and arguments. Sichel (1969) suggested that the unfashionable nature of focusing on educational aims was the result of a shift in educational philosophy discourse away from substantive questions concerned with values and towards analytic philosophy, the conceptual analysis of education and related concepts.

After Peters (1966), an analytic philosopher, offered a detailed analysis of the concept of education, the leading question among educational philosophers became, what is the meaning of the term ‘education’?, rather than, what aims should education seek to achieve? White (2010) critiques the analytic approach, arguing that it is impossible to adequately analyze the concept of education without reference to a set of aims of education. The philosophical discourse about the concept of education was vigorous, but conclusions were decidedly mixed, and no consensus on the meaning of the term ‘education’ emerged. Carr (2010) reviews the history of the conceptual controversy, and summarizes the current state of the literature:

In the contemporary literature of educational philosophy and theory, it is almost routinely assumed or claimed that ‘education’ is a ‘contested’ concept: that is, it is held that education is invested—as it were, ‘all the way down’—with socially-constructed interests and values that are liable to diverge in different contexts to the point of mutual opposition (Carr, 2010, p. 89).

It is perhaps a disappointment that scholarly debate has produced a distinct lack of conceptual clarity about the basic questions concerning the concept of education, and that little progress has been made on the question of which educational aims ought to be guiding education. Some educational philosophers have argued that any effort to assess and warrant a generally acceptable set of aims of education is simply an exercise in futility. Nunn (1920) argued that aims of education “which are concrete enough to give definite guidance are correlative to ideals of life—and, . . . ideals of life are eternally at variance . . .” (p. 9). Kazepides (1989) examines the conceptual differences between aims

and objectives and argues that “aims” discourse serves no practical purpose. Kazepides, (1989) writes,

To-day there are still some educationalists who continue to insist on the need for formulating clearly the ‘aims of education’, while others maintain that all such statements are useless, high-sounding vague claims that should be abandoned for the sake of clearly defined, specific curriculum objectives (p. 51).

Some current philosophers of education conclude that the question of a proper set of educational aims cannot be settled (Haji & Cuypers, 2011; Hardarson, 2012). In an article titled *Why The Aims of Education Cannot be Settled*, Hardarson (2012) argues that education as a concept is so open ended that it is not worth pursuing the question of the aims of education. In Hardarson’s (2012) words, “although we can specify some of its purposes and make general statements to the effect that it [education] aims at improvement or excellence of some sort, we cannot justify any definitive or exhaustive description of its purpose” (p. 225). Similarly, Haji and Cuypers (2011) raise concerns about the ability to identify and justify educational aims that might be considered basic or ultimate.

If it is in fact the case that the aims of education cannot be settled, as both Hardarson (2012) and Nunn (1920) suggest, then it is entirely reasonable that the fruitless discussion be abandoned. If, as Kazepides (1989) suggests, educational aims serve no practical purpose, then, again, an attempt to describe them and justify them is pointless.

In contrast, though, Whitehead, in 1967, wrote that “when ideals have sunk to the level of practice, the result is stagnation. So long as we conceive intellectual education as merely consisting in the acquirement of mechanical mental aptitudes, and of formulated statements of useful truths, there can be no progress” (p. 29). This means that, in addition to examining how effective we are at doing what we are currently doing, we must examine our aims, and consider the compatibility of what we are doing with those aims.

There are contemporary educational philosophers (Biesta, 2009; Katz, 2010; Kazepides, 1989; Noddings, 2003; Sichel, 1969; White, 2010; Winch, 1996) who argue

that a return to the discussion of educational aims is necessary. The concern is about the effects of abandoning inquiries into educational aims, despite the dissatisfactory outcomes to date, because aims, whether articulated and justified or not, are always going to be driving educational policies and practices. Winch (1996) states the problem in this way:

When the major aims of education are not clearly agreed upon, there is a danger that covert aims may become the most influential in determining the operation of a public education system. It is likely that these aims will be set by the most influential groups operating both within and outside the system. Because there will have been little or no public debate about aims, it is likely that the interests of some will receive scant attention and may even be harmed (p. 33).

As an example of this danger, Winch (1996) cites the absence in Great Britain of debate about education and its aims, even as the country designed and implemented a national curriculum for the first time in the late 1980s.

The current political climate surrounding education and its aims within the United States is similar to that of Britain's in the late 1980s. There has been great political pressure to develop specific educational standards and objectives on a national scale, and to objectively measure educational achievement. The governors of 45 states, at this point in time, have agreed to collaborate in The Common Core State Standards Initiative (Common Core State Standards, 2013). The process of developing, adopting, and implementing a common set of national standards and objectives is well under way. There are other public-private partnerships that have emerged that aim to develop, and to market, assessment tools intended to objectively measure student achievement. As Winch (1996) has argued, there is a problem when such political and economic activity takes place in advance of critical public discourse about the aims of education that are to be pursued. Explicitly identifying and critically evaluating educational aims is necessary if we are to reasonably and effectively devise and direct educational institutions and processes.

With the educational discourse currently focused on efficiency, on how effective we are at meeting the current set of standards and objectives, the need to focus on aims, i.e., on what we ought to be achieving, is more important than ever. This is because, first, efficiency in productive action is a good thing if and only if that which is produced is itself good. Second, education is becoming increasingly uniform with respect to standards of accountability and specific measurable objectives. Given the current strong emphasis on standards and objectives, without a matching effort to evaluate the aims of education, educational philosophers have begun to question our ability to wisely direct the U.S. system of education. Biesta (2009) asks whether “we are indeed measuring what we value, or whether we are just measuring what we can easily measure and thus end up valuing what we (can) measure” (p. 35). Biesta (2009) makes the important point that “instead of simply making a case for effective education, we always need to ask ‘Effective for what? – and... Effective for whom? We need to re-engage with the question as to what constitutes *good* education” (p. 36). Noddings (2003) encourages the restoration of discourse on educational aims and offers an additional series of questions important for consideration. Noddings (2003) asks, “What are we trying to accomplish? For whom? Why?... Are our aims consistent with one another? Are the means we have chosen compatible with our aims?” (p. 4).

Though the turn to analytic philosophy of education may have diminished attention to normative discourse on educational aims, Katz (2010) finds merit in Peters’ (1973) analytical approach, and urges that that approach be applied to clarification of educational aims. According to Peters (1973), the point of conceptual analysis is to facilitate clear and fruitful social discourse about the matter of concern; it is not to define, once and for all, the precise content of a term.

I don’t take it to be the philosopher’s job, with a concept like ‘education’, to formulate hard and fast, necessary and sufficient conditions which must always be satisfied if the word is to be used correctly... Really, the main point is to become clearer and clearer about the contours or the concepts which have emerged; we

cannot pin them down with a definition (Peters, 1973, p. 44; as quoted in Katz, 2010, p. 99).

Katz, following Peters, considers the aims of education to be an indeterminate set, one that must be evaluated and re-developed as changes occur in the social context. Katz argues that we must engage in an inclusive, sustained, and critical discourse about educational aims. In Katz's (2010) words, we should "rethink the aims of education with each new generation. We must re-examine these aims within our contemporary political, social, and economic contexts" (Katz, 2010, p. 106). This means that we must reassess educational policies and practices in the light of current social, political and economic conditions, in order to judge whether or not current practices, given current conditions, align with those aims.

Further reason to continually re-examine the aims of education can be found in the work of critical theorists. Paulo Freire (1970/2006), Michael Apple (1995), Peter McLaren (2005) and others argue that, to if we wish to approach a socially just society, it is necessary that we continually examine our current political, social, and economic contexts, and question how current conditions privilege some persons and oppress others. Winch's (1996) argument, that the system of education will always be directed by some set of values and ideals, whether or not those values and ideals are acknowledged or examined, is particularly compelling. Failure to engage in a discourse on educational aims does not prevent aims from guiding the system of education. It merely conceals the guiding aims, and makes it easier for individuals in positions of power to select aims that continue to serve the interests of those in power.

This dissertation is a development and a testing of a method of ethical evaluation of educational aims, policies, and practices. I shall attempt, in the course of the dissertation, to show that the justification of a general set of educational aims is in fact possible. To do this, I develop a particular regulative ideal, that of generative community, which can be used, and I argue should be used, to evaluate putative educational aims, policies, and practices. The dissertation provides a method which

others can use in an ongoing process of ethical evaluation of educational aims, policies, and practices. Such evaluation, when used, provides greater clarity as to which educational aims, policies, and practices are morally justified and reveals flaws that can then be addressed.

### **Dewey's Reflective Morality and Educational Aims**

Education, when conceived in Deweyan terms, is laden with moral significance. In order to develop a well-warranted set of educational aims, which can be used to direct educational policies and practices, it is necessary to employ a moral theory, and it is critically important that that moral theory itself be well-warranted. So, the necessary preliminary question is, what moral theory ought to be used to guide a moral conception of education? In this section, I explicate Dewey's theory of reflective morality (1901/1991; 1908/1996; 1920) and argue in favor of this moral theory.

Reflective morality never permits the passive acceptance of what has been deemed good by others (Dewey, 1908/1996); a process of moral reflection is required. In this process, one must ask, what are the aims (the ends-in-view) that should guide my actions?, and, by reference to what ideal state of affairs are those aims judged to be good? In other words, how can one make a decision which is morally defensible in that it contributes to the realization of an envisaged ideal? In reflective morality, no single ideal state of affairs is provided as a given to be sought. Envisaged ideals must be generated through an imaginative process based on knowledge of the conditions and consequences of occurrence of states of affairs. There is no escaping this cognitive work. It is through a process of education that people generally develop the habits of reflective inquiry essential to reflective morality.

## **Dewey's Reflective Morality: Central Concepts**

### Concepts of Value

It is true that human beings have different values, different valuations, different desires, and different interests. For the purpose of clarity, I will explicate these four key terms in this section (Dewey, 1939b; 1908/1996).

The term 'value' can have the meaning of a noun or a verb; Dewey (1939b) conceives the primary meaning as that of a verb; to value is to engage in acts of valuing (p. 4). Valuing *simpliciter* refers to an act of prizing; this can occur without any reflective thought whatsoever. Such valuing can be the result of instinct, urge, or impulse. For example, one might value the experience of communing with nature.

Valuing, as prizing, can become complicated. Dewey writes, "Possession and enjoyment of goods passes insensibly and inevitably into appraisal...it requires but brief time to teach that some things sweet in the having are bitter in after taste and in what they lead to" (Dewey, 1929/1958, p. 398). This appraisal process is a process of reflective thinking; the valuing that incorporates such appraisal can be marked by the use of the term 'valuation'.

Reflective valuations, according to Dewey, occur only when problem situations occur, e.g., when there is a lack of, or a threat to, that which is valued. It is the problem situation that engenders the thinking process, and the effort to resolve the problem situation. Valuations require both thought and action, and thus one's valuations are observable and verifiable. In Dewey's words, "It is by observations of behavior...that the existence and description of valuations have to be determined. Observation of the amount of energy expended and the length of time over which it persists enables qualifying adjectives 'slight' and 'great' to be warrantably prefixed to a given valuation" (Dewey, 1939b, p. 15). For example, the nature lover, when a much valued ecosystem is threatened, may exert the thought and the effort required to become the environmental activist.

The term ‘desiring’ refers to the state which one comes to as a result of the conscious process of reflective thinking that is valuation. Dewey (1939b) refers to a desire as “a union of prizing and appraising” (p. 31). One’s desires are dependent upon one’s knowledge: of the existing situation; of the conditions of occurrence of the desired state; and, of the consequences of occurrence of the desired state. So, the process of desiring has a fundamental cognitive basis. For example, a teacher might begin with a sense of delight in seeing a quiet docile group of students, but, with the growth of reflective knowledge, come to desire a class of inquisitive students, vigorously engaged in conjoint communicative inquiry.

The term ‘interest’ refers to a coherent set of desires which one is committed to realizing because of the perceived value of the future state. To “have an interest”, in this sense, indicates an objective relationship between an individual and a coherent set of objects of desire. In Dewey’s (1939b) words, “Whenever a person has an interest in something, he has a stake in the course of events and in their final issue—a stake which leads him to take action to bring into existence a particular result rather than some other one” (p. 17). Individuals may have similar values or desires, but Dewey (1939b) warns against equating similar desires or values with similar interests. For example, a hunter, a hiker, and a nature lover could all have an interest in maintaining a sustainable natural environment. But the interest is based, in each case, on a very different set of values and desires.

### *The Ideal*

An ideal, in Dewey’s theory of reflective morality, is an envisaged future state of affairs which, it is thought, would be an improvement over the current state of affairs. One’s conception of an ideal state is based on one’s desires and interests. The ideal is a natural state of affairs; the term does not carry any sense of the Platonic Ideal. An ideal state, in Dewey’s conception of the ideal, is a state of affairs that does not currently exist, but that might be brought into existence, under the right conditions, and with the right



actions. Dewey (1901/1991) connects the concept of an ideal state to the concept of the Good:

The Good must be an ideal (in the sense not of unattainable but of unattained) and not a natural, or given fact. Because the idea of it grows out of the failure of our experience to satisfy us, and then our projecting ourselves beyond anything we have actually got and formulating this conception of what experience must be transformed into if it is to be satisfactory (p. 25).

Dewey makes the same point in 1916, in *Essays in Experimental Logic*:

If philosophers could aid in making it clear to a troubled humanity that ideals are continuous with natural events, that they but represent their possibilities, and that recognized possibilities form methods for a conduct which may realize them in fact, philosophers would enforce the sense of a social calling and responsibility (p. 72).

When an ideal state of affairs is envisaged, it is usually envisaged with only partial knowledge of the envisaged state. In Dewey's epistemology, when one knows a thing, one has well-warranted beliefs about the conditions of occurrence of that thing and the consequences of occurrence of that thing. In this sense of knowing, it is impossible for a human being to know an event fully. Given this lack of full knowledge, when the envisaged ideal comes to be realized, i.e., becomes an existent state of affairs, it typically only partially satisfies the conditions of the problem situation that gave rise to it. In other words, the lack of complete knowledge of the situation generally leads to unaccounted for connections and unintended consequences. For one to judge the moral worth of an action, one has to consider, retrospectively, the conditions of its occurrence, and then, prospectively, the consequences of its occurrence.

The achievement of an envisaged ideal is always an intermediate state of affairs. Once an envisaged ideal is realized in fact, one must begin again to consciously assess the newly achieved conditions, to identify newly emerging problem situations, to formulate new ideal states, and to work to realize them. The achievement of an ideal is in no sense a final resting point.

### Moral Action

In Deweyan reflective morality, there is a need to take action because one is aware of the occurrence of a problem situation. A distinction can be drawn between natural goods and considered goods, i.e., things or states that are valued after a process of reflective moral inquiry. For example, if one feeds wild deer, the activity might be a natural good that is simply enjoyed, no decisions are required because no problem situation is recognized to exist. However, it is possible that there could be a problem situation, if the activity experienced as naturally good in fact conflicts with the achievement of another incompatible natural good. And it is possible that one would come to recognize the existence of the problem situation. At this point, one must make a decision to act to resolve the problem situation, or not to act and to suffer the emerging consequences. One would have to envisage a future ideal state in which the conflict would be resolved, and choose a means to the achievement of the ideal state. It is the work of human beings to make such decisions, so that the envisaged ideal situation that would resolve the problem situation can be realized.

In Deweyan ethics, it is a necessary condition of morally right action that the action be the result of the intelligent process of reflective moral inquiry (Dewey, 1908/1996). Morally right action cannot be habitual action; this is because new problem situations are continually arising, to which habitual actions are, by definition, not adequate. The morally good person is alert to the developing new problems and engages in reflective deliberation with respect to them. Dewey (1908/1996) puts it this way: “The good man who rests on his oars, who permits himself to be propelled simply by the momentum of his attained right habits, loses alertness. With that loss, his goodness drops away from him” (p. 132).

Humans engage in numerous acts of non-problematic choice that do not require moral deliberation. But all voluntary action (i.e., actions chosen for some purpose or with some aim) can have a moral aspect. If one were to never engage in conscious

consideration of one's actions, routine or not, one would be ignoring the moral significance of ends to which those very actions contribute. It is because of the connectedness of actions that Dewey (1908/1996) stresses the importance of the habit of awareness and reasoning about the consequences of one's actions and the conditions of occurrence of ideal states. With this, action becomes conduct.

### Moral Accountability

Dewey conceives "conduct" to be an intentionally coordinated sequence of actions intended to achieve some purpose or state of affairs. In reflective morality, one is held morally accountable for one's conduct. Dewey (1908/1996), classifies human action into three levels. Conduct is the type of action that is driven by thoughtful and reflective deliberation. In Dewey's (1908/1996) words, the three levels of action are:

1) behavior which is motivated by various biological, economic, or other non-moral impulses or needs (e.g., family, life, work), and which yet has important results for morals. 2) behavior or conduct in which the individual accepts with relatively little reflection the standards and ways of his group as these are embodied in customs or *mores*. 3) conduct in which the individual thinks and judges for himself, considers whether a purpose is good or right, decides and chooses, and does not accept the standards of his group without reflection" (p. xxvii).

Dewey (1908/1996), goes on to detail his formula for moral accountability: "First, [an individual]...must *know* what he is doing; secondly, he must *choose* it, and choose it for itself, and thirdly, the act must be the expression of a formed and stable *character* (p. 8). In the absence of these three conditions, one cannot be held morally accountable for a particular action. But on a broader level, one is accountable for meeting the conditions for moral action.

One is morally accountable if one does not engage in the process of intelligent action, to attempt to resolve recognized problem situations through the development and pursuit of envisaged ideals. One is not morally accountable for the success of the action; it is the inquiry process and the intelligent action that are important (Dewey, 1908/1996).

*Morally Defensible Collective Decisions*

Human beings are social by nature. Despite having unique values, desires, and interests, individual human beings must at times take collective action, which requires making morally defensible collective decisions. The term ‘good’ refers to that which is valued or is desired as a result of reflective thought. Right action is the action required to bring into being and/or maintain the desired object or condition.

In reflective morality, decisions about the good and the right can be made on the basis of individual judgment. But there is a need for morally defensible collective decisions. When collective action is required, the determination of the moral good and the morally right actions require reference to the interests of all human beings. An isolated individual would have no inclination to serve any but his or her own interests. But the demands of collective living serve to alter individuals’ conceptions of moral goodness and right action. In Dewey’s (1908/1996) words

Others do not leave us alone. They actively express their estimates of good in demands made upon each one of us. They accompany them with a virtual promise of aid and support if their expectations are met, and with virtual threats of withdrawal of help, and of positive infliction of penalty if we do not take them into account in forming the purposes of which control our own conduct (p. 76).

Dewey (1908/1996) states that the demands of others function to induce individuals to conceive the good and the right collectively.

Their [the demands of others] ultimate function and effect is to lead the individual to broaden his conception of the Good; they operate to induce the individual to feel that nothing is good for himself which is not also a good for others. They are stimuli to a widening of the area of consequences to be taken into account in forming ends and deciding what is Good (p. 77).

Dewey (1908/1996) realized the difficulty of this and wrote,

There is no doubt that serious moral problems arise when that which we judge to be good because it is agreeable to our own desires comes into conflict with that which, if our own interests were not deeply involved, we should see to be the good of others. To regard oneself as one among others and not as the only pebble on the beach, and to carry out this estimate in practice is perhaps the most difficult lesson we have to learn (Dewey, 1908/1996, p. 76).

To make morally defensible collective decisions, one must consider the values, desires, and interests of others. Yet, it is difficult for any individual to see or understand the values, desires, and interests of others. This difficulty means that, for human beings to make morally defensible collective decisions, we must engage in conscious and intentional forms of communicative deliberation. While it is possible, through frequent casual interaction, to gain an understanding of the values, desires and interests of those in one's immediate social circle, such casual processes of social communication are limited in their scope.

A necessary condition of that widespread communicative deliberation across social boundaries is the development of social structures and institutions dedicated to the facilitation of the process. It is through intentional processes of reflective contemplation and deliberation in community that one gains a broad, wide-ranging understanding of the values, desires and interests of others. This understanding of others' perspectives gives one the capacity to replace one's initial desires with a more thoughtful set of desires that is inclusive of others' desires.

The development of increasingly thoughtful desires through widespread communication and reflective thought encourages the harmonization of self interest and social interest, and the development of a common social ideal. As people engage in reflective contemplation and deliberation in community, and begin to recognize the conditions that increase the desires of all people, collective efforts to maintain and grow those conditions will intensify.

### **The Justification of Dewey's Reflective Morality**

One chief strength of Dewey's theory of reflective morality is that it focuses on the articulation of a process of thinking about moral problems. It does not advance, *a priori*, a single Good, i.e., a *summum bonum*, nor even a set of goods that are to be achieved. Any such single Good, or set of goods, would itself require justification of some sort, and most moral theories founder on this difficulty.

Dewey's moral theory is built instead upon his articulation of the process of thinking that is productive in generating knowledge, in the sense of well-warranted beliefs, about the world. This is the scientific process of inquiry, that begins with a problem situation, moves to the development of testable hypotheses, proceeds to the testing of those hypotheses in experimental action, and culminates (temporarily) in the collective social process of examination and critique of the meanings of the observed results.

Dewey's theory of reflective morality uses this method of inquiry in addressing moral problem situations. As when applied to empirical problems, this method of inquiry is capable of leading over time to the development of moral knowledge, and thus to the improvement of moral judgment with respect to particular moral decisions.

The only "goods" fixed in Dewey's theory of morality, then, are the social conditions that are the necessary conditions for the employment of the thinking process. Any further goods must be developed through the process of reflective inquiry, and are justified by the quality of the inquiry process. Moral knowledge results, and develops over time, in the same way that scientific knowledge results and builds from the inquiry process.

The only justification that the Deweyan theory of moral inquiry logically requires is the justification of the claim that the inquiry process is a legitimate approach to gaining empirical knowledge, and, that the inquiry process is applicable to moral problems. The manifold successes of the inquiry method as a means to gaining empirical knowledge provide the requisite evidence for the first half of the claim. The second half of the claim appears to be more troubling.

A possible objection might arise. It could be claimed by a critic that the empirical world is one thing, the moral world an entirely different thing, and that the cognitive tools that lead to knowledge in the one world will be entirely useless in the other. But, there is no good evidence to suggest that there is a distinctive "moral realm" that in some sense

exists independent of the ordinary experienced world. Moral problems, so-called, are thoroughly real, material problems, experienced in the world, in problem situations that involve creatures cognitively able to frame certain questions, i.e., questions of right and wrong, good and bad. These are normative questions, and questions of value. For a human being, these questions can be raised in any problem situation. Since any problem situation can become a “moral” problem situation, the moral realm is a part of the ordinary, experienced, material world.

The only way to address and positively alter experienced problems in the world is to come to understand the complex network of causal interactions in the world that generate the negative effects we experience. Knowledge, i.e., in the ordinary sense in which to know is to understand the conditions of occurrence of events and the consequences of the occurrence of events, is essential, if ameliorative action in moral problem situations is to be successful.

The chief deficit of competing moral theories is the reliance on inadequate methods of gaining knowledge. (See Appendix for a brief account of contrasting theories of ethics.) For instance, a Divine Command theory of ethics provides a rich set of prescribed statements of what is morally good, and what actions are morally right (Frankena, 1963/1973). But, the only justification of the truth of any of these statements is the assertion that the statements are given to humanity by a Supreme Being. A deontological approach makes the assumption that moral knowledge takes the form of knowledge of a set of moral laws, and is acquired through deductive processes of reasoning from foundational axioms. Again, the presumed foundational statements themselves require a justificatory process before there is sufficient reason to accept them as true. And, no such process is available, save perhaps intuition or direct insight into truth by virtue of a supposed faculty of Reason. But neither justificatory process is satisfactory, given that very different intuitions and insights are reported by different persons.

There is another possible objection to reflective morality. Some may find a problem in the lack of formal content, of specified moral goods and/or moral rules, and the fact that reflective morality fails to provide simple prescriptions for morally good conduct. This, however, ought to be considered a positive feature of Dewey's reflective morality. In reflective morality, one is required to consider new solutions to new social problems in the context of specific new circumstances. This is a strength, given that the world is constantly changing, and distinctively new problem situations are constantly emerging.

A second fundamental strength of Dewey's moral theory is that Dewey recognizes the essential connection between the individual and the social, and clarifies their relation. Dewey's view is unlike that of philosophers such as Kant and Sartre who interpret the self as an autonomous moral agent (Ameriks, 2013). Dewey acknowledges the empirical fact of the matter, that every individual is born and raised in a social, cultural milieu, and argues that the mind of every individual is deeply influenced by his or her social environment. Dewey (1929/1958), in *Experience and Nature*, writes that, in primitive cultures, an individual "...is a subject for assimilation and incorporation of group traditions and customs" (p. 210). Education, in such societies, serves to "bring otherwise unconscious customs to mind and to render consciousness of them acute and emotional.... [in such societies] Custom is Nomos, lord and king of all, of emotions, beliefs, opinions, thoughts as well as deeds" (Dewey, 1929/1958, p. 211). Individuals in such societies come to possess what Dewey describes as "social mind". There is much in contemporary societies that is still "primitive", in this respect, and contemporary formal processes of education continue to serve the aim of uncritical cultural reproduction.

But social mind, ubiquitous though it is, is a poor second to "individualized mind", when it comes to the development of knowledge of the world. Individualized mind is the form of mind that begins to develop, in some persons, when the engrained beliefs and habits given by culture are subjected to critical reflective thought.



Individualized mind is relatively rare; it is difficult to develop because it requires alteration of the individual's existing social mind. Once developed, individualized mind is often considered dangerously subversive, destructive of social custom, and is thus intentionally suppressed. Yet, individualized mind is the source of every cultural innovation. In Dewey's (1929/1958) words, "[a]ll utensils, traps, tools, weapons, stories, prove that someone exercised at some time initiative in deviating from customary models and standards" (p. 211).

Individualized mind could only become socially acceptable, and valued, when the generation of an expansive body of knowledge, i.e., a body of well tested statements about the world and its workings, came to be recognized as an essential social good. The social acceptance of individualized mind as valuable, Dewey writes, became possible "only when social relationships were heterogeneous and expansive, when demand for initiative, invention and variation exceeded that for adherence and conformity" (Dewey, 1929/1958, p. 215). Given the continual emergence of new problem situations, the social, cultural, and intellectual innovation made possible by the production of knowledge via critical reflective inquiry is necessary for social improvement. "The truth...is that social institutions as they exist can be bettered only through the deliberate interventions of those who free their minds from the standards of the order which obtains (Dewey, 1929/1958, p. 218). Hence the need for individualized mind capable of engaging in reflective inquiry, and criticism of, existing social norms and institutions.

Dewey's reflective morality requires, first, the development of individualized mind, and second, the development of social institutions and habits that promote collective engagement of persons having individualized minds in a conjoint communicative process of social critique and reconstruction. The transition to this innovative, self-critical, and progressive form of society is in no sense complete.

In Chapter I, I set out, explicated, and argued in favor of a Deweyan conception of education. I examined the debate on educational aims in the educational philosophy

literature. I argued that ethical evaluation of putative educational aims is necessary, and that this requires the use of a well-warranted ethical theory. I set out and argued in favor of Dewey's reflective morality as a well-warranted ethical theory. This lays the groundwork for the development of an ideal state of affairs that meets the requirements of Dewey's reflective morality, and that can be used as a regulative ideal to guide educational aims, policies, and practices. I take up this issue in Chapters II and III.

## CHAPTER II

### THE GOOD LIFE, HAPPINESS, AND GENERATIVE COMMUNITY

#### The Good Life as Moral Happiness

According to Hirst (1999), it is often considered axiomatic that the pursuit of the Good Life is the ultimate aim of education. The Good Life is a notion that requires explanation, because it has little *prima facie* definition. Ethical philosophers as diverse as Bentham (1789/1823) and Aristotle (ca. 350 B.C./1881) have conceived the Good Life to be a life of happiness. Yet ‘happiness’ is itself a highly ambiguous term. I conceive the Good Life to be a life of happiness. For the reasons set out in Chapter I, I draw on Dewey’s (1908/1996) notion of “moral happiness” to give greater clarification to the conception of the Good Life.

#### Happiness and Pursuit of Ideals

Dewey identifies two main senses in which the term ‘happiness’ is used. The first sense is that in which happiness, as a psychological pleasure, is of fundamental object of desire and the motivation of all action. It is in this sense that humans are always acting to achieve some degree of happiness, even when pursuing specific ends that turn out, on further inspection, to be morally reprehensible. Happiness, in this sense of pleasure, cannot serve as the standard of ethics. Such pleasures, according to Dewey, (1908/2008) “may be accepted or reacted against. So far as not acquiesced in it is from the standpoint of [true] happiness, positively disagreeable” (p. 258).

Dewey identifies a second sense of happiness, in which happiness is capable of serving as the standard of moral judgment. In this sense, happiness is the condition of being that is realized by engaging with, working toward, and perhaps even achieving, our envisaged ideals (Dewey, 1908/1996). An envisaged ideal is a future state of affairs thought to constitute an improvement on the current state of affairs. By experimenting

with ordinary and concrete actions, we seek to realize our envisaged ideals and, through this seeking, gradually and incrementally improve on the *status quo ante*.

In Dewey's conception of happiness, happiness is associated with the sense of effective agency that results from the active pursuit of, and approach toward, an ideal state of affairs. Dewey (1908/2009) puts it this way:

...The proper meaning of happiness turns out to be the satisfaction, realization, or fulfillment of some *purpose and power of the agent*. We can distinguish between the false and unsatisfactory happiness found in the expression of a more or less isolated and superficial tendency of the self, and the true or genuine good found in the adequate fulfillment of a fundamental and fully related capacity (Dewey, 1908/2008, p. 246).

Happiness, in this sense, is distinct from pleasure. Happiness is a state of being that is linked to conduct that maintains a trajectory of growth toward an ideal. Conceived this way, happiness is not fleeting or ephemeral. Dewey (1908/1996) states that "true happiness...issues from objects which are enjoyable in themselves but which also reinforce and enlarge the other desires and tendencies which are sources of happiness" (p. 46).

### **Happiness and Stable Dispositions**

Happiness is differentiated from fleeting conditions of pleasure or pain, in part, by its greater degree of stability (Dewey, 1908/1996). Pleasure and pain are temporary organismic states of affairs that can conflict or interfere with the harmonizing and expanding nature of happiness. For example, a person may experience pleasure by receiving an unexpected gift from a friend, or pain by losing a favored object. Happiness, however, is a condition that is not dependent on the impulses of pleasure or pain. Dewey (1908/1996) states that "happiness is a matter of the disposition we actively bring with us to meet situations" (p. 46). A person who is happy in this sense is happy because he or she is working to realize envisaged ideals. That work is not dependent upon the fleeting conditions of pleasure or pain. It is because of the connection of happiness with the

effort to realize envisaged ideals that the “pursuit of happiness” can also be understood as a necessary condition of improvement of future states of affairs.

**Happiness and Intelligent Action**

In Dewey’s sense, human beings are acting intelligently when, and to the extent that, they are engaged in reflective reasoning. Intelligence is not primarily an attribute of a person, rather it is primarily adverbial, a characteristic of action. It is the disposition to engage in the reflective reasoning process that makes human beings “intelligent”. It is intelligent action that permits us to generate knowledge, and it is intelligent action using that knowledge that permits us to change and improve current conditions. Happiness is found through this use of intelligence to realize envisaged ideals. Dewey (1920) asserts that

Happiness is found only in success; but success means succeeding, getting forward, moving in advance. It is an active process, not a passive outcome. Accordingly it includes the overcoming of obstacles, the elimination of sources of defect or ill (pp. 179-180).

Understood this way, happiness is not a product of a passive state of being; it is the result of intelligent action toward the realization of envisaged ideals.

Conceiving happiness in this way, as a natural good that is conceptually connected with intelligent action, means that judgments of right moral action are open to revision and improvement. Dewey (1920) stresses the importance of this connection between happiness and morally defensible intelligent action when he says,

Mistakes are no longer either mere unavoidable accidents to be mourned or moral sins to be expiated and forgiven. They are lessons in wrong methods of using intelligence and instructions as to a better course in the future. Ends grow, standards of judgment are improved. Moral life...is rendered flexible, vital, growing (p. 175).

Recognizing that happiness requires a process of improvement based on the human capacity for moral reasoning is essential. Honoring each human’s capacity for moral reasoning means that every human has the inherent right to be included in the pursuit of happiness, i.e., the Good Life.

### **Happiness and Social Engagement**

Happiness, in Dewey's sense, is not something one individual can fully achieve in isolation from others. Dewey (1908/1996) acknowledges the primary role other human beings play in each individual human's pursuit of happiness, and says,

The very problem of morals is to form an original body of impulsive tendencies into a voluntary self in which desires and affections center on the values which are common; in which interest focuses in objects that contribute to the enrichments of the lives of all (p. 168).

Action based on impulsive tendencies can have a negative effect on the capacity of other persons to achieve happiness. Yet, given a disposition to reflective inquiry, an individual may come to place a high value on the experiences of social harmony that are conducive to moral happiness, and may voluntarily choose conduct that contributes to social harmony. In this way, the individual's achievement of his or her personal happiness is consistent with the achievement of happiness by others, i.e., general happiness.

Dewey calls this form of personal happiness a "distinctively moral happiness" (Dewey, 1908/2008, p. 273). This happiness is morally justified because it promotes the concurrent happiness of others. It is through reflective moral inquiry that one recognizes that his or her happiness, in Dewey's sense, is dependent on the growth of the larger social community. It is the achievement of moral happiness that is an intrinsic component of the Good Life, as I conceive it here.

### **Generative Community: A Regulative Ideal For Education**

I have conceived the Good Life as a form of happiness that requires individual and collective actions of improvement through experimentation in order to change current conditions to fit envisaged ideals. Collective forms of action require moral decisions to be made via a collective process of deliberation. This is because the action is intended to promote the pursuit of the coordinated harmonious happiness of many individuals in the community. I have argued that Deweyan reflective morality is the best-warranted moral process by which to make morally defensible decisions. Given this, a

morally good education must provide conditions that are conducive to a) the occurrence of reflective morality and b) the realization of moral happiness and the Good Life. In this section, I develop a conception of an ideal community that is necessary for collective actions to be morally justified. I call this ideal community, *generative community*.

### **Generative Community**

A generative community emerges from a form of organismic interaction best thought of as communication. Dewey's (1929/1958) notion of communication is unusually rich. Communication is a cooperative activity; each party in the communication must be actively seeking engagement with the other: "The heart of language...is communication; the establishment of cooperation in an activity in which there are partners and in which the activity of each is modified and regulated by partnership" (Dewey, 1929/1958, p. 179). When two or more persons are engaged in any conjoint cooperative activity, they are in communication. The shared activity itself requires perspective taking, i.e., each party must be able to view the joint process from the other's perspective. Without communication, shared activity is impossible.

Dewey (1929/1958) writes, "When communication occurs, all natural events are re-adapted to meet the requirements of conversation, whether it be public discourse or that preliminary discourse termed thinking" (p. 166). In conversation, "Learning and teaching come into being and there is no event which may not yield information" (Dewey, 1929/1958, p. 167). It is because human individuals are able, instinctively, to take the perspective of others, i.e., to communicate, that we are able to experience the concerns of others as our own, and to jointly act for mutual aims. Moreover, we find great fulfillment in so doing. Dewey (1929/1958) asserts that "Communication is consummatory as well as instrumental...shared experience is the greatest of human goods" (p. 202). Through communication, understood in this sense, individuals are enabled to develop a generative community.

Generative community is a type of community that is strongly committed to communicative interactions in pursuit of a broad array of shared social aims. A generative community might be working to achieve aims such as social and ecological justice, knowledge, and/or self-realization. To achieve such aims, individuals would be engaged in the communicative interactions that constitute democracy in the Deweyan sense. Dewey (1916/2009) explains his conception of democracy: “A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience” (p. 73). The term ‘democracy’, in current social/political discourse, is often conceived, *contra* Dewey, in a thin sense, as a particular set of conventions that allow citizens to vote for governmental officials. Current forms of representative democracy can depart dramatically from Dewey’s conception of democracy, and from the conception of generative community developed here.

Generative community is grounded in, but goes beyond, Dewey’s (1908/1996) ethical theory of reflective morality. In this section I further conceptualize the notion of generative community, drawing on insights from the works of numerous philosophers and social theorists.

### *The Meaning of ‘Community’*

Community has been philosophically conceptualized in myriad ways. One way to conceptualize community is to focus on notions of sameness or consensus. This can seem intuitively obvious, because we often voluntarily group ourselves around similarities or common interests. This conception of community is problematic, however, because the value of individual differences to the life of the community is neglected. As a result, the term ‘community’ is sometimes abandoned, in an effort to find a way of discussing collectives of people who are intimately connected to one another, yet have very real differences. Abowitz (1999), however, argues for the reclamation of the term ‘community’. She deconstructs the dichotomy between difference and



community, and envisages community as constituted by communication across, through, and into difference.

Abowitz's (1999) way of conceptualizing community is important because it gives us the language to represent what Lederach (2005) calls our moral imagination. Abowitz (1999) explains the importance of language on our collective moral imagination when she says

The creativity of our social imaginations are limited by our discursively constructed world-views. In other words, if we cannot imagine community without imagining how human differences can peacefully co-exist and even thrive in its organic and shifting borders, then we will find ourselves hard-pressed to build social alliances across the constructed lines of social identity that currently keep us segregated and in violent conflict (p. 144).

Lederach (2005) expands on the role of moral imagination in the development of community: An ideal community must imagine difference, incorporate difference, and ultimately transcend difference. An ideal community, he writes

...has much to do with the nature of imagination and the capacity to envision a canvas of human relationships. This imagination, however, must emerge from and speak to the hard realities of human affairs. This is the paradoxical nature of both imagination and transcendence: Each must have a foot in what is and beyond what exists (Lederach, 2005, p. x).

What Abowitz (1999) and Lederach (2005) both imagine is the type of community that emerges when we are willing to engage with others, especially those who we may view as different. This is critical because, in Deweyan reflective morality, individual reflection and deliberation in community is a process that must include all human beings, not just people who appear to be similar, or whose interests appear to align. Peck (1987) adds an important observation about the term 'community':

If we are going to use the word [community] meaningfully we must restrict it to a group of individuals who have learned how to communicate honestly with each other, whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure, and who have developed some significant commitment to rejoice together, mourn together, and to delight in each other, make others' conditions our own (p. 59).

To develop this type of community, one must engage in conversations that encourage vulnerability and openness especially with those who may be perceived as different from one's self. Palmer (1977) writes

In a true community we will not choose our companions...our companions will be given to us... Often they will be persons who will upset our settled view of self and world. In fact, we might define true community as that place where the person you least want to live with always lives! (pp. 18-19).

This means that human beings, to grow together, must engage with those who are understood as different. Developing a sense of community with individuals who share similar worldviews, experiences, aspirations, and other features of identity is relatively easy. The work that needs to be done for such individuals to understand one another is eased by the fact that so much is shared. In that type of interaction, however, growth is limited, because interpersonal connections that are new and qualitatively different are limited. Engaging with individuals who are different in many fundamental ways from one's self is relatively difficult. One must actively work to understand their views of the world, that is, to enter into communication with those others. Through the expanded sphere of communication, growth in experience occurs.

The institution of public schooling provides a cultural space where individuals can engage in a community of difference, a community whose members are committed to learning about difference. It is a cultural space where people who see the world differently are in constant interaction. In the school setting, students and adults who differ with respect to race, ethnicity, religion, culture, or ability work together to achieve common aims. In this way, students and adults are engaged in a community of difference with a commitment to fostering communication across difference.

Wheatley's (2002) notion of the "courage of conversation" puts an emphasis on the difficulty of communication in a community of difference. Wheatley (2002) observes that "It's not easy to begin talking to one another... We stay silent and apart for many reasons. Some of us have never been invited to share our ideas and opinions" (p. 24). It

takes a great degree of courage to be in Deweyan communication with persons who are in fundamental ways different than oneself. It takes an even greater degree of courage to engage in communication across difference with respect to contentious issues of social equity. A strong commitment to engage in the social and inherently human practice of critical reflection is required, as is a commitment to moral imagination and openness to the collective. Through this process a community of difference emerges.

Schools have the potential to become this type of emergent community. Strong communities focused on learning, such as schools, are built on the commitment to communication (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). School communities, grounded in mutual respect and trust, encourage people to engage in the types of interactions that strengthen community. This type of community emerges when people who are willing to be open and vulnerable stretch the moral imagination. In these communities, the individual's most deeply held beliefs are challenged, not just by abstract ideas but by actual interactions with human embodiments of difference, diversity, and the "other".

*The Meaning of 'Generative'*

The continual growth of the type of community I have conceptualized above is critical. This means that the community must be "generative", in a sense I explain in this section. Dewey (1916/2009) points out the fact that for a society to continue over time the society must transmit the fundamentals of the society across generations. This transmission occurs, according to Dewey (1916/2009),

...by means of communication of habits of doing, thinking, and feeling from the older to the younger. Without this communication of ideals, hopes, expectations, standards, opinions, from those members of society who are passing out of the group life to those who are coming into it, social life could not survive (p. 6).

Education is, in part, this communicative process.

Erikson (1950/1963) uses the term 'generativity' to refer to this process.

Generativity, in Erikson's (1950/1963) sense, "encompasses the evolutionary development which has made man the teaching and instituting as well as the learning

animal.... Generativity, then, is primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation” (p. 266-267). McAdams and Logan (2004) provide a definition of generativity that succinctly captures the ideas of both Dewey (1916/2009) and Erikson (1950/1963). McAdams and Logan (2004) see generativity as

...both the conservation and nurturance of that which people deem good in life and the transformation of that which people believe to be in need of improvement, with the common aim of fostering the development and well-being of future generations (McAdams & Logan, 2004, p. 16).

The development of generativity, in this sense, as both socially conservative and transformative, is a necessary means to realizing a community that is in a continual process of moral improvement. Reflective inquiry is what gives the generative community the ability to redevelop, refine, and improve its body of moral knowledge. Conserving knowledge that is already gained, while at the same time being committed to the critique of the existing body of knowledge through reflective inquiry is the fundamental core of the concept of generativity.

#### *Fundamental Conditions of Generative Community*

The conditions that constitute generative community are justified on the grounds that these conditions are necessary for the development of reflective morality. Generative community as a regulative ideal for social life thus shares in the justification that obtains for reflective morality. Reflective morality is justified on the grounds that it is the way to develop a body of well-warranted statements about the world, i.e. knowledge, with respect to ethical questions. In so far as reflective morality is justified, generative community is justified. To the extent that the conditions that constitute generative community are lacking, the processes of reflective morality are impeded. There are four fundamental necessary conditions of generative community that fit generative community for the processes of reflective moral inquiry. These are: social equity; inclusivity; transparency; and, fallibility (defeasibility). I shall consider each of these conditions in turn.

The condition of social equity is the requirement that, for all members of the community, there is equitable access to social goods, services, and social/political engagement. Why is the condition of social equity necessary for reflective morality? Successful reflective morality (inquiry into ethical matters) requires the greatest possible extent of intercommunication. This provides the necessary sharing of background knowledge, of creative imagination, and of the critical assessment of hypotheses and tentative conclusions. A social structure that provides for the maximum communicative interaction across all segments of society is thus necessary for the fullest development of reflective morality.

In the absence of an equitable social structure, communicative interaction would necessarily be diminished. In the extremes of the economic distribution of social goods, there will be persons who simply cannot participate in important collective forms of deliberation. For example, a person with a high paying job and paid time off would have the economic security that would allow him or her to participate in important collective forms of deliberation that a person with a low paying job and no paid time off would not.

The collective use of Deweyan reflective morality in a communicative context, as argued in Chapter I, is the only way, in any social context, to arrive at well-warranted answers to ethical questions, such as, what would count as an equitable distribution of social goods? It is the quality of the process of reflective moral reasoning that warrants the claim that an acceptable form of social equity has been developed. Iterative re-evaluations of social conditions through reflective moral reasoning involves the continued generation of new ideals of social equity, permitting the growth toward both social equity and reflective moral reasoning, in an incremental way.

The condition of inclusivity is closely related to the condition of equity. Inclusivity requires that social equity extend to all persons regardless of differences in personal characteristics or ideas. People differ in terms of characteristics such as race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, disability, sexual identity, education,

occupation, and host of other differences. People also differ in terms of ideas about what constitutes a social problem situation, about what the features of a recognized problem situation are, and about what the future state of affairs envisaged as ideal would be. To be most effective in generating well-warranted collective decisions about social action, the process of reflective moral reasoning requires the maximum variety of inputs. Hence inclusivity is required for generative community.

The condition of transparency is the requirement that all members of the community engaged in the process of reflective inquiry fully disclose whatever information they have that may affect the process of critical reflective moral reasoning. Without such disclosure, the conclusions reached through reflective moral reasoning would not be as well-warranted as would otherwise be possible. Relevant information must be fully open to public scrutiny, as this is part of what warrants the conclusions reached through the process of reflective moral reasoning. The pursuit of hidden agendas for personal gain would violate the condition of transparency, as would decision making behind closed doors, deceptive political maneuvering, and manipulative advertising.

The condition of fallibility requires that members of the community be committed to allowing currently accepted norms, policies, practices, and cultural conventions to be open to revision. This means that initial conventions should not be conceived as fixed, prior to the process of reflective inquiry. All ideas considered must be understood as being defeasible through reasoned argument. This is necessary for the processes of reflective morality because well-warranted moral knowledge must be based on the best knowledge of the day. If new information is brought to light that has an effect on currently accepted norms, policies, practices, and cultural conventions, then accepted social conventions must be changed.

#### *Possible Objections to Generative Community*

There are two primary objections to generative community as an ideal: first, that it is not realistic, and second, that it is not desirable.

The first possible objection is that the ideal of generative community is not realistic, in the sense that it is a state of affairs that is unachievable. But an “ideal” need not be wholly and permanently achievable in fact. An ideal is an imagined state of affairs that provides a direction for growth. Movement toward the ideal is valuable in itself, even if the ideal cannot be fully reached.

There are a number of possible states of affairs to be considered. It may be the case that the conditions necessary even for an approach to generative community do not currently exist, because individual human beings have not evolved in such a way that it is possible that the collective good be understood as necessary for individual good. It may be that individuals are naturally greedy, power-hungry, aggressive, and insensitive to the needs of others. If this is the case, an impulse to act for the collective good would not be engrained as an instinctive habit.

The question then becomes: Are individual human beings capable of actualizing the conditions required for generative community, given that this requires acting in opposition to native instinct? If humans are not capable of this, then it must be conceded that social change in the direction of generative community is not possible. Generative community, in this case, would not be worth pursuing as an ideal.

If, however, human beings are naturally moved to act for the collective good, or, if human beings are able to overcome opposing natural impulses, then an approach toward generative community would be possible. In this case, the important question becomes, how do we propel our current social evolution in this direction? The development of social institutions, laws, and mores that help people see the overall social good of acting for the benefit of community is necessary. It is particularly important that educational institutions become committed to serving this purpose, if it is to be achieved.

Another question is: Are human beings in a community capable of developing social institutional structures that effectively counter whatever natural tendencies oppose the development of generative community? If such social institutions are not possible,

then, again, it must be conceded that generative community is not realistic or worth pursuing as an ideal. If, however, such social institutions are possible, then the question becomes the practical question, how do we proceed in developing adequate social structures? It is at this point that focus shifts to the Deweyan concept of reflective moral inquiry, as a necessary condition for bringing about the improvement of existing problem situations. If it is not possible for a collective group of human beings to conjointly engage in Deweyan reflective reasoning, or, if Deweyan reflective reasoning is not adequate to resolve broad social problem situations, then, again, the concept of generative community, which is based on Deweyan reflective moral inquiry, would not be worth pursuing as an ideal.

These are legitimate questions, which cannot be adequately answered without continued social experimentation regarding the prospects of Deweyan reflective reasoning. The only alternative to making this effort is to simply give up on the possibility of building generative community. At this time there is not adequate evidence that this goal is impossible. Nor is there conclusive evidence that it is possible. In other words, this is an open question. There would need to be an intentional process of social experimentation to effectively evaluate whether or not the building of generative community is possible, given the current state of affairs. The Deweyan conception of inquiry makes the nature of social experimentation explicit. It requires the development of a hypothesis, action on that hypothesis, and analysis of the results of that action. This inquiry process permits incremental discovery of new knowledge about human capacities that is applicable to the problem of developing generative community.

A second major objection might be that generative community is not, in fact, an ideal future state that is generally desired. That is, even if it were possible to realize generative community, it may be that few people would actually desire to do so. On the one hand, human history does not seem to indicate such a desire. Culturally developed and accepted conditions in human societies have seldom been socially equitable in the



sense employed here. Inclusivity is often lacking—human beings are wont to divide themselves into groups whose members are similar, and intentionally exclude from their groups those who are viewed as different, in certain, often trivial, respects. Transparency is not often the norm. Human beings often keep information hidden, intentionally deceiving others in pursuit of individual gain. And, fallibility is seldom assumed. Human beings, having acquired social mind, in the Deweyan sense, often maintain specific ideas or conclusions dogmatically, and work harder to prove the truth of ideas currently held than to critique and improve upon them. All this suggests the possibility that generative community has not been generally desired.

Yet, on the other hand, human history is also replete with collective efforts to develop moral and legal structures that aim to secure a more humane and communal social life. In the U.S., for example, civil rights activists have worked to ensure greater inclusivity of persons who have been historically marginalized. Sunshine laws, the freedom of information act, and intentional efforts to expose information such as WikiLeaks all serve to increase transparency, making information more readily accessible to the public. Even though these efforts have not been fully successful, they do seem to indicate that the conditions of generative community have been considered desirable by many. Although the historical evidence is mixed, there does seem to be reason to conclude that generative community can be, and historically has been, a desired ideal.

### *Generative Community and the Self*

Generative community may seem like an unrealizable state of affairs; it is surely the case that it is seldom, if ever, realized in fact. Conceptions of the self are relevant to the development of any community, and specifically generative community. This is because how the self is conceptualized is directly related to the type of community that is possible. Western thinkers have historically conceptualized the “self” as an autonomous non-material being. Landrine (1992) describes this autonomous self as a “...bounded,

unique, singular, encapsulated, noncorporeal, ghostlike, and godly entity somewhere in the body” (p. 403), and refers to this conception of the self as the “referential self”. The referential self is conceived to have “abilities, preferences, needs, desires, and a “style” of its own that describe it, refer to it (hence, referential), and differentiate it from other selves. The referential self can be described without reference to others or to a context” (Landrine, 1992, p. 403). Perhaps most importantly, to be in relationship is considered a secondary feature of the referential self. In other words, the referential self exists prior to and independent of interpersonal relationships.

Landrine (1992) considers the referential self to have been, historically, the dominant way people in western cultures have understood the self. Landrine (1992) observes that

Community, nation, family, roles, and relationships are all secondary to the self, and are conceptualized as an “instrumentality” for the self. Each of these larger social units is presumed to exist in order to meet the self’s needs, and will be rejected if it fails to do so. The self thereby chooses its values, roles, politics, and religion, as well as the forms of relationship and community in which it will participate (p. 405).

This way of conceptualizing the self reduces communication and community between humans to a function of pure efficiency, practicality, or self-interest. Both communication and community become superficial features that are separate from the individual. In other words, for the referential self, communication and community are optional, something one can choose to engage with, rather than something one is necessarily bound up with. When people believe that the individual self is independent of others, a sense of humanity as a collective to which they belong is diminished. As a result of conceiving the self as referential, both the humanity of the individual and the health of the community suffer. Conceiving the self as referential or autonomous is inconsistent with the conception of generative community.

There is, however, another conception of self, the “indexical self”, that is consistent with generative community. In this conception, social context is conceptually

inseparable from self. The indexical self is essentially interdependent, because it is conceived to exist in and through relationship. The claim is that an individual's conception of self always emerges from processes of social interaction (Gaines, 1982). Markus and Kitayama (1991) describe the interdependent nature of the indexical self in this way. It is a matter of:

seeing oneself as part of an encompassing social relationship and recognizing that one's behavior is determined by, contingent on, and to a large extent, organized by what the actor perceives to be the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others in the relationships (p. 227).

McCabe (2005) argues that social interaction is an inherent feature of human life. Human beings are in fact all dependent upon social interactions, because human survival and reproduction requires some form of social grouping. The evolution of language conferred upon human beings a unique way of being in community. Language permits us to represent the world to ourselves and to others, and also to represent ourselves to ourselves and to others (McCabe, 2005). In McCabe's (2005) view, this ability to intentionally construct and present a chosen "self" to others and to oneself gives human beings a unique freedom, a freedom that is, however, dependent upon one's social interactions.

The self that one chooses to construct and present has its significance because of the interpretation of others. The goal is to fashion one's self in relation to others, in a social context, i.e., as a member of a community. To belong to a community, is in McCabe's (2005) view "to develop...specifically symbolic, linguistic, rational relationships with others..." (p. 29).

Hirst (1999) makes a similar point, arguing that it is through social interaction that the individual becomes a person. "To be a person and not merely an individual being is to live and act in relationships with others in which shared activities, concepts, beliefs and so on crucially define us as the persons we are" (Hirst, 1999, p. 127). It is through such communal relationships that the individual becomes able to experience the Good

Life, as each individual's pursuit of happiness is recognized, honored, and supported by his or her community.

The community generates a structure of social order, i.e., social mores, customs, laws, etc., that constrain the choices of the individual members. But this order is not an external imposition on the individuals, because the individual forms in the context of the community. Dewey (1938/1963) puts it this way: "it is not the will or desire of any one person which establishes order [among individuals] but the moving spirit of the whole group. The control is social, but individuals are parts of the community, not outside of it" (p. 54). Such social control can be oppressive, unless the necessary conditions of generative community are in place. The conditions of social equity, inclusivity, transparency, and fallibility ensure individual freedom in social interaction.

Realizing the importance of relationship and community to the Good Life means, in practical terms, that we must put community building at the center of the educational process. To build generative community within schools, we must transform our system of schooling. Sergiovanni (1994) agrees, writing that "[c]ommunity can help teachers and students be transformed from a collection of I's to a collective "we," thus providing them with a unique and enduring sense of identity, belonging, and place" (p. xiii).

The beliefs about performance and success that currently guide educational reform movements must also be transformed. Currently, in the U.S. system of education, there is too much emphasis on the aim of individual achievement and personal gain, and too little on the aim of community development (Apple, 2013; Fielding, 2007). Palmer, almost 40 years ago, observed that "we will build community in these places [schools and society] only if we see that performance at the expense of community is no achievement at all" (Palmer, 1977, p. 24). Yet to achieve the Good Life requires the development of community, in the strong sense of generative community, as described herein. Generative community, as an envisaged ideal state of affairs, provides a standard by which to assess the merits of particular educational aims, policies, and practices.

**PART II**  
**USING GENERATIVE COMMUNITY AS A REGULATIVE IDEAL**  
**TO ASSESS THE MORAL VALUE OF**  
**EDUCATIONAL AIMS, POLICIES,**  
**AND PRACTICES IN THE U.S.**

## **CHAPTER III**

### **ASSESSING EDUCATIONAL AIMS**

#### **Selecting the Exemplars**

If education is to fulfill its moral purposes, every specific educational aim that is set out ought to be assessed in terms of a regulative moral ideal. I have argued that the concept of generative community ought to be a primary regulative ideal that guides the development and adoption of specific educational aims. In this chapter I will employ the concept of generative community as a regulative ideal in assessing several exemplars of educational aims. I have purposefully selected a small sample of educational aims that play a prominent role in the U.S. system of education and assess each of these educational aims by reference to generative community as a regulative ideal.

Exemplars have been selected because in the context of a dissertation it is impracticable to work with more than a small sample of educational aims. Marshall and Rossman (2011) provide a thorough explication of legitimate qualitative sampling strategies appropriate for different research purposes. One of these sampling strategies is that of purposive sampling. The qualitative method of purposive sampling was employed here in the selection of the educational aims I assess. The reason I chose to examine this particular set of aims is because, first, these aims are relevant to the social/political structure of U.S. education, and second, the interpretation of these aims has implications for current reform initiatives. The aims I have chosen to examine are instances of what Marshall and Rossman (2011) refer to as “politically important cases”.

From the literature on the history and philosophy of education, I have selected a set of six prominent and politically important educational aims on which to focus attention (see Cremin, 1961; Kaestle, 1983/1994; Ravitch, 1983; Reese, 2005, Tyack & Hansot, 1982). These aims are: 1) to disseminate knowledge; 2) to increase economic efficiency; 3) to achieve individual self-realization; 4) to promote cultural assimilation; 5) to promote the growth of democracy; and, 6) to advance social justice. In this chapter, I

explicate each of these six aims, and assess each by reference to generative community as a regulative ideal.

### **Knowledge and Generative Community**

In this section, I explicate and assess the dissemination of knowledge as an educational aim, by reference to generative community as a regulative ideal.

Educationalists in the U.S. have adopted a variety of distinct educational models in an effort to clarify the specific sort, or sorts, of knowledge that students ought to achieve, and the way, or ways, in which students ought to acquire such knowledge. Educational historians have categorized these distinct educational models of knowledge in a variety of ways. Ravitch (1983) and Reese (2005) use the terms ‘traditionalism’ and ‘progressivism’. Gutek (2004) uses the terms ‘perennialism’, ‘essentialism’, ‘progressivism’, and ‘critical theory’. Gutek’s (2004) categorizations will be employed here, because it draws finer distinctions.

Perennialism, essentialism, and child-centered progressivism each have distinctive conceptions of knowledge, which have had effects on the form of U.S. education. In this section, I explicate and assess perennialism, essentialism, and child-centered progressivism, in relation to the aim of knowledge dissemination, using generative community as a regulative ideal.

#### **Perennialism and Knowledge**

Perennialist educators emphasize the idea that acquiring knowledge is a process of understanding truth, which is conceived to be universal and timeless. Educational procedures are justified when they transmit universal timeless truths. Students are expected to be exposed to the recurrent themes of human life as represented in a prescribed set of works which are argued to be the greatest works of humankind. The process of coming to know, in this view, requires students to be receptive to the great ideas and absorb the lessons. The proper work of the school is to achieve the aim of intellectual development and socialization in the norms of a community of scholars. The

other aims, such as enculturalization in the wider society and vocational learning are devalued as distractions from the proper scholarly aims of the school. Non-academic learning is at times recognized to be important, but it is considered to be outside the responsibility of the school (Guttek, 2004).

A good example of a perennialist model of education in the history of U.S. education is the Great Books initiative developed and promoted by John Erskine, Robert Hutchins, and Mortimer Adler (Beam, 2008). In order to implement this initiative, a select group of academics were convened to choose the greatest books of the western world, to serve as the basis for what students ought to know. Under this form of education few elective courses are offered to students and they spend a considerable amount of time reading from original works rather than textbooks. In a science classroom students might read Newton's *The Principia* or in a math class they might read *Pascal's Scientific Treatises*.

Another example of the perennialist model of knowledge is Adler's (1982) *Paideia Proposal*. According to Adler (1982), it is imperative that all students receive the same high quality curriculum and be required to meet the same objectives. Adler proposed that this be accomplished through a standardized curriculum aimed solely at the development of students' academic capabilities. The choice of a second language was the only elective students were given.

It is possible to argue that the transmission of knowledge, in the perennialist sense, is a worthy educational aim. There is value in the great works approach because, when engaging with original works, a student has the opportunity to process and critically reflect on the nature, content, and quality of the work. This is important to the development of the necessary skills of critical thinking and reflection that are required in a generative community.

The perennialist model of knowledge, however, is problematic, because some of its features conflict with generative community. The perennialist model of knowledge is



often implemented through a single standardized curriculum which excludes various types of educational opportunities. The inclusion of various types of educational opportunities is important to the development of generative community because, for human beings to learn how to effectively interact and communicate, they must have more than well-developed academic capabilities. They must have social skills that foster the development of strong relationships.

The different interests and needs in a community require that there be a wide-range of educational opportunities for students to pursue. It may be that an individual who is interested in carpentry may not be best served by studying classic works of Latin. However, an individual interested in carpentry may have an interest in studying both a practical trade and a classic body of literature. In a generative community it would be important to leave both options open to all members of society.

The perennialist model of knowledge also appears to be inconsistent with the inclusivity that is required in generative community. This is because with this model of knowledge, it is a select group of individuals who decide which great works convey the knowledge that students properly ought to learn. Such a selective process excludes a wide range of persons from participation in the curricular decision making process. The inclusion of a wide range of individuals in decision-making processes is important to the development of generative community because for decisions to be well-warranted there must be a maximization of diversity of individuals participating in the inquiry process.

### **Essentialism and Knowledge**

The perennialist and essentialist models are sometimes lumped together under the term 'traditionalism' (Ravitch, 1983; Reese, 2005). However, essentialism is distinct from perennialism in that essentialism emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge that is specific to human survival and productivity. This means that the approved subject matter may be changed over time to more effectively prepare students for their role in a changing society. In modern society, knowledge and skills in subjects such as reading,

writing, math, science, and history are often referred to as “the basics”. The essentialist model of education is often referred to as “basic education” or “getting back to basics”.

Academic subjects are treated as distinct elements in a curriculum that is organized both sequentially and cumulatively. What students should know is the body of knowledge that has been developed and organized by experts, such as scientists and scholars. In the essentialist model of education, students are expected to be receptive to the information that is presented to them, and to commit it to memory (Gutek, 2004).

Essentialism with respect to knowledge has been a key conception in the history of the U.S. system of education (Gutek, 2004). In particular, after the launch of Sputnik in 1957, essentialism dominated the educational landscape. Since Sputnik, public education has been routinely criticized for its lack of rigor and its lack of emphasis on subject-centered curriculum. In the 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, these concerns were raised. The U.S. system of education was blamed for the United States’ inability to compete economically with other industrialized nations. Since the release of *A Nation at Risk*, numerous educational acts such as the Goals 2000 Educate America Act of 1994, the Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 have all stressed an essentialist model of education.

It is possible to argue that the pursuit of knowledge in the essentialist sense is a worthy educational aim. The fact that this model of knowledge is based on what experts in professional fields have come to know about the world gives students the best knowledge of the day to analyze, critique, and further develop as adults. Reliance on the best knowledge of the day, developed by experts in specific fields of study, is an essential feature of generative community. This is because, to adequately assess current problem situations and generate creative ideals as solutions to be pursued, we must work from the best knowledge of the day. That knowledge is considered to be fallible and is not regarded as a set of infeasible certainties.

Despite relying on the best knowledge of the day, essentialist knowledge is problematic as an educational aim. Generative community requires individuals to be active participants in a collective process of reflective and critical thinking. The essentialist model of knowledge in some respects is inconsistent with this requirement. This is because students are expected to be receptive to the ideas presented to them and commit them to memory. Subjects and their ideas may not be presented in such a way that students are engaged in the active process of raising questions about the knowledge presented and about its relation to specific problem situations. Taken to an extreme, this has the potential to inhibit the development of the necessary process of critical thinking and questioning that is required in generative community.

### **Child-Centered Progressivism and Knowledge**

Child-centered progressivism is often thought to conceive knowledge as a set of individual understandings of the world in the mind of each learner. These understandings are actively constructed within each learner's mind, by reflections on the experiences of each learner.

Each child's interests and needs are central to the process of constructing the child's individual knowledge (Gutek, 2004). Child-centered progressives regard learning as an experiential process that encourages students to engage in real-life situations to do activity-based learning, group projects, and experimental based forms of problem solving. In a child-centered learning environment, students are expected to be active participants in activities, projects, and discussions where they have the opportunity to formulate, test, and critique their ideas. The teacher's role is to know the students and the subject matter well enough to effectively facilitate the growth of students' learning. The teacher is expected to provide students with activities, projects, and problems that are in line with a student's needs and interests so that the learning experience might broaden the student's knowledge base.

It is possible to argue that pursuit of knowledge as understood in the child-centered model is a worthy educational aim. Child-centered progressivism appears, in some of its features, to be consistent with generative community. Generative community requires individuals to be engaged in an active process of testing and revision of beliefs taken to count as knowledge. This is the feature of fallibility. The child-centered model of knowledge is consistent with this requirement because students are expected to be active participants in the process of knowledge development. This contributes to the development of individuals' abilities to engage in the necessary process of critical thinking and questioning that is required in generative community.

Child-centered progressivism also appears consistent with generative community because it encourages students to pursue diverse interests, questions, puzzles, ideas, and problem situations. This is consistent with generative community because generative community requires a maximization of diversity with respect to information and ideas pursued by the larger community. The emphasis of a child's interests encourages an intellectual autonomy in the development of the "individualized mind" that is essential for critique of the socially given mores, practices, and beliefs.

It would be a mistake to conceive and implement child-centered progressive education under the belief that expert knowledge and the classic works are in some sense forbidden. This kind of an extreme conception would inhibit the development of generative community. This is because there is a cumulative improvement in the knowledge of human kind due to the reflective processes of inquiry Dewey describes. It is important that the members of generative community understand the vast body of existing knowledge in order to build on that body of knowledge.

### **Economic Efficiency and Generative Community**

In this section, I turn from the educational aim of the dissemination of knowledge, to take up the educational aim of economic efficiency. I explicate and assess

economic efficiency as an educational aim, by reference to generative community as a regulative ideal.

Economic efficiency in education can be understood in two different senses. First, the term ‘economic efficiency’ might refer to the efficiency of the process of education itself. An economically efficient education is one that operates to maximize the benefits while minimizing the costs of education. This is a matter of maximizing benefit per unit cost ratio. At worst, the pursuit of economic efficiency becomes a matter of reducing costs to the bare minimum, even though this reduction in spending reduces the educational benefits that may be achieved.

Second, the term ‘economic efficiency’ might refer to the development of a national economic system that operates efficiently. Education then becomes a matter of preparing students for the needs of the current and future economy. Some theorists do not distinguish the difference between the two senses of economic efficiency, and call for both senses simultaneously. The call, that is, is for efficient school systems to produce efficient national economies.

The educational aim of economic efficiency in both senses is deeply rooted in the history of the U.S. educational system. This aim can be traced back to common school reformers who adopted a Lancasterian system of education, a system of education specifically designed to maximize educational efficiency (Kaestle, 1983/1994). Educational efficiency was a primary aim in the early 1900s and remains a central aim of the U.S. education system today. In this section I will explicate and assess economic efficiency, first as it relates to the educational process, and, second as it relates to the national economy, using generative community as a regulative ideal in both cases.

### ***Educational Economic Efficiency***

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Fredrick Winslow Taylor pioneered a technique called scientific management, which was aimed at creating the most economically efficient process that could be applied on an industrial scale (Callahan, 1962).

Administrative progressives adopted Taylor's style of management and aimed to achieve educational efficiency through the use of scientific data (Cremin, 1961).

Measurement of efficiency was an important feature of this style of management. Many administrative progressives thought it was critical to measure the amount of time spent on various aspects of schooling. To save money spent on education, administrative progressives sought ways to simultaneously shorten the school hours and transmit more information during those hours. Learning procedures ranging from content to methods were standardized in an effort to yield the highest possible returns on educational expenditures.

The measurement of student achievement was also undertaken as a key part of the pursuit of educational economic efficiency. Lewis Terman and Edward Thorndike focused on measuring students' IQs and students' achievements in subjects such as arithmetic handwriting, spelling, drawing, reading, and language (Cremin, 1961). Administrative progressivism encouraged rote forms of learning as such learning could be easily measure and easily maximized for very little cost. The greatest educational efficiency would thus be achieved.

The logic of economic efficiency can be found in the increased emphasis on school choice in the U.S. The school choice option was detailed by the U.S. Department of Education (1991) in *America 2000: An Education Strategy Sourcebook* (Sullivan, 1993). The *Sourcebook* calls for a market-based approach to education. The market-based approach is promoted as the most efficient way to ensure that the quality of schools remains high and that schools continue to focus on economically beneficial forms of productivity. Essential to the market-based approach is a focus on "performance indicators". This focus allows parents to grade or compare the effectiveness of competing schools. The market-based logic assumes that parents whose children attend schools that do not perform well will simply move their children to schools that do

perform well. Educational efficiency is thought to be maximized by the dynamics of the free market.

Currently in the U.S., educational efficiency is a major aim that is pursued. Standardization of knowledge and objectives serves to increase educational efficiency. Online educational opportunities also serve to increase educational efficiency. For John Katzman, founder of the Princeton Review, Inc. test-prep company, the goal of an educational technology revolution is to answer the question, “How do we use technology so that we require fewer highly qualified teachers?” (as quoted in Simon, 2012a, p. 1). As an educational entrepreneur, Katzman advises investors to focus on companies that are developing educational technologies that can take the place of teachers for certain parts of the school day. Katzman suggests that these technologies will become profitable because they will ultimately drive down labor costs (Simon, 2012a).

It is possible to argue that educational efficiency is a worthy educational aim. Educational efficiency is certainly better than educational waste. It is true that there is a finite amount of resources that is available for the task of educating children in society. Using these resources wisely is a standing imperative. To do this requires intentional and reflective inquiry into the best way to achieve the greatest educational goods. Understood this way, educational efficiency would be consistent with generative community.

When attempting to achieve greater efficiency, it is important to know what the educational goods are that one intends to achieve. It is shortsighted to attempt to achieve efficient production, without having first evaluated the worth of the various aspects of the educational results. The danger is that easily and cheaply achieved results will displace more valuable educational goods that are more difficult and costly to achieve.

Online educational opportunities, for example, may be considerably less costly than the provision of public, brick-and-mortar, schools with highly qualified teachers. But the central question is, is the educational product of the same value? It may be that

online educational opportunities may offer a better educational result. For example, the acquisition of knowledge through the use of corporate products that provide access to expert knowledge may be equal to that available in a traditional public school. And, in addition, a child may be better protected from negative social experiences, such as bullying, prejudice, violence, and/or aggressive competition, which may be found in a traditional form of schooling.

On the other hand, online educational opportunities may produce an inferior educational result. The commercial curricula that are available may be developed with the aim of cost efficiency in mind, rather than the aim of educational excellence. Such an emphasis, if it were to occur, would inhibit the development of generative community. This is because an educational divide may be created, such that cost efficient education, producing only marginal educational results, is produced and marketed to the economically disadvantaged, while a “cost-is-no-object” education, producing excellent educational results, is reserved for the economically advantaged.

This educational divide is already generated given current reliance on local funding of public education, which, in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, results in inadequate levels of funding (Carr & Griffith 2005a; Carr & Griffith 2005b; Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2007; Odden & Picus, 2008; The Education Trust, 2005; 2006; Valverde, 2004). In contrast, in wealthy neighborhoods, public schools receive substantially higher levels of funding, and private educational options are available for the economically advantaged. In a generative community, these divides must be intentionally and explicitly addressed. Efforts to increase educational efficiency must be judged in the context of the quality of the educational results that are produced in the interest of the production of maximal social equity.

### **National Economic Efficiency**

Taylor’s notion of scientific management was adapted for the educational setting in the early 1900s. This move was widely championed by prominent educational leaders



of the time, such as Ellwood P. Cubberley, a prominent historian of education, and William Bagley, a prominent educational theorist. In Bagley's (1913) textbook for students of education, *Classroom Management*, he states that "the aim of the school may be formulated as social efficiency" (pp. 7-8). Alongside the aim of efficiency in the system of education there emerged a related aim, the aim of national economic efficiency, to be achieved by means of an efficient educational system. The intention became to develop a system of education that would produce future workers as needed by the national economic system, at the lowest cost possible. Cubberly, as early as 1916, maintained that schools were "factories in which the raw products (children) are to be shaped and fashioned into products to meet the various demands of life" (Reese, 2005, p. 144).

The current emphasis on economic efficiency in education is in part due to the conception of a close link between education and wealth in human capital theory (Burbules & Torres, 2000; Gilead, 2012). In a human capital framework, the study of literature would only be considered valuable if it could directly or indirectly lead to economic benefits. Robeyns (2006) reveals how this line of reasoning extends into decisions about the types of educational endeavors that ought to be funded, and decisions about which individuals ought to be given the opportunity to pursue education. Ultimately, in a human capital framework, subjects and persons most likely to yield the highest return on investment ought to be given priority. This conversation is taking place today, to name one example, in Florida's system of higher education. In 2012, Florida Governor Rick Scott has proposed giving students discounts on tuition for majoring in fields that are thought to be high-skill, high-wage, and in high demand by Florida employers (Weissmann, 2012).

Those who have had significant power over educational policy in the United States have often promoted the production of economic efficiency as an educational aim. In 1907, the President of the Commercial National Bank of Chicago was invited as a

guest speaker to the National Education Association's annual convention and proclaimed that progress was "a result of getting away, to an extent, from the mere scholastic education, and developing the practical side, making the school the place to learn how to manufacture..." (Callahan, 1962, p. 9). Andrew Carnegie was a strong proponent of this view. He made his voice heard by encouraging school leaders to implement a practical education that prepared students for the business of society (Callahan, 1962). Carnegie's legacy, The Carnegie Foundation, continues to promote a system of education that is shaped by and for economic efficiency (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2012).

Political leaders in the United States continue to justify the system of education with arguments of economic efficiency. In a campaign speech, President Clinton (1992) stated,

The key to our economic strength in America today is productivity growth... In the 1990s and beyond, the universal spread of education, computers, and high speed communications means that what we earn will depend on what we can learn and on how well we can apply what we learn to the workplaces of America (para. 8).

Eighteen years later, in an address to the U.S. public, President Barack Obama (2010) said, "Countries that out-educate us today are going to out-compete us tomorrow" (para. 3). Whitehurst (2010), former director of the Institute of Education Sciences within the U.S. Department of Education, stated that "If we're to win the international horserace we will need to create the conditions for horse races among postsecondary institutions in this country with finish lines of productivity and employment" (para. 4). This extreme emphasis on the economic effects of education for the country and for each individual person is now more common than ever.

In a paper titled *The Economic Imperative for Improving Education*, the U.S. Department of Education (2003a) emphasized the importance of human capital. The U.S. Department of Education (2003a) explained how No Child Left Behind works to "mobilize high schools to address the economic imperative for a more rigorous education

system in the United States” (p. 1). This paper was developed through an initiative of the U.S. Department of Education (2003b) “to support state and local level leaders in creating educational opportunities that will fully prepare American youth for success in further education and training, as participants in a highly skilled U.S. workforce, and as productive and responsible citizens” (para. 1).

According to The U.S. Department of Education (2003a), each individual’s increasing need for education as a means to achieve personal economic survival is another version of the economic justification of education. The U.S. Department of Education (2003a) cited the following as support: “In the year 2000, female and male college graduates earned 60 and 95 percent more, respectively, than those who had not gone beyond high school” (p. 2). President Obama (2012) recently remarked that “Higher education cannot be a luxury in this country. It’s an economic imperative that every family must be able to afford” (para. 1). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2003a), the increasingly important effect education has on the economic conditions of individuals, and of the country as a whole, means that

The well being of the nation increasingly depends upon U.S. high schools rising to the challenge of preparing all students for a new economic reality.... In a world where financial capital, technology, information and goods flow freely across borders, economic advantage goes to the educated and entrepreneurial (p. 1).

Philosopher of education Hodgson (2010) considers the role the economy now plays in the lives of all people and argues that “the economic imperative operates across all areas of our lives such that it is no longer distinct from the social” (p. 121). Education and economic efficiency have become so entangled that it is now difficult to conceptualize education apart from national economic progress and from one’s individual role as an economic agent. Hodgson (2010) asks two important, and philosophical, questions that force one to consider the depth of this entanglement: What does it mean to be an educated person?; and, What is significant about being an educated person?

Hodgson (2010) suggests that in today's knowledge economy, the significance of being an educated person is that one can be economically productive. The entanglement of one's education with economic productivity has important implications for how one makes sense of one's self. Hodgson (2010) says that the self is now understood "according to key terms such as 'mobility', 'employability', 'flexibility' and 'transferable skills'" (p. 113). Hodgson (2010) refers to that type of self as the 'entrepreneurial self'. Hodgson (2010) argues that, in contemporary society, if one does not use the notion of the entrepreneurial self to orient oneself to the world, one risks economic marginalization.

It is possible to argue that national economic efficiency is a worthy educational aim. Economic efficiency is not in and of itself a bad thing. Society does have finite resources that must be wisely employed to the benefit of society as a whole. Economic efficiency in the sense of wise resource management for long-term sustainability is a worthy and necessary social goal. This is required for the maintenance of generative community. Economic efficiency in the sense of a maximization of corporate profit, however, need not lead to economic efficiency in the sense of wise management. This means that calls for national economic efficiency must be continually judged, in particular concrete instances, by reference to the requirements of generative community.

Current conceptions of national economic efficiency accept conditions of vast economic stratification as a concomitant of economic efficiency, taken to be an acceptable form of collateral damage. Understood this way, the aim of achieving national economic efficiency through an appropriately designed educational system would be in conflict with generative community. Generative community requires social equity in the distribution of social goods.

In some conceptions of an efficient national economy, individual economic success is thought to be achieved through competition, and successful competition is an indicator of personal worth. Such an emphasis on individual competition devalues the

less successful others in the broader community. Under this conception, individuals who “win” are considered not only to merit economic success, but also to merit inclusion in social power structures. Economically successful individuals would then determine the direction, goals, and structure of society, especially in its decision-making functions. This conflicts with generative community’s requirement of inclusivity in the social decision-making processes.

Some may argue that the best way to distribute social economic resources is solely through the consideration of individual merit. Only those individuals who are able to prove they have the necessary knowledge and skills deserve to possess the resources necessary to be fully participating members of society. Those who do not have merit, in this sense, are excluded from participation in social decision-making by their lack of social economic resources. This, however, is in conflict with social equity, which is a necessary condition of generative community.

An emphasis on national economic efficiency as the aim of education is problematic because it devalues a wide range of educational disciplines. Only the educational disciplines that can be economically justified would be valued and deemed worthy of pursuit. Similarly, values which would tend to limit economic productivity would be considered less worthy of pursuit. Long-term considerations of essential environmental sustainability, for example, access to potable water, may be subordinated to short-term economic considerations. Educational curricula, if controlled by economic elites, may give little attention to problem situations that require a limitation of economic profit.

Individual development is similarly limited. Individual interests and ideas are valued to the extent that they contribute to economic productivity. The production of workers, with the virtues suitable for workers, such as diligence, docility, submission to authority, and acceptance of subordinate social/economic status, becomes a principal aim of education. The exception would be that a class of creative entrepreneurs would be

required for economic productivity. This creative class would not include the majority of workers (Tucker, 1978). Marx would term this the proletarianization of society. This effect is inconsistent with generative community's requirement of inclusivity with respect to a broad range of diverse ideas and values.

### **Self-Realization and Generative Community**

In this section, I turn from the educational aim of economic efficiency, to take up the educational aim of self-realization. I set out different conceptions of self-realization as an educational aim, and assess them by reference to generative community as a regulative ideal.

Education has been conceived as a process of both individualization and socialization. The degree to which either aspect ought to predominate in a child's education is a source of conflict among educational philosophers. This tension between individualization and socialization is a central element in the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Self-realization has been variously conceived.

In *Emile*, Rousseau (1762/2007) sets out an ideal conception of human nature and the proper method of education for such human beings. Rousseau (1762/2007) writes that there are three teachers that can influence the development of human beings; these teachers are Nature, things, and man. For humans to develop properly, the work of the three teachers must be in harmony. Nature and things must be the predominant educational force; the influence of man as teacher must be constrained so that it fits with the education of Nature and things (except in the case of the education of women). Rousseau (1762/2007) argues that the master teacher must be Nature, the source of our natural human tendencies, and "everything should...be brought into harmony with these natural tendencies" (p. 7).

When humans assume the role of master teacher, they generally attempt to train the natural man to be fit for society, to see himself as a citizen, rather than an autonomous natural man. Education then becomes a tool used by society to "civilize" children into

predictable and acceptable forms of behavior. Rousseau (1762/2007) objects strongly to this and compares “scholars” in this type of education to peasants:

Your scholar is subject to a power which is continually giving him instruction; he acts only at the word of command; he dare not eat when he is hungry, nor laugh when he is merry, nor weep when he is sad, nor offer one hand rather than the other, nor stir a foot unless he is told to do it; before long he will not venture to breathe without orders (p. 92).

Rousseau (1762/2007), in contrast, argues that a child should be educated primarily by Nature and things. Educated in this way, the child (the male child) will be self-reliant and use reason to guide his action. Such a child will allow his mind and body to work together to enhance his understanding of the world. Through this natural form of education, the child will develop his own ideas and be governed by his own will, not the will of others. In this sense, the child achieves a natural self-realization.

In what appears to be a glaring contradiction, Rousseau (1762/2007) counsels the teacher to be in complete control of the student’s “natural” education, but without seeming to do so, without giving commands, and without appearing to be in control. Rousseau (1762/2007) writes: “Young teacher, I am setting before you a difficult task, the art of controlling without precepts, and doing everything without doing anything at all” (p. 93).

An early U.S. treatment of the educational aim of self-realization can be found in the work of Jones (1911). Jones (1911) conceives self-realization as a form of self-perfection, and notes the importance of continuously seeking a greater degree of self-perfection through education. Jones’ conception differs from that of Rousseau in that Jones did not believe self-realization was compatible with individualism or autonomy. Jones (1911) argued instead that self-realization requires cooperative social interaction. The achievement of a perfect society was, for Jones, the ultimate goal, and only way to perfect society is by perfecting every individual. Society is only as good as each individual member. To immerse oneself in cooperative action is necessary, if any

individual being is to realize his or her human potential as a fundamentally social creature.

Wain (1991), like Jones (1911), argues that self-realization is not something one can accomplish independent of others. According to Wain (1991), “self-realization is attained socially in the course of open conversation with others” (p. 276). Wain (1991) does not dismiss the value of autonomy, but argues that “the ‘superior’ level of human self-realization will be valued for its contribution to the ‘conversation’ rather than for its autonomy as such” (p. 277).

Maslow (1943) conceives self-realization as a human need. In his hierarchy of needs, Maslow (1943) considers self-realization to be a need which can only be met after all other needs have been met. Roseman (1964), following Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, argues that if schools are to promote self-realization, all of children’s basic needs must first be met. Following this logic, Roseman (1964) suggests that schools that do not attend to a child’s need for things such as safety and belonging block that child’s path to self-realization. Self-realization requires growth from within. Roseman (1964) says, “It is not we who should dictate what he is to become, but it is our responsibility as educationists to help the student discover what he could be...” (p. 290). In this conceptualization, self-realization is a matter of free choice based on a child’s interests, values, and envisaged future.

Ignacio Gotz (1974) along with Jones (1911) and Roseman (1964) conceives self-realization as a continuous, endless process of self-perfection. Gotz (1974) writes that the process of self-perfection “...can never be thought of as completed as long as a man is alive, as long as there are in him potentialities capable of being actualized, or of being actualized more fully. Whether individually or socially, a human being in the process of realizing himself is engaged in a continuous becoming – until death” (p. 96).

A.S. Neill’s Summerhill is a classic example of a school in Great Britain focused on the aim of self-realization (Summerhill, 2013). Summerhill is a school where students



are given the freedom to direct their own course of learning. Students are given access to a variety of subjects and materials to help them develop their interests and talents. However, students are not required to take any specific courses, and all formal lessons are optional. In the school community, students take responsibility for the direction of programming and overall affairs of the school through community meetings.

In the U.S., the Sudbury Schools model is a prime example of an approach to schooling focused on the aim of self-realization. The Sudbury Schools model was developed in the 1968. Sudbury Schools now have been launched in 16 states. The Sudbury Valley School (2013) asserts that

At Sudbury Valley, students from pre-school through high school age explore the world freely at their own pace and in their own unique ways. They develop the ability to direct their own lives, be accountable for their actions, set priorities, allocate resources, deal with complex ethical issues, and work with others in a vibrant community (para. 3).

At Sudbury Valley School, students are given access to a wide range of classes and have the freedom to choose which classes they want to take, if any. “From the beginning of their enrollment, no matter what their age, students are given the freedom to use their time as they wish, and the responsibility for designing their path to adulthood” (Sudbury Valley School, 2013, para. 1). Students are also given access to a wide range of resources in order to enable the students to develop creative interests such as art, woodworking, computer technology, and music, to name a few.

Self-realization, when it is conceived as a process which requires each individual to develop as an autonomous being separated and isolated from others, would conflict with generative community. In a generative community, human beings are recognized as interdependent and linked with one another; the development of individual human beings is necessarily linked with that of others in the community. This means that in a generative community each individual’s process of self-realization is dependent upon the quality of his or her social interactions. In a generative community, for individuals to

achieve self-realization, the larger community must be committed to supporting all individuals in their own unique paths of self-realization.

It is possible to argue that self-realization is a worthy educational aim. When understood as the development of individual ideas and interests, the aim of self-realization appears to contribute to the development of generative community. Generative community flourishes when there is a great deal of individual diversity with respect to experiences, interests, and ideas. In a school committed to self-realization, students would not be required to follow any form of a standardized educational process that would inhibit the exploration of diverse ideas and fields of interest. Instead, each student would be free to choose his or her learning path, to explore and develop a set of interests, ideas, knowledge, and skills that is uniquely their own. This promotes the growth of “individualized mind”, as well as the development of a society in which individualized mind is valued and recognized as necessary for the common good.

It is possible to argue that, under this model of education, too many individuals would choose to engage in experiences that lead to a negative form of “self-realization”. Without any constraints on his or her choices, a student may choose not to participate in any types of intentional learning experiences. A student may simply choose to engage in activities to fill time, without reflecting on his or her experiences, without any goals, or without a plan of self-development. But this assumes that a human being is bereft of energy, curiosity, enthusiasm, and interest in the world. This is not the case for a healthy individual creature, human or otherwise. According to many theorists, humans are naturally curious (Berlyne, 1954; Dewey, 1929/1958; Loewenstein, 1994; Litman, 2005; Maslow, 1943). Given an environment rich in possibilities an individual, not under coercion, is very likely to engage in exploring that environment. It is educationally important, then, to ensure that the environment is rich enough to elicit the natural motivation to explore.

But some might argue, what about a teenager whose free choices have led him or her to self-destruction through negative choices such as violent behavior or drug abuse? There are several responses possible. Under certain circumstances, consideration of the student's health would justify a substitution of judgment by the responsible adult, and provision of appropriate medical care. Members of a generative community would be naturally concerned about protecting the health of the individual students. Another consideration would be the well-being of the community as a whole. Under certain circumstances, this consideration would justify a substitution of judgment by the responsible adult. The aim of self-realization as an educational goal does not at all require that the student be wholly isolated and cut off from community concern and care. To the contrary, it is essential that the community be engaged in a caring way with the student's personal growth.

### **Assimilation and Generative Community**

In this section, I turn from the educational aim of self-realization, to take up the educational aim of assimilation. I explicate and assess assimilation as an educational aim, by reference to generative community as a regulative ideal.

The term 'assimilation' has been variously defined and is often used interchangeably with the term 'acculturation'. There are three primary forms generally identified. The first form of assimilation is generally referred to as Anglo-conformity. Anglo-conformity is a form of assimilation that requires various ethnic groups to relinquish their ancestral cultures and to adopt instead behaviors and values associated with Anglo-Saxon ancestry. The second form of assimilation is typically referred to as cultural pluralism. Assimilation that is culturally pluralistic is a form of assimilation that allows various ethnic groups to retain their ancestral cultures, and to use their knowledge of the dominant culture to enhance their social mobility. The third form of assimilation is typically referred to as "melting pot" assimilation. Assimilation that is of the "melting pot" variety is a process of cultural interpenetration and fusion, whereby various ethnic

groups merge together to form a new and unique merged culture (Gordon, 1964). In this section, I will explicate and assess each of these three forms of the educational aim of assimilation, using generative community as a regulative ideal.

### *Anglo-Conformity*

In the mid 1800s, education in the United States was dominated by a Protestant ideology (Kaestle, 1983/1994). Schools and the system of education became instruments to ensure a uniform adoption of the Protestant ideology. Kaestle (1983/1994) described the nature of Protestant ideology and the process of assimilation in the United States system of education in this way:

Its core – the beliefs that related an emerging view of human nature to a developing country and economy – was basically this: human beings are born malleable and potentially good but need much careful guidance; all men are equal in some formal ways, but some groups are more able, wise, and refined than others; and therefore in education, economics, and politics, institutions be shaped to maintain the values and leadership of cultivated, native, Protestant Americans (p. 95).

There was a widespread belief that homogenizing all immigrant groups was a national imperative. In 1843, the New York City school authorities proclaimed that “When foreigners are in the habit of congregating together, they retain their national customs, prejudices and feelings... [and therefore] are not as good members of society as they would otherwise be” (Kaestle, 1983/1994, p. 100). This led school authorities to conclude that “assimilation of immigrants is a necessary Americanizing process” (Kaestle, 1983/1994, p. 100).

In the United States, assimilation as Anglo-conformity has included the intentional elimination of the “others” history. There is perhaps no better example of this than the history of American Indian education in the United States. During the late 1800s, popular sentiment towards American Indians held that “the only good Indian is a dead one” (Adams, 1995, p. 52). This sentiment emerged from decades of conflict between American Indians and white expansionists who ascribed to an ideology of manifest destiny. The eradication of American Indians from the United States was

considered to be a legitimate policy, and many thought extermination was the best means of dealing with American Indians. Others, such as Richard Pratt, saw education as a tool that could save the lives of potentially good men, by “killing the Indian in him and saving the man” (Adams, 1995, p.52).

Thomas Jefferson noted what he considered to be a “coincidence of interests” between American Indians and the U.S. government (Adams, 1995). American Indians were in need of civilization, and the U.S. government was in need of land. Both objectives could be achieved simultaneously: Indians would be educated and removed from their land; the land would be given to American settlers. Given this, it was considered more economically prudent to assimilate than to eradicate the Indians. Carl Schurz calculated that it would cost the U.S. government nearly a million dollars to kill one Indian through warfare and only \$1,200 to “educate” an Indian for eight years (Adams, 1995). This line of reasoning led to initiatives to educate American Indians in the United States.

American Indian children were the targets of the United States’ educational aim of assimilation because it seemed clear to government officials that the American Indian elders could not be assimilated. Different models of schooling were developed to effectively assimilate young American Indians (Adams, 1995). Various educational models were attempted, such as day schools and “on-reservation” boarding schools. But there was only one model that was thought to effectively assimilate children into the dominant culture – the “off-reservation” boarding school.

The off-reservation boarding schools were built away from any American Indian reservation so that children would not have contact with their family (i.e., their cultural heritage). These schools used myriad tactics to ensure “proper” assimilation (Adams, 1995). Once at the boarding schools, children were given new European-American names. Boys with long hair received haircuts to fit the mold of European-American soldiers. All children were required to wear standard issue school uniforms. In essence,

all outward signs of a child's culture was stripped from him or her and each child was reassigned a new outward identity.

The physical structures of the schools conflicted with children's cultural heritage and conceptual views of the world (Adams, 1995). For example, straight lines and ninety-degree angles dominated the physical environment. This conflicted with American Indians' circular conception of space. For the Sioux, life and the natural world existed in circular patterns. According to Black Elk, "...Everything is now too square. The sacred hoop is vanishing among the people...We are vanishing in this box" (Adams, 1995, p. 113). According to Commissioner William Jones, however, restructuring the minds of American Indian children was a critical step in the "educational" process.

Another key facet in restructuring the minds of American Indian children was to impress upon them the importance of reconstructing the natural environment (Adams, 1995). The earth and its natural flora were to be manicured and improved by introducing contoured layouts of lawns, trees, and flowers. Taming the earth's natural and wild conditions served as an important metaphor to the necessary process of civilizing the wild and savage nature of humanity as exemplified by the American Indians. Taming this savage and wild nature was often considered a brutal task, which required harsh but necessary action.

For many American Indians, being tamed (i.e., assimilated) meant severe forms of punishment (Adams, 1995; Lomawaima, 1994). Off-reservation boarding schools often operated like military compounds. Stern discipline policies and the threat of corporeal punishment reinforced the idea that one's role was to follow directions. In this way, educating (i.e., assimilating) American Indians became a tool to ensure social control. Through this process, American Indians were socialized to realize and to accept their place within the larger social strata and were given specific roles to play in society, specifically the role of subservience. Socialization, at most, was only externally effective.

Today, an Anglo-conformity style of assimilation can still be found in the schooling process (Cooks & Simpson, 2007; Noguera, 2008; Rofes, 2005). It looks superficially different, because it is not as explicitly pursued as it was throughout the history of American Indian education, but it is still a driving feature. The aim of Anglo-conformity is apparent in a variety of practices that reinforce dominant cultural norms associated with sex, gender, race, religion, ability, and sexual identity, among others.

Within the schooling environment, dominant cultural norms are used to define what is “normal” (Cooks & Simpson, 2007; Rofes, 2005). This has led to the mental and physical harm of many students. In some cases, the extreme conditions of harassment and isolation students face for not conforming to dominant cultural norms associated with sexual identity have led to suicide (Baier, 2012; Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009; Friedman, Koeske, Silvestre, Korr, & Sites, 2006; Rofes, 2005). In other cases, black and Hispanic students have been subject to disproportionate levels of disciplinary action and have been overlooked for placement in programs for gifted and talented students (Lewin, 2012; Noguera, 2008). In these ways, students who fail to conform to the dominant Anglo culture are effectively excluded from the learning community, even though there is no explicit coercion to conform.

It is possible to argue that Anglo-conformity assimilation is a worthy educational aim. Attempting to give individuals the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be successful in a specific social context seems like a good idea that would be consistent with generative community. Generative community, however, requires the inclusion of difference. Anglo-conformity assimilation is inconsistent with this requirement, because it necessarily requires individuals to abandon their cultural identity and conform to the dominant cultural norms.

The exclusion of differences of ideas, norms, and/or values is detrimental to a generative community. This is because, first, in a narrowly homogenous community, the lack of diversity of perspectives makes it more difficult to recognize problem situations

and to effectively consider possible solutions to them. The process of reflective inquiry is thus negatively affected. Problem situations will persist unaddressed, and tensions in the community will grow. In the case of the American Indians, any Anglo-conformity that was achieved merely masked a deep interpersonal divide, a bitter animosity, which continued to exist and to grow. This is still very much the case in contemporary U.S., with respect to many diverse cultural groups.

Second, Anglo-conformity assimilation is problematic because it entails the exclusion of individuals from the collective decision-making process of the community. Individuals who have been forced into conformity, forced to obscure their genuine identities, are forced to live according to collective decisions that they had no part in making. In a generative community, an open and collective process of reflective reasoning would guide the adoption of cultural norms, ideas, and practices.

Third, the process of Anglo-conformity assimilation requires an exertion of power and control. This is problematic because of the lack of respect for persons that such treatment entails. Either through an intentional and overt use of force, or through more subtle pressures, individuals are made to adopt false and unchosen personae or identities. This inhibits the development of generative community because it promotes a type of community where “social mind” is used to intentionally subvert the “individualized mind”.

### **Cultural Pluralism**

Assimilation as cultural pluralism may seem like a contradiction in terms. In this type of assimilation, individuals maintain their distinctive cultural heritages to a large extent, yet, at the same time, assimilate to the dominant culture, in the sense that they become fluent in the norms of the dominant culture, and actively participate in that culture. In a fully culturally pluralistic society, there would be a widespread societal acceptance of a variety of cultural norms and practices as valuable.



In the United States, marginalized populations have often assimilated in this sense. They have used formal educational opportunities to become literate in the dominant structures of society, and to secure higher levels of social, political, and economic standing while retaining their cultural heritage. Examples of this sort of assimilation can be found in the history of black education in the southern United States (Anderson, 1988; Beecher Stowe, 1853; Bond, 1934/1970; Bullock; 1967; Burnley, 2008; DeBoer, 1995; Morris, 1981; Webber, 1978; Williams, 2005). Black Americans in the southern United States established their own schools with the intention of retaining their culture and at the same time becoming literate and successful in the dominant culture. Black education arose in resistance to the unjust power of the dominant culture (Anderson, 1988; Bullock; 1967).

Before the Civil War, enslaved blacks were forbidden from learning how to read and write. Former slave William Henry Heard said,

We did not learn to read nor write, as it was against the law for any person to teach any slave to read; and any slave caught writing suffered the penalty of having his forefinger cut from his right hand; yet there were some who could read and write (Anderson, 1988, p. 16).

Anderson (1988) gave an account of a slave by the name of Scipio. Scipio was “put to death for teaching a slave child how to read and spell and the child was severely beaten to make him forget what he had learned” (Anderson, 1988, p. 17). The inability to read and write was taken as a mark of an inherently genetic feature of the inferior status of blacks in the social order of things. The cruel irony in this is that the dominant culture used every means possible to prevent blacks from gaining the skills necessary to read and write, and even with that effort was not fully successful and many blacks found ways to educate one another (Webber, 1978; Williams, 2005).

Although subject to severe penalties, hidden but formal meetings took place to teach the skills of reading and writing (Anderson, 1988; Williams, 2005). This push for formal educational opportunities grew out of an intense desire to assimilate into a literate

culture denied to them for so long. One former slave remarked, “There is one sin that slavery committed against me which I will never forgive. It robbed me of my education” (Anderson, 1988, p. 5). For blacks, formal education and literacy represented a culture of freedom and a vision of liberation historically reserved for whites. Former slave Thomas H. Jones expounded on this idea and said, “It seemed to me that if I could learn to read and write this learning might, nay, I really thought it would point out to me the way to freedom, influence and real secure happiness” (Anderson, 1988, p. 16).

After the Civil War, black education in the South grew from secret meetings to a formal system of universal schooling (Anderson, 1988). Schooling for blacks was often obstructed by white power holders. Blacks were required to organize and fund their own systems of schooling while being forced to pay taxes for white only schools (Anderson, 1988; Bond, 1934/1970).

Black leaders often adopted a curriculum for their schools that was similar to the New England classical liberal curriculum taught to white students in the north. However, black leaders did not view the adoption of this curriculum as a way to embrace white culture. Rather, black leaders thought this curriculum would supply blacks with a common culture and language of “official knowledge”. It was hoped that this would give blacks the capacity to assimilate into the dominant structure of society, and to increase their economic, political, and social standing, while retaining their cultural heritage (Anderson, 1988; Burnley, 2008).

By the 1970s, cultural pluralism became recognized formally as an educational aim. The aim of cultural pluralism was promoted from within the dominant culture in charge of the U.S. system of formal education (Ueda, 1995). In 1972, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education released a document titled *No One Model American: A Statement on Multicultural Education*. Ueda (1995) sets out the four goals outlined in the statement:

(1) the teaching of values which support cultural diversity and individual uniqueness; (2) the encouragement of the qualitative expansion of existing ethnic cultures and their incorporation into the mainstream of American socioeconomic and political life; (3) the support of explorations in alternative and emerging life styles; and (4) the encouragement of multiculturalism, multilingualism, and multidialectism (pp. 117-118).

Using formal systems of education to become literate in the dominant structure of society and to advance one's social standing is a strategy used by many minority and historically marginalized populations throughout U.S. history (Ravitch, 1983; Reese, 2005). Gibson (1988) described the experience of Sikh immigrants in California, explaining how they used formal education in the process of culturally pluralistic assimilation. The Sikhs sought to retain their cultural heritage, while becoming conscious of and skilled in the ways of the dominant culture as a means to achieve social mobility.

Garcia (1989), Kaplowitz (2005) and Valencia (2008) discuss the important role education has played in a culturally pluralistic assimilation process for many Mexican Americans. The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 was one historic piece of legislation that recognized the needs of students who had limited English proficiency. More recent efforts have focused on integrating students with limited English proficiency into general education classrooms. Some schools have even implemented dual language programs where students receive instruction in English fifty percent of the time and Spanish fifty percent of the time (West Liberty Community School District, 2012).

It is possible to argue that cultural pluralism is a worthy educational aim. The aim of cultural pluralism appears to be consistent with generative community. Generative community requires inclusivity of difference. For a generative community to flourish, there should be diversity of ideas, values, and customs. But this is not enough. It is necessary that the diverse groups in the community be conjointly engaged in collective deliberation on social decisions for the common good. Cultural pluralism seems to contribute to generative community, provided that the diverse groups do not become effectively communicatively isolated.

The educational aim of cultural pluralism would conflict with generative community if it were to produce a “mosaic” community, in which the culturally diverse groups were unable to effectively interact across the cultural boundaries. This would be problematic, because generative community requires individuals to engage with one another in the communicative process of reflective inquiry. In the absence of such communication, or reflective inquiry, the social structure would be a community in name only. There would be isolated groups communicatively detached from one another. It is possible to have an “acceptance” of diverse cultures within a society, while the various cultures remain communicatively isolated, and largely ignorant of one another’s ideas, beliefs, and customs. This may be an accurate description of social conditions that we think of as culturally pluralistic. The mosaic society should be described as culturally diverse, but not culturally pluralistic.

Consider this example. Suppose there were to exist, in a single community, a group that is strongly committed to sex segregation in public education, and another group equally committed to integration of the sexes in public schools, what then? Some might argue that a respectful isolation of the two cultural groups each having their own autonomous school system that conforms to their values would be an excellent resolution. This would, clearly, be the antithesis of the proposed ideal of generative community.

In response, I would argue that the two groups have an interdependent effect on one another. Decisions that are made, whether or not they are made collectively, have an effect on all members of a community. There may be many justifiable and important differences among the members of a community. But, if there is to be a generative community in the full sense, there must be a shared commitment to the open process of collective reflective inquiry.

In the example under consideration, there are two possible circumstances. On the one hand, it may be that the claim that the sexes should be segregated is based on

scientific research into the learning processes of boys and girls. On the other hand, it may be that the claim that the sexes should be segregated is based on religious belief.

What difference, if any, does it make, in the sphere of collective public action, that the grounds of the identical claim, that the sexes should be segregated in the public schools, are so different? It makes a huge difference.

The difference is that the scientific claim is amenable to scientific inquiry, and it is therefore possible to reach a well-warranted decision about the merits of the claim that learning occurs more effectively under conditions of sex segregation. If the evidence is not clear, one can imagine undertaking an experiment for a trial period, with sex segregated education in some schools. But, when the claim is grounded in scientific research, there is, ultimately, a way of reaching consensus on the merits of the claim.

This would not be the case, however, when the support for sex segregation in the public schools is based on religious belief. In this case, there is no process of inquiry through which to resolve the differences in belief about the value of sex segregation in education. There is no process through which to achieve well-warranted consensus of belief. This is why scientific inquiry and reflective morality is an essential element in the concept of generative community. With this element, in a generative community there is always the possibility of reaching well-reasoned consensus on disputed claims through a continued process of open inquiry.

### **The “Melting Pot” Model**

Assimilation that is of the “melting pot” variety emphasizes the melding of two or more unique cultures to produce one new and unique culture. Park and Burgess (1921) developed this interpretation of assimilation. Park and Burgess (1921) describe assimilation in this way:

Assimilation is a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life (p. 735).

According to Park and Burgess (1921), assimilation is a mutual process whereby the cultural fusion is reflexive and recursive. It is reflexive in the sense that each culture has an effect on the other and in turn is itself affected. It is recursive in the sense that it is a recurrent process of action and reaction. This form of assimilation has received a lot of theoretical attention, but in practice it has proven to be problematic.

Glazer and Moynihan (1963), argued that the amicable cultural interpenetration of the melting pot model has not been, and never will be, a realistic pursuit. In practice, attempts to pursue a “melting pot” form of assimilation have typically given way to assimilation as Anglo-conformity or as a culturally pluralistic assimilation (Ravitch & Vinovskis, 1995). A “melting pot” form of assimilation appears *prima facie* to be a noble goal, but some argue that it has in fact served the purpose of Plato’s Noble Lie. Joyce (1970) denounces the “melting pot” interpretation of assimilation as a deliberately developed cultural mythology intended to deceive, and pacify, those who are excluded from the dominant culture. In Joyce’s (1970) words,

Our nation’s experiences in minority group relations demonstrate that the proverbial American melting pot has been a colossal fraud, perpetuated by a dominant majority for the purpose of convincing society at large that all cultural groups, irrespective of race or ethnic origin, were in fact eligible for full and unrestricted participation in the social, economic, political, and religious life of this nation (pp. 289-290).

Whether the melting pot was deliberately developed as some form of a noble lie, or it was developed with the sincere hope that people of disparate cultural backgrounds may one day grow together to form a single new, distinct, and unified culture, it is often the case that cultural tensions remain in the presumably unified culture, and that the initially dominant culture remains dominant.

It is possible to argue that the melting pot model of assimilation is a worthy educational aim. The melting pot model of assimilation as an educational aim appears to conform with the concept of generative community in some respects. Generative community requires a condition of social equity, which is conceptually required by the

melting pot model. Inclusion of difference is required conceptually by both generative community and the melting pot model. The fallibility requirement of generative community entails a commitment to a reconsideration of accepted beliefs and practices and an openness to change, which is consistent with the melting pot model of assimilation.

Despite the conceptual consistencies between generative community and the melting pot model of assimilation, there are problems. The problem is that the melting pot model is susceptible to being used to mask a continued cultural domination (Dorner, 2011; Pavlenko, 2006). So, for example, dual language immersion programs are well suited to serve the aim of the production of a unified bilingual Spanish/English linguistic culture in the U.S.—and this melting pot result may be the actual aim of those who adopt such programs (Rubinstein-Avila, 2002). But, this melting pot result is not an aim that is widely shared in the U.S. cultural context, and dual language immersion programs are rare enough to be notable when found. Despite this, the rhetoric of the melting pot itself continues to be a popular trope, a part of our national self image. This rhetorical commitment obscures the paucity of steps to realize the aim.

### **Democracy and Generative Community**

In this section, I turn from the educational aim of assimilation, to take up the educational aim of democracy. I explicate and assess democracy as an educational aim, by reference to generative community as a regulative ideal.

Despite the long history in the United States of commitment to “education for democracy”, there is a lack of conceptual clarity about the meaning of the term ‘democracy’. Oppewal (1959) wrote that

Democracy is rapidly becoming, if it has not already become, a term which when used automatically carries a freight of value equal to, if not greater than, that carried traditionally by such terms as God, Mother, and Freedom. It now needs only the consistent capitalization of the beginning letter, and then its status as a supreme value is assured. As with most value terms, these very emotional overtones of automatic approval invite both confusion and charlatanism. Whenever a term such as democracy achieves such a status, there is great danger

that the content of the word becomes fuzzy, and this fuzziness invites misuse because it allows the unscrupulous to pour his own content into the word without refutation (p. 156).

Oppewal's (1959) concern has indeed become a problem in the United States.

The term 'democracy' is often used as a meaningless, but effective, rhetorical device. Giroux (1992) asserts that there is a "crisis in the meaning and practice of American democracy" (p. 4). According to Giroux (1992), "when wedded to its most emancipatory possibilities, democracy encourages all citizens to actively construct and share power over those institutions that govern their lives" (p. 5). But, in current discourse, Giroux (1992) contends that the term democracy, with its immediate and positive emotional appeal, has been used as a rhetorical device in support of anti-democratic practices. A call to institute "democracy" may be used to effect merely the expansion of free-market capitalism.

Educational theorists have conceptualized democracy in a variety of ways. Some theorists have conceptualized democracy as a set of specific processes and procedures of governance, a particular way of organizing and operating a system of government. Democracy, that is, has been conceptualized as a political conception. A good example of this can be found in the words of Cubberly in 1914. According to Cubberly, "Democracy ought to mean good government and efficient administration – the best and most efficient that the taxes we pay can secure. This, however, does not of necessity mean that the people should vote for all, or even any large number, of those who are to secure such government" (Reese, 2005, p. 146). With this conception of democracy, a system of education "for democracy" needs only to provide a place to teach the necessary rules and procedures that lead to an efficient process of government.

Other theorists have conceptualized democracy as more than a political process or form of government. Democracy is at the heart of Dewey's (1916/2009) social, political, and educational philosophy. In Dewey's (1916/2009) work, the term 'democracy' has more than a political meaning. Dewey (1916/2009) writes "A democracy is more than a



form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience” (p. 73). For Dewey, democracy requires people to do more than engage in majority-rule voting procedures. Democracy requires people to engage with one another in intimate forms of communication and social interaction to achieve some aim.

According to Simpson and Stack (2010), Dewey’s way of conceptualizing democracy can be classified into three dimensions: political, social, and individual. The political dimension encompasses political processes and emphasizes values such as equality, justice, and freedom. The social dimension emphasizes natural features of humanity such as interaction, compassion, and communication. The individual dimension stresses individual attitudes, habits, and behaviors. It is at the intersection of these three dimensions that a Deweyan form of democracy is realized.

Dewey’s (1916/2009) conception of democracy incorporates an ethic, an ideal approach to life, that recognizes the importance of all voices in the process of individual, social, and political growth or betterment. Dewey’s conception of democracy requires a respect for each person’s experience and affords to each person the opportunity to engage in authentic forms of communication. For education to aim at a Deweyan form of democracy, learners must be given the tools and opportunities to critically analyze and identify problems associated with contemporary conditions of power and control.

Hewitt (2006) emphasizes the necessity of seeing and understanding the dynamics of power and control that exist in all human relations. Shor (1992) adds to Hewitt’s (2006) emphasis on power. According to Shor (1992), Dewey viewed democracy as "a process of open communication and mutual governance in a community of shared power, where all members have a chance to express ideas, to frame purposes and to act on intentions" (p. 136). The notion that democracy is built on equality or shared power fits with Gutmann’s (1987) notion of democratic education. According to Gutmann (1987), democratic education itself is driven by principles of non-repression and non-

discrimination. Giroux (1992) adds to that list, and maintains that democracy, in a full sense, must be imbued with the principles of freedom, equality, and social justice.

Apple and Beane (2007) develop a detailed set of core principles and values of an education for and through democracy. They write

- Concern for the dignity and rights of individuals and minorities.
- Concern for the welfare of others and “the common good.”
- Faith in the individual and collective capacity of people to create possibilities for resolving problems.
- The open flow of ideas, regardless of their popularity, that enables people to be as fully informed as possible.
- The use of critical reflection and analysis to evaluate ideas, problems, and policies.
- An understanding that democracy is not so much an “ideal” to be pursued as an “idealized” set of values that we must live and that must guide our life as a people.
- The organization of social institutions to promote and extend the democratic way of life (p. 7).

The core principles outlined above reveal how values and education are integrated.

Gutmann (1987) argues that it is impossible to have a form of education that is neutral with respect to values. Even a “neutral” education is driven by a value, namely the value of being neutral. Based on this reasoning, Gutmann (1987) argues that a democratic education must give children “the ability to deliberate among competing conceptions of the Good” (p. 36). Gutmann (1987) calls this “conscious social reproduction”.

According to Gutmann (1987) conscious social reproduction is the primary ideal of democratic education.

It is possible to argue that democracy is a worthy educational aim. Democracy, when conceived in an appropriately rich sense, is consistent with generative community. In this sense, the term ‘democracy’ includes Dewey’s notion of conjoint communicative experience among all individuals in a community. Dewey’s notion is elaborated by Gutmann (1987), Giroux (1992), and Apple and Beane (2007). Education for democracy, in this sense, would be productive of generative community. Education for democracy would require students to engage in collective processes of examination and critical deliberation on social/political problem situations. This means that there must be a

tolerance for differences of ideas and a structure to encourage critical deliberation of those differences, in a civil way.

Creating that structure is difficult and is sometimes seen as too risky. For example, in 2008, following the election of Barack Obama, some schools in New Orleans's St. Tammany Parish were reported to have formally banned discussion of and conversation about Barack Obama's Presidential victory, citing concerns about public safety (Hall Hayes, 2008; Straw, 2008). Avoiding or officially banning such dialogue is the antithesis of generative community.

Education for democracy, when democracy is conceived as merely the mechanics of political action, is necessary for, but contributes very little to the production of generative community. The focus on democracy in this thin sense would have a deleterious effect on the production of generative community, if it displaces focus on the genuine communication on critical social/political issues that is a necessary, and more demanding, condition of generative community.

### **Social Justice and Generative Community**

In this section, I turn from the educational aim of democracy, to take up the educational aim of social justice. I explicate and assess social justice as an educational aim, by reference to generative community as a regulative ideal.

Social justice as an aim of education is a broad concept that encompasses a variety of specific conceptions. Chapman and West-Burnham (2010) argue that embedded in the concept of social justice is the belief that every human being is of equal worth. Characteristics such as race, religion, sex, and ability are irrelevant to the worth of an individual. It follows that a society that uses those irrelevant characteristics in assessing an individual's worth would be an unjust society. To pursue social justice requires examination of the ways in which individuals are positioned in society based on their characteristics.

Chapman & West-Burnham (2010) argue for an extraordinarily strong concept of equality. Chapman & West-Burnham (2010) write that

social justice requires the deliberate and specific intervention to secure equality and equity defined as:

- Equality: every human being has an absolute and equal right to common dignity and parity of esteem and entitlement to access the benefits of society on equal terms.
- Equity: every human being has a right to benefit from the outcomes of society on the basis of fairness and according to need (p. 26).

Young (1990) explicates another conception of social justice. Young's (1990) concept of social justice emphasizes an individual's power in both distributive and relational contexts. Young (1990) focuses, first, on the concept of equity, arguing that there are certain ways in which wealth, income, and other material goods ought to be distributed. But, according to Young (1990), social justice requires more than distributive justice with respect to material goods. Social justice also requires that power be distributed and exerted in equitable ways. Young (1990) maintains that social justice requires "action, decisions about action, and provisions of the means to develop and exercise capacities. The concept of social justice includes all aspects of institutional rules and relations insofar as they are subject to potential collective decision" (p. 16). In this way, social justice is centrally about the relational context of human interaction.

Kreisberg's (1992) work is similar to Young (1990) in emphasizing the dynamics of power associated with the relational context of human interaction. Kreisberg (1992) refers to the relational context of social justice as "power with". According to Kreisberg (1992), power with is "jointly developed power where people fulfill their desires and develop their capacities through acting together" (Kreisberg, 1992, p. 71). Kreisberg (1992) argues that for educators to do the work of social justice, they must seek to transform power relations and act in ways that empower others to do the same.

Bell (2010) takes a similar view of social justice and power, identifying various forms of power that govern the relational context of human interactions. Bell (2010) argues that

the goal of social justice education is to enable people to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand oppression and their own socialization within oppressive systems, and to develop a sense of agency and capacity to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and in the institutions and communities of which they are a part (p. 2).

Social justice education provides the cognitive tools that give people the power to reconstruct society and bring about a more socially just state of affairs.

Critical theorists argue that education, when properly conceived, will be focused on issues of social justice and dynamics of power. The issues are not merely to be discussed; social justice must be actively pursued. Gutek (2004) calls critical theory the “rigorous probing and analytical investigation of social and educational conditions in schools and society that aims to uncover exploitative power relationships and bring about reforms that will produce equity, fairness, and justice” (p. 309).

Critical theorists maintain that education requires more than the development of knowledge and basic skills. Education must be a process that raises awareness of social injustice and the inequitable distribution of power. Critical theorists attempt to bring about social change through education, social change that empowers and liberates historically marginalized populations through the collective application of the acquired knowledge and skills.

Questions are also aimed at the structures of power that operate within the system of education itself, for example, “Who controls the schools and what are their motives? Who establishes the curriculum? How and why are students grouped? How is student academic achievement assessed and measured?” (Gutek, 2004, p. 311). Education grounded in critical theory encourages students to enter into dialogue and become active participants in their own development of knowledge and skills. Students’ lives, and the contexts in which the students live, and in which the schools operate, become important focal points for the curriculum.

In the critical theory model of education, students engage with ideas and concepts from traditionally separate academic subjects to communicate, critique, and understand

their social realities (Gutek, 2004). Critical theorists emphasize the importance of connecting student interest to “subject matter.” Thus, the curriculum is not focused solely on the acquisition of isolated bits of subject-specific knowledge. Knowledge is conceived as trans-disciplinary: Math can be used for social justice. Art history can be used for social justice. Science can be used for social justice. These school subjects are not intended simply to provide general cultural competence; rather, they are intended to be used as tools for social change. Education, conceived in this way, seeks to give individuals the knowledge that will mobilize a passionate commitment to social activism.

Within critical theory there are a number of educational approaches that have emerged. Five prominent educational approaches are: 1) multicultural education, 2) critical pedagogy, 3) equity pedagogy, 4) anti-racist education, and 5) liberatory education.

Multicultural education is an umbrella term used to refer to a host of educational approaches that seek to promote an understanding about cultural diversity and or to effect positive social change (Duarte & Smith, 2000; May, 1999). Some theorists, such as Banks (1993), conceive multicultural education to include attention to issues of social justice. Multiculturalism in this sense requires educators to consciously use education as a tool to empower students to act for social justice and would fit within the critical theory conception of education. Duarte and Smith (2000), however, argue that the term ‘multicultural education’ is too often understood as non-political, as simply requiring a tolerance for cultural diversity, or a celebration of diverse cultural customs and traditions—such as food, clothes, dance, or music. Understood in this way, multicultural education would not fit within the critical theory conception of education.

The term ‘critical pedagogy’ is used by some theorists to refer to an educational approach focused on issues of social justice. It has been clearly conceptualized around the notion of social justice. Burbules and Berk (1999) assert that

In the language of critical pedagogy, the critical person is one who is empowered to seek justice, to seek emancipation. Not only is the critical person adept at recognizing injustice but, for critical pedagogy, that person is also moved to change it (pp. 50-51).

Giroux and McLaren (1986) use the term ‘transformative intellectuals’ to refer to teachers who engage in the practice of critical pedagogy. Transformative intellectuals conceive their work as a form of intellectual labor which requires ethical judgment and critique, and abjure educational methods or practices that rely on rote memorization. The transformative intellectual is one who acts as an “emancipatory authority”, who uses his or her position of authority as an educator not to control others, but to liberate them. As such, they reject educational approaches that reinforce inequality by silencing both teachers and students. Giroux and McLaren (1986) state,

...transformative intellectuals are not merely concerned with empowerment in the conventional sense, that is, with giving students the knowledge and skills they will need to gain access to some traditional measure of economic and social mobility in the capitalist marketplace. Rather, for transformative intellectuals, the issue of teaching and learning is linked to the more political goal of educating students to take risks and to struggle within ongoing relations of power in order to alter the oppressive conditions in which life is lived (p. 226).

A transformative intellectual, as described, is a prime example of what an educator must become in order to intentionally work towards the aim of social justice.

The term ‘equity pedagogy’ is a term used, primarily by McGee Banks and Banks (1995), to refer to an educational approach focused on social justice. Equity pedagogy, like critical pedagogy, emphasizes inequitable structures of power; it is intended to expose social divisions based on concepts such as race, class, or gender, in order to effect social justice. According to McGee Banks and Banks (1995), teachers engaged in equity pedagogy focus attention on the classroom as a physical space that can promote the social interactions essential to the construction of equity. For example, when chairs are organized into rows facing the teacher, implicit messages of authority and obedience are conveyed to the students. This common classroom arrangement, it is said, fails to provide the conditions necessary for students to engage in critical forms of questioning. Instead, it enforces a passive form of socialization, which limits collective interactions.

When classrooms are organized so that students face each other, the arrangement encourages student to student interaction, cooperation, and shared responsibility. This type of arrangement conveys the messages that are essential to equity pedagogy.

The term ‘antiracist education’ is often encountered in the critical theory literature. Kailin (2002) writes that antiracist education is a “non-reformist reform”, which is intended to challenge the structures of power that have given rise to social injustice. Antiracist education focuses on existing relations of social domination as a matter of racial oppression. This version of critical theory education differs from the preceding two conceptualizations in its primary emphasis on race.

Critiquing the “top down” perspectives that are believed to govern all social systems is central to this educational approach. The perspectives of those who are oppressed are used to critique the social status quo. Kailin (2002) asserts that knowledge should be reconstructed through the development and use of alternative forms of curriculum and pedagogy, and that such reconstruction is central to antiracist education. Brandt (1986) describes antiracist education as a form of “oppositional pedagogy”. Brandt (1986) states that “oppositional pedagogy is a theory and practice that...[views] schooling as repressive and as serving to maintain the power structure *vis a vis* the social and racial status quo of schooling as well as the wider social structure” (p. 143).

The term ‘liberatory education’ is sometimes used to refer to Freire’s (1970/2006) famous *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire (1970/2006), like other critical theorists, argues that education should be a tool used to promote freedom and to oppose oppression. Freire (1970/2006) describes various forms of education that either perpetuate oppression or lead to liberation.

A methodological component of a liberatory education is dialogue. According to Freire (1970/2006), dialogue, by definition, cannot occur when one person is attempting to deposit ideas, words, or truths into another. Dialogue requires the exchange of ideas, words, or truths among dialoguers. Freire (1970/2006) asserts, “At the point of encounter



there are neither utter ignoramuses nor perfect sages; there are only people who are attempting, together, to learn more than they now know” (p. 71). Education that aims for liberation must overcome the traditional authoritarianism of education, so that true dialogue can occur.

In the current schooling context of the United States, teachers and educational leaders at times find that educational approaches which are explicitly intended to promote social justice meet with resistance and become compromised. The resistance takes various forms; a lack of funding, a lack time; and certain testing requirements (see O’Donnell, Pruyne, & Chavez, 2004; Theoharis, 2007).

Gewirtz (1998) suggests that to better align the policies that govern the system of education with the concept of social justice, educational leaders must begin to continuously ask the following complex question:

- How, to what extent and why do education policies support, interrupt or subvert:
- Exploitative relationships (capitalist, patriarchal, racist, heterosexist, disablist, etc.) within and beyond educational institutions?
  - Processes of marginalization and inclusion within and beyond the education system?
  - The promotion of relationships based on recognition, respect, care and mutuality or produce powerlessness (for education workers and students)?
  - Practices of cultural imperialism? And which cultural differences should be affirmed, which should be universalized and which rejected?
  - Violent practices within and beyond the education system? (p. 482).

Gewirtz’s call for educators to continually ask complex questions about social justice and its relationship to the schooling process is important advice. Every generation can look back on history and claim to have progressed, but the achievement of social justice is not something that is assured and the process is never finished. The pursuit of social justice is a form of work that requires us to continually ask difficult questions about current social conditions.

It is possible to argue that social justice is a worthy educational aim. Social justice is critically important conceptually to the concept of generative community. The concept of generative community requires social equity as a necessary condition.

Therefore, an education that aims to produce conditions of social justice is justified by reference to generative community as a regulative ideal. Critical theory offers a variety of educational approaches aimed at producing conditions of social justice.

The five versions of critical theory just described share a concern about the inequitable structures of power that pervade contemporary society. The term ‘multiculturalism’ is the most widely accepted and implemented form of critical theory, broadly conceived. It places a positive value on cultural diversity, and this is an important first step in the pursuit of social equity. The term ‘multicultural education’ is problematic conceptually, however, because it has become multiply ambiguous. In some usages, it may convey a need for opposition to social practices that are culturally oppressive. But, the term is more commonly used merely to promote an appreciation of diverse cultural practices, without an explicit call for radical critique of existing inequitable social power relations. It is a strength of the other four variations of critical theory that this need is recognized and emphasized.

Critical pedagogy’s strength lies in the breadth of its focus on a range of social problem situations that lead to and maintain social inequity. The critical pedagogue, for instance, examines power structures that are external, as well as internal, to the school as an institution. In the broader social context, teachers, conceived as transformative intellectuals, work actively to literally transform the social structure so the teacher is expected to take up the role of social/political activist. The teacher is conceived as a public intellectual, participating with the community in organized opposition to inequitable social structures in an effort to redistribute political power. In the classroom, transformative intellectuals use their authoritative position to bring about conditions of shared power, equitably distributed among members of the classroom community. The resulting experience of an equitable power structure is an important element of critical theory, because it contributes causally to the production of generative community.

An important feature of equity pedagogy for social justice is its emphasis on the reorganization of the physical structure of the classroom. The physical changes provide the necessary basis for the emergence of a social structure in the classroom in which students are engaged in a lived experience of social equity. With this experience, students begin to develop the social habits of communicative interaction that are necessary for effective social critique. This is a necessary condition of social reform and a primary function of a generative community.

The strength of anti-racist pedagogy lies in its specific focus on the oppressive race relations that are a primary source of social inequity. This requires, first, the prominent incorporation in the school curriculum of the history of racial oppression and exploitation that has produced current conditions of social/political inequity. It requires, in addition, that the teacher encourage students to engage in social critique and active opposition to current policies that perpetuate that history of oppression. Students develop the knowledge that promotes active resistance by the students to their own condition of social oppression and exploitation. A sense of the potential for political empowerment through active resistance can have a liberatory effect and contributes to the development of generative community.

The idea of an education for liberation is explicit in the work of Freire (1970/2006). Education is recognized as valuable because of its potential power to lead to social liberation of historically marginalized populations. Even something as basic as learning to read is understood to serve this purpose of social liberation and is valued accordingly. When education is understood in this way, people are intrinsically motivated and empowered to learn. The knowledge gained leads to an expanding potential for social/political empowerment in the larger social context.

Critical theory offers numerous educational approaches that intentionally work towards an aim of social justice. Social justice as an educational aim is critical to the development of generative community because generative community requires social

equity and the inclusion of difference in order to effectively engage in a collective process of reflective moral reasoning. The pursuit of social justice also requires all individuals in a community to continually examine social/political conditions and remain committed to a process of social reconstruction. The idea that individuals must continually be engaged in an intentional and collective process of social reconstruction is a necessary condition of generative community.

In Chapter IV, I have considered six different educational aims, discussed their meanings, and assessed them with respect to the regulative ideal of generative community. I began, first, with the aim to disseminate knowledge. Second, I focused on the aim to increase economic efficiency. Third, I examined the aim to achieve self-realization. Fourth, I took up the aim to promote cultural assimilation. Fifth, I examined the aim to promote the growth of democracy. Finally, sixth, I focused on the aim to advance social justice. Now I turn from the assessment of educational aims to the assessment of educational policies and practices.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **ASSESSING EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES**

#### **Selecting the Exemplars**

If education is to fulfill its moral purposes, every specific educational policy or practice that is set out ought to be assessed in terms of a regulative ideal. I have argued that the concept of generative community ought to be a primary regulative ideal that should guide specific educational policies and practices. In this chapter I will employ the concept of generative community as a regulative ideal in assessing several exemplars of current educational policies and practices. I have purposefully selected a small sample of educational policies and practices that play a prominent role in the U.S. system of education and assess each of these policies and practices by reference to generative community as a regulative ideal. The same sampling process, described in Chapter III, to identify exemplars of educational aims was used to identify exemplars of educational policy and practice.

I have selected a set of six prominent and politically important cases of educational policy and practice in the United States. I use the first three cases to exemplify features within the current system of education that conflict with generative community. The first three cases are: 1) the current practice of market-based textbook development; 2) the current policy of parental empowerment, as represented by parent trigger laws; and, 3) the current policy of curriculum standardization, as represented by the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

I use the second three cases of educational policy and practice to exemplify features within the current system of education that align well with generative community. The second three cases are: 4) the current policy of promoting the ethnic and cultural diversity of teachers; 5) the current practice of teaching for civic engagement; and, 6) the current policy of teaching for “whole child” development.

### **Market-Based Textbook Development**

In this section I examine the market-based development of textbooks in the United States, and argue that the market-based approach to developing textbooks conflicts with the concept of generative community and undermines its development.

Textbook development has been and still is largely market-based (Jobrack, 2012). Some scholars argue that, historically, textbook content has included material that has negatively affected historically marginalized populations because of its racist assumptions and language (see Hickman & Porfilio, 2012; Loewen, 1995/2007). Douglas (2005) analyzed the language found in many textbooks of the early 1900s, and his work supports this conclusion. When focused on black Americans, a history textbook published in 1923 included derogatory statements, for example, that: "...white and black must be kept severed socially, and that the dominant race must see to it that the negro be given a helping hand toward educating him and making him useful in industry" (Douglas, 2005, p. 216). Terms such as "nigger," "mongrel," and "gross plantation dialect" were regularly used as descriptors in textbooks of the 1920s (Douglas, 2005, p. 217).

In 2010, Texas received considerable media attention regarding the State's control of the content of its textbooks, the inclusion of discriminatory ideas and language, and their subsequent national dissemination (Jefferson, 2010; Mangan, 2010; Scharrer, 2010). The controversy over what merits inclusion in Texas' K-12 textbooks is longstanding. In the 1960s, Norma and Mel Gabler, prominent advocates of conservative Christian values, began voicing opposition to what was included in Texas' K-12 textbooks (Blake, 2010). In 1961, they established Educational Research Analysts, a nonprofit organization charged with reviewing textbooks. The stated intention was to contribute to "the Christian conservative intellectual renaissance" (Educational Research Analysts, 2013).

One concern in the development of Texas' textbooks is the way in which marginalized populations are portrayed; another concern is how much space should be given to the history of marginalized populations. Bill Ames, a curriculum surveyor

appointed by the Texas State Board of Education, asserted that Texas' history textbooks contain an "overrepresentation of minority content" (Jefferson, 2010, p. 2). Don McElroy, head of the Texas State Board of Education, asserted that high school students should be learning the importance of the majority over the minority, because "Everything that's ever been accomplished in the United States...was accomplished by a majority vote. In other words, the minorities were not able to do it by themselves" (Jefferson, 2010, p. 2).

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), in contrast, have raised concerns about the omission of notable leaders from historically marginalized populations and the negative portrayal of minority groups. For example, the NAACP and LULAC stated that Texas' textbooks emphasize violent features of the Black Panthers while deemphasizing the violence the Ku Klux Klan directed against blacks (Scharrer, 2010). The NAACP and LULAC called these readings "racially or ethnically offensive as well as historically inaccurate" (Scharrer, 2010, para. 2). In a review of the Texas curriculum standards, the NAACP and LULAC also found that, of the historical figures considered notable, 83 percent were white, while only 16 percent were either African American or Latino.

The unbalanced portrayal of notable historical figures along racial lines is educationally problematic. Ben Jealous, president of the NAACP, said, "Children will learn the telling of history that does not comport with the facts and will therefore be disadvantaged on everything from national tests to college" (Jefferson, 2010, p. 1). The unbalanced portrayal is especially problematic because of the influence Texas exerts on what major textbook publishers market nationwide. Mangan (2010) writes, "The impact could reach far beyond the state's borders...since Texas is one of the largest markets for textbooks, and national publishers often tailor their texts to the state's standards" (para. 5).

There is a strong economic incentive to develop textbooks that will be purchased in large quantities, because the initial investment per textbook ranges from \$5 to \$100 million (Jobrack, 2012). In 1995, Texas spent \$231 million on new textbooks, more than any other state in the nation (Combs, 2012). As a result, districts in other states, that purchase textbooks from publishers that intend to sell their textbooks in Texas, are, in effect, bound to Texas' demands.

The market-based approach to developing textbooks is problematic because the market-based system is set up to provide what the majority of citizens demand (Apple, 1991; Jobrack, 2012). As a result, the market-based system ends up privileging the ideologies of the dominant social/political groups. What is problematic is that the content of textbooks is subject to economic and political pressures, not necessarily the best knowledge of the day, as judged by relevant scholarship. When money and power shape textbook content, the accurate portrayal of knowledge is endangered, because it is possible that accurate knowledge might reveal negative aspects of dominant groups or cast doubt on their ideas (Apple, 1991; Jobrack, 2012).

The development of knowledge according to the model of reflective inquiry is critically important to the development and maintenance of generative community. This is because a community has a constant need to effectively grapple with real occurrent problem situations, which may be of a material nature, a political nature, an economic nature, a social nature, and/or an ethical nature. Knowledge, understood in the Deweyan sense, is generated in and through the process of working to resolve problem situations and is the essential basis for the resolving of newly developing problems.

The public dissemination of knowledge is a key aim of education, and is critically important to the survival and growth of generative community. Market-based pressures can bring about omissions and distortions of the best knowledge of the day. This, when it occurs, is detrimental to the development and maintenance of generative community.



### **Parental Empowerment: Parent Trigger Laws**

In this section I examine the effects of parent trigger laws and argue that the observed power struggles produced by these laws conflict with the concept of generative community and undermine its development.

The first parent trigger law was developed by Parent Revolution in California in 2010. Other groups have since worked to develop similar laws in other states. For the purpose of this example, I will focus my attention on the parent trigger law developed by Parent Revolution.

The parent trigger law developed by Parent Revolution was developed as a tool to provide parents with effective power to alter the conditions of their children's schooling. Parent Revolution (2012) claims that the only way parents can achieve real control over school conditions is through the implementation of parent trigger laws. Powerful interest groups have opposed the passage of such laws (Baron, 2011; Biddle, 2011). Parent Revolution cites the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) as an interest group that has worked to oppose parent trigger laws. Parent Revolution's website provides the following account of the AFT's political tactics, based on a document posted on the AFT website, which appeared there for a short time:

- Their primary strategy is called "KILL Mode," which means using powerful lobbyists to "kill" Parent Trigger laws wherever they are introduced.
- If "KILL Mode" fails, then ensure that parents are never at the table when powerful deals are being negotiated.
- Finally, trick parents into thinking they have power when they actually do not, by creating committees with fancy names but no real power of any kind (Parent Revolution, 2012, para. 2).

Parent trigger laws have stimulated considerable debate in the media. Ravitch (2012) raises concerns about who finances Parent Revolution and who stands to benefit from the use of parent trigger laws. Ravitch (2012) argues that the parent trigger law is actually a tool used by corporate elites in an effort to privatize public schools. Ravitch (2012) points out that Parent Revolution is funded by three of the wealthiest educational foundations (the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Eli and Edythe Broad

Foundation, and the Walton Family Foundation). Wilkins (2012) argues that, in Michigan, the strongest proponents of the parent trigger law are the businesses that operate 84 percent of Michigan's charter schools, not community-based organizations.

Broad (2012), of the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, however, claims to support only public education, not private education. In Broad's (2012) words, "I do not believe in privatizing public education. Public schools must remain public, free, and open to all children, while also being accountable to the public for using taxpayer dollars to deliver results" (para. 5). Broad (2012) contends that the system of public education is currently failing because it relies on outdated and inefficient practices that prevent good teachers from being as effective as they could be. Broad (2012) believes that an important way to transform failing schools is to give parents power through parent trigger laws.

Austin (2011), executive director of Parent Revolution, contests Ravitch's claim that Parent Revolution is directed by corporate elites with a charter school agenda. In evidence, Austin (2011) writes that he drafted regulations giving California school boards the power to shut down charter schools. According to Austin (2011), many parents who organize around the parent trigger law focus on public in-district reform options, as opposed to charter options. For example, in the Desert Trails Elementary parent trigger case, parents organized 70 percent of the parents and worked with school leaders for modest changes (Austin, 2012a; 2012b). In Austin's (2012b) words, the parents' "initial proposal was for modest in-district reform rooted in minor modifications to their school's union contract based on similar contract modifications that National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers affiliates have signed in districts across America" (para. 2).

Grannan (2012), a founding member of Parents Across America, a parent organization concerned about corporate-style education reform, claims that the parent trigger law only creates division within educational communities. Grannan (2012) states

that the McKinley Elementary parent trigger was primarily organized by paid staffers and led to a divisive battle in the court system. When a charter school did open up not far from the original school, only one-fifth of the families transferred their children there (Medina, 2011). Similarly, the Desert Trails Elementary parent trigger case divided the school, parents, and the community, with numerous charges and countercharges of fraud and intimidation (Anderson, 2012; Austin, 2012a; Grannan, 2012; Lindstrom, 2012).

In contrast, Austin (2012b) argues that the parents organizing around the parent trigger law have been focused on collaboration, not division. Austin (2012a) asserts that it is unwarranted political opposition from powerful organizations such as the AFT, and harassment from oppositional community members, that has led to community division. In one case, a flier was circulated through the community of a parent revolution site which claimed that undocumented parents would be targeted for deportation if they signed the parent trigger law petition (Blume, 2009).

When parent trigger laws produce the kind of struggle over power that has been regularly observed, the effect is contrary to generative community. Conceptually, generative community requires open and transparent communicative interaction. Such communication is critical conceptually because it is what allows people to engage in reflective inquiry. Individuals in a generative community must have the opportunity to express what they see as a problem situation, to engage in cooperative analysis of the problem situation, and to generate and test hypotheses in an effort to resolve the problem situation.

Instead of the conjoint communicative interaction of reflective reasoning, parent trigger laws have been observed to produce non-communicative power struggles. A power struggle of this kind is characterized by conditions of fixed convictions, interpersonal animosity, and lack of openness to others' perceptions of the nature of the problem. The intense animosity of the struggle over power is contrary to the spirit of communication. This points to the problematic nature of the parent trigger laws. Rogers

(2012), associate professor of education and director of UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access, summed up the problem in this way:

The parent trigger [law] has offered an appearance of empowering parents by focusing on a model of parent mobilization that does not promise the sort of deep development and community-wide formation of strong parent organizations that alternative processes have proven to develop" (para. 8).

The power struggles that often emerge from parent trigger laws undermine the collaborative, equitable, and transparent decision-making processes which are fundamental features of generative community.

### **Curriculum Standardization: The CCSS**

In this section I examine the development of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSS) and argue that the primary role played by private educational consulting organizations, private charitable foundations, corporate entities, and political leaders in the development of the CCSS conflicts with the concept of generative community and undermines its development.

The CCSS has been controversial for a number of reasons. There is the claim, on the one hand, that the CCSS is what the U.S. system of education needs to remain rigorous and competitive in a global society. On the other hand, there is the claim that the CCSS will lead to an increased emphasis on standardized testing and rote forms of learning that will be wholly directed by what is tested. Despite which of these causal claims proves to be most well-warranted by research, there are other important sociopolitical questions that ought to be considered. Three important questions are: How has the CCSS been developed, i.e., by what social processes?; Who are the primary participants and leaders of the initiative?; and, What role have economic interests had in the development of the standards? I will now trace the development of the CCSS, which involves a complex public-private interramification of corporate and governmental efforts.

Achieve, Inc. is an educational consulting organization founded in 1996 by governors and Fortune 500 CEOs to reform education by creating standards (Achieve, 2012a; Education First, 2012a). In a public statement of its origin and its early role in the development of the CCSS, Achieve, Inc. (2012a) writes, “At the 1996 National Education Summit a bipartisan group of governors and corporate leaders decided to create and lead an organization dedicated to supporting standards-based education reform efforts across the states” (para. 1).

In 2008, Achieve, Inc. released a report titled *Out of Many, One: Toward Rigorous Common Core Standards from the Ground Up*. In 2009, Achieve partnered with the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) (Achieve, 2012b). The purpose of the partnership was to develop the CCSS. A primary financier of the CCSS has been the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The Gates Foundation has provided Achieve, Inc. with between \$23 and \$37 million (see Gates Foundation, 2012f; Great Schools for America, 2012) and the NGA and CCSSO with more than \$35 million (Wood, 2011).

Since 2008, the Gates Foundation has increased its spending on Common Core Initiatives by more than 2,000 percent (Libby, 2012c). Part of that spending has been on political advocacy for the advancement of the CCSS. In 2009, the Gates Foundation spent \$78 million in educational advocacy and plans to spend \$3.5 billion over the next five to six years (Dillon, 2011b). Pullman (2013) describes some of the political advocacy work funded by the Gates Foundations. According to Pullman (2013), the Gates Foundation, in 2012, contributed substantial funds to the advocacy of the CCSS: “The Pennsylvania Business Roundtable got \$257,391 to educate Pennsylvania opinion leaders, policymakers, the media, and the public on Common Core State Standards and the Common State Assessment.” Further, “the Foundation for Excellence in Education received \$151,068 to complete a statewide communications campaign in Florida ... on

how raising the bar on education standards leads to greater student success” (Pullman, 2013, para. 26).

The Gates Foundation has also awarded \$163 million dollars in grants to various organizations for the sole purpose of developing and expanding the Common Core Initiative, including \$1.9 million to the Kentucky Department of Education “to examine the use of high-quality curriculum to accelerate common core state standards implementation” (Pullman, 2013, para. 26).

In 2010, the Common Core State Standards were released and Achieve, Inc. became the project management partner for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) (Achieve, 2012b). PARCC was developed in 2010 and is one of two multistate consortia that received funding from the U.S. Department of Education’s Race to the Top Fund to develop an assessment system aligned to the Common Core State Standards (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers [PARCC], 2012a). PARCC is “a consortium of 22 states plus the U.S. Virgin Islands working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments” (PARCC, 2012b, para. 1). The other multistate consortium is the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, 2012). In 2012, PARCC and the SBAC approved a partnership “to help sustain the two consortia after the \$360 million in Race to the Top money runs out” (Gewertz, 2012, para 3).

In 2011, the Gates Foundation partnered with the Pearson Foundation, the nonprofit organization associated with Pearson PLC, to create digital learning programs for use with the Common Core (Dillon, 2011; Pearson Foundation, 2011). According to Vicki Phillips, Director of Education at the Gates Foundation, “This project is an innovative way to support teachers by providing tools they need to help students meet the new standards” (Pearson Foundation, 2011, para. 4). According to Pearson PLC’s Chief Executive Marjorie Scardino,

The development of the Common Core Standards has set a high bar for public education in America. With the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Pearson Foundation, we'll aim high to devise courses that will engage teachers and students and try to help a new generation compete in a demanding world economy (Pearson Foundation, 2011, para. 5).

In 2012, Achieve, Inc. and PARCC partnered with Education First, another educational consulting organization, to develop a Common Core State Standards Implementation Rubric and Self-Assessment Tool (Achieve, 2012c; Education First, 2012b). Achieve, Inc. (2012c) reports that the purpose of this tool is “To assist states in gauging the strength of their implementation plans and to illustrate how to improve them” (para. 3). In 2012, PARCC awarded to Pearson PLC the primary contract for developing a new means of educational assessment, a “new Technology Readiness Tool to support states as they transition to next-generation assessments” (PARCC, 2012c, para. 1).

In answering the first two questions raised above, it has become clear that the development of the CCSS has been primarily directed by a closely interconnected network of private educational consulting organizations, private charitable foundations, corporate entities, and political leaders. It is also clear that private for-profit entities have been instrumental in the development of the CCSS and now stand to benefit economically from the implementation of the CCSS. Given this, there is warrant for the concern that, through engagement in the CCSS development process, private interest groups and corporate entities have served their own economic and political interests, instead of acting for the interests of the broader public.

An alternate interpretation is possible. It may be that the private interest groups and corporate entities involved in the development of the CCSS have acted out of a sense of public interest and altruism to devise valuable improvements in the current educational structure, and to provide the products and services needed to implement them. Scott Thomas, Dean of Claremont Graduate University's Education School wrote, “I don't think many people will quibble the good intentions of these foundations, but that they

subvert the basic democratic processes designed to help encourage liberty and equality is what we should be concerned about” (Pullman, 2013, para. 29).

Empirical research into the details of corporate profits and educational effects of their products would help to answer the question of motive. But, regardless of the motivations involved, the fact remains that the CCSS has been directed by a small number of sociopolitical and economic elites. This is in direct conflict with the fundamental condition of inclusivity that is a conceptual requirement of generative community. What is objectionable is the absence from the decision-making process with respect to a public institution of the vast majority of the citizens of a democratic society.

### **The Promotion of Teacher Diversity**

In this section I examine the disproportionate levels of teacher diversity in the current system of education. I argue that the National Education Association’s (NEA) educational policy designed to increase teacher diversity is consistent with the concept of generative community and enhances its development.

Educational scholars generally agree that racial/ethnic minority groups have lacked equitable access to the profession of education, and that this is problematic (see Adams, 1995; Anderson, 1988; Douglas, 2005; Fairclough, 2007; Kaestle, 1994; Low, 1982; San Miguel Jr., 1987; Tyack & Hansot, 1982; Weiler, 1998). Historically, non-white groups have been excluded from many institutional settings and professional roles in education.

Over the last forty years, the number of educational professionals from racial/ethnic minority groups has increased. In 1972, approximately 220,000 teachers identified themselves as members of racial/ethnic minority groups. In 2004, that number had increased to approximately 470,000 (Hatwood Futrell, 2004). Even though there has been a significant increase in numbers of teachers from racial/ethnic minority groups, the percentage is far below the number of students from racial/ethnic minority groups. According to the NEA, in 2007-08, “minority students made up 40.7% of the public



school population, while minority teachers made up only 16.5% of the teaching force” (NEA, 2011, p. 4). This disproportionality is complicated by the fact that, between 1980 and 2009, the number of elementary and secondary teachers from racial/ethnic minority groups has nearly doubled, increasing from 325,000 to 642,000. This increase in absolute numbers is encouraging, but the disproportionality remains.

Another problem is the retention of teachers from racial/ethnic minority groups. According to Ingersoll and May (2011), “Data show that at the beginning of the 2003-04 school year, about 47,600 minority teachers entered teaching; however, by the following year, 20% more—about 56,000—had left teaching” (para. 14). Without these losses, there would have been an even greater reduction in the disproportionality between racial/ethnic minority students and racial/ethnic minority teachers. Of the 56,000 who left teaching, about “30,000... reported that they left to pursue another job or career or because of job dissatisfaction” (Ingersoll & May, 2011, para. 21).

Ingersoll and May (2011) report that teachers from racial/ethnic minority groups are more likely to be employed at “hard to staff” schools. Hard to staff schools are often associated with urban communities that have high rates of poverty and high rates of students from racial/ethnic minority groups. One might think that these factors would be sufficient to account for high rates of attrition. Yet, this appears not to be the case. Ingersoll and May (2011) found that “a school’s enrollment of poverty-level students, its minority-student enrollment, its proportion of minority teachers, or its location in an urban or suburban community weren’t strongly or consistently related to the likelihood that minority teachers would decide to stay or depart” (para. 15). Other seemingly plausible causal factors were examined and found not to be significant. Ingersoll and May (2011) found that, “Salary levels, the provision of useful professional development, and the availability of classroom resources all had little impact on whether [minority teachers] were likely to leave” (para. 17). Ingersoll and May (2011) concluded that “[t]he strongest factors by far for minority teachers were the level of collective faculty decision-

making influence in the school and the degree of individual instructional autonomy held by teachers in their classrooms” (para. 17).

The NEA has taken a dual approach to the problem of increasing teacher diversity, focusing attention on the recruitment and retention of racial/ethnic minority educators. Specifically, the NEA reports its focus to be on “teacher recruitment, preparation, licensure, district hiring, compensation, tenure and other aspects of retention” (NEA, 2011, p. 4). Accordingly, the NEA has established its Recruitment and Retention of Educators Program (NEA, 2012h).

One major part of the NEA’s recruitment and retention program is to provide grants to local and state NEA affiliates. According to the NEA (2012h), “These grants support partnership activities with school districts and community organizations working to recruit prospective teachers, retain experienced educators, and encourage students (from the high school level to college) to become teachers” (para. 24). Another major part of the program is to establish networks, to hold seminars and trainings, and to distribute fact-sheets, resource guides, program models, and other forms of research that support recruitment, retention, and professionalism (NEA 2012i; 2012j; 2012k; 2012l; 2012m).

The NEA’s policy aimed at increasing teacher diversity is a good example of a policy that enhances the development of generative community by promoting inclusivity and social equity, two of the necessary conditions of generative community. This policy promotes generative community because it directly addresses the problems associated with having a lack of racial/ethnic minority teachers.

Having a disproportionate number of teachers based on characteristics such as race/ethnicity is problematic in two ways. First, the disproportionality constitutes a failure of inclusivity, a necessary condition of generative community. In the absence of diversity in the teaching profession, students are deprived of access to the diverse set of experiences and perspectives on social/political issues that a diverse set of teachers would

bring to the classroom. Students are also deprived of interactions with members of minority groups in positions of authority, who are recognized as authoritative experts in their professional fields (Jenlink & Hicks Townes, 2009).

Second, the disproportionality of racial/ethnic minority teachers may be indicative of a broader problem of social/political and economic inequity in the society. Social equity is a necessary condition of the regulative ideal of generative community. Social equity would provide all individuals with equal access to professional careers of high social value. By increasing teacher diversity through this policy, the NEA is aiding in the development of both inclusivity and social equity.

### **Teaching for Civic Engagement**

In this section I examine the National Council for the Social Studies' (NCSS) educational policy, teaching for civic engagement, and a particular practice, service-learning, that is an implementation of that policy. I argue that this policy and the practice of service-learning are consistent with the concept of generative community and enhance its development.

The NCSS asserts that “a primary goal of public education is to prepare students to be engaged and effective citizens” (NCSS, 2012g, para. 2). The following is an abbreviated list of what the NCSS asserts constitutes an effective citizen. An effective citizen:

- Embraces core democratic values and strives to live by them.
- Accepts responsibility for the well-being of oneself, one's family, and the community.
- Has knowledge of the people, history, and traditions that have shaped our local communities, our nation, and the world.
- Seeks information from varied sources and perspectives to develop informed opinions and creative solutions.
- Uses effective decision-making and problem-solving skills in public and private life.
- Has the ability to collaborate effectively as a member of a group.
- Actively participates in civic and community life (NCSS, 2012g, para. 7).

In its “Creating Effective Citizens” position statement, the NCSS states, “every student must participate in citizenship education activities each year. These activities

should expand civic knowledge, develop participation skills, and support the belief that, in a democracy, the actions of each person make a difference” (NCSS, 2012g, para. 3). To foster the development of effective citizenship, the NCSS encourages social studies educators to use service-learning in their educational curriculum.

The NCSS distinguishes service-learning from community service and volunteerism. According to the NCSS, service-learning should:

- Provide opportunities for student and community input in the design of the service-learning experience;
- Engage students in both meaningful service and essential social studies content;
- Provide opportunities for reflection on the service experience and the connections between this experience, democratic values, and citizenship;
- Focus on change rather than charity, enabling students to question prevailing norms and develop new ideas for creating a more just and equitable society (NCSS, 2012h, para. 4).

The NCSS maintains that service-learning gives students the opportunity to develop democratic values through firsthand experiences of abstract concepts such as justice, diversity, and opportunity (NCSS, 2012h). The NCSS’ position is that students need to “engage in experiences that develop fair-mindedness, and encourage recognition and serious consideration of opposing points of view, respect for well-supported positions, sensitivity to cultural similarities and differences, and a commitment to individual and social responsibility” (NCSS, 2012i, para. 14).

The NCSS’ educational policy, teaching for civic engagement, and the particular practice of service-learning, enhance the development of generative community by promoting inclusivity, which is a necessary condition of generative community. Generative community requires, conceptually, a condition of inclusivity in public decision-making processes. Active engagement with existing community problems provides the experiences that are essential to begin the process of Deweyan reflective reasoning—this thinking is fundamentally a problem solving process. In the absence of this practical immediate experience of social problem situations, persons can easily remain oblivious to, or at least unconcerned about, the existence of the problem.

Social/political elites are frequently subject to the deleterious effects on reflective reasoning of isolation from direct contact with social problems. But, it is equally and even more problematic when the majority of citizens in a society are isolated from the social problems that affect minority groups in the community, e.g., the problems of the very poor, the very ill, or the very elderly, to name just a few groups. Given that reflective reasoning requires experience of problem situations, and given that inclusivity in decision-making processes requires reflective reasoning, it follows that widespread social experience of problem situations is required for widespread inclusion in social decision-making.

Why is widespread inclusivity in social decision making required for generative community? It is required because diversity of experience permits many different aspects of a problem situation to be perceived. Diversity of experience permits the imaginative generation of a wide range of possible solutions to the problem, which may then be critiqued and tested in practice (Daft, 2008; Larson Jr., 2007; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004; Phillips, 2008). Through a process of reflective reasoning that includes all members of society, new problem situations that are constantly emerging can be most effectively addressed.

The NCSS' policy on civic engagement and the practice of service-learning as a means to promote civic engagement provide students with the experiences necessary to become effective participants in a process of reflective reasoning on social problem situations. Through these experiences, students gain insight into a diversity of perspectives about the nature of the social problems and have the opportunity to engage in social actions aimed at ameliorating the social problems.

### **Teaching for Whole Child Development**

In this section, I examine the educational policy of teaching for whole child development, advanced by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

(ASCD). I argue that this policy is consistent with the concept of generative community and enhances its development.

The ASCD faults the U.S. system of public education for having too great a focus on academic achievement: “The current direction in educational practice and policy focuses overwhelmingly on academic achievement. However, academic achievement is but one element of student learning and development and only a part of any complete system of educational accountability” (ASCD, 2012a, para. 3).

They offer instead a conception of teaching for “whole child development”. They present a picture of what is needed for the education of the “whole child”, a comprehensive approach that : “...recognizes that successful young people are knowledgeable, emotionally and physically healthy, motivated, civically inspired, engaged in the arts, prepared for work and economic self-sufficiency, and ready for the world beyond their own borders (ASCD, 2012a, para. 3).

The ASCD identifies five educational goals. Children, if properly educated, should be: healthy; safe; engaged; supported; and, challenged (ASCD, 2012b, para. 5).

Accordingly, the ASCD sets out five tenets of the whole child initiative:

1. Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.
2. Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults.
3. Each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.
4. Each student has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified, caring adults.
5. Each student is challenged academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment (ASCD, 2012b, para. 5).

The ASCD has developed an elaborate rubric to express their whole child education program (ASCD, 2012c).

As a part of its whole child initiative, the ASCD aims to encourage collaboration between school leaders and school-community members. To aid schools and community members in effective forms of collaboration, the ASCD has developed community

conversation models that school and community leaders can use (ASCD, 2012d). The ASCD has partnered with numerous educational and community-based organizations to advance the whole child initiative (ASCD, 2012e).<sup>1</sup>

In advocating for the whole child initiative, the ASCD stresses the importance of respect for difference. The ASCD advises that “Differing views and legitimate disagreement over policies are fundamental ingredients of effective advocacy. Disagreement on one issue does not mean you will not agree on another issue. Agree to disagree, be courteous, and move on” (ASCD, 2012f, para. 10)

The ASCD calls for the publication of a “Whole Child State Report Card” that would measure the health, safety and education of children and families in the state. According to the ASCD, this “...would be an important tool—a comprehensive look at the circumstances (e.g., hunger, poverty, crime, literacy, and health) of children in the state... (ASCD, 2012g, para. 5).

The ASCD’s educational policy on whole child development enhances the development of generative community by promoting social equity, a necessary condition of generative community. Social equity pertains to the distribution of material goods, and to the distribution of social, political, and economic power. An equitable distribution of social goods is one that ensures that all individuals have the resources necessary to permit them to engage fully in social decision-making processes.

This is not to say that a state of complete equality is required—this would be an impossible state to reach and maintain with any degree of individual freedom. It is to say that a society is inequitable when, for example, certain individuals receive educational benefits, from the system of public education intended to provide free and equal education to all, that are vastly inferior to those that others receive. Deficiency of

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<sup>1</sup> These organizations include: American Association of School Administrators, Coalition for Community Schools, The National Education Association, Phi Delta Kappa International, and School Social Work Association of America, among others (ASCD, 2012e).

educational benefits deprives such individuals of full social, political, and economic participation in society. Social structures that produce such a result are *ipso facto* inequitable; the U.S. system, to the extent that it produces such a result, produces an inequitable society.

To take a second example, when some individuals in society do not have the access to necessary health care, those individuals are deprived of the ability to fully participate in society. One of the ASCD's primary goals in the whole child initiative is to ensure all children have adequate access to proper health care. This is because individuals who have health issues that negatively affect their ability to go to school, or to learn while in school, lose out on the education necessary to be full participants in society. For instance, individuals with chronic health conditions that require medical care, in an equitable society, would receive the care needed to enable them to participate. Children and their families would be connected to the necessary resources in the community to ensure such care. A society that does not commit to provision of the resources necessary for educational success would not count as equitable, in the sense required for generative community.

The ASCD's whole child initiative is an example of an educational policy that is consistent with generative community, because it focuses on broad issues of social equity at both the individual and community levels. It emphasizes a child's well-being with respect to his or her physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. The ASCD's whole child initiative also emphasizes the responsibility of the community as a whole for the development of children, and hence the importance of collaboration between schools and the broader school community. These key features of the ACSD's whole child initiative enhance the development of generative community.



## CONCLUSION

Examination of contemporary literature reveals that, in the United States, there has been a dearth of contemporary scholarly attention to the conceptualization and justification of a set of broad underlying educational aims that can be used to guide decisions about educational policies and practices. Contemporary educational discourse focuses largely on the level of implementation of policies and practices, on, for example, the development and implementation of accountability methods, or the development of curriculum standards and objective methods of measuring individual achievement. This is problematic because broad educational aims, and values that underlie them, guide the system of education, whether they are critically examined or not. The central role that values play in educational matters places educational decisions in the realm of ethics.

To address the problems of identifying and justifying a set of aims of education, I drew on the insights of John Dewey's philosophy of pragmatism. I argued that Dewey's philosophy of pragmatism is a well-warranted philosophy because of its emphasis on reasoning, and the applicability of the reasoning process to moral decision-making. I argued that Deweyan reflective morality is a well warranted moral theory and can serve as the means to reach morally justifiable decisions.

I then examined the concept of the Good Life, and its suitability as the ultimate aim of education. I used Dewey's notion of "moral happiness" to give definition to a particular conceptualization of the Good Life. I argued that in order to achieve the Good Life, so conceived, a community must engage in Dewey's reflective morality. I then developed the concept of generative community as a regulative ideal, which can be employed in the assessment of the merits of particular educational aims, policies, and practices. I identified a set of conditions which are necessary if a community is to effectively engage in reflective morality. Four fundamental necessary conditions of generative community were identified: social equity; inclusivity; transparency; and, fallibility.

For educational aims, policies, and practices to be morally justified, on this analysis, they must, at the least, be consistent with the regulative ideal of generative community. At the best, they would be strongly conducive to the development of generative community. The justification of particular aims, policies, and practices is strengthened to the extent that they are conducive to the development of generative community.

I argued that any set of educational aims, policies, or practices must be explicitly stated and opened up to critical assessment through the inquiry process of reflective morality, by reference to the regulative ideal of generative community. This is because educational aims, policies, and practices are informed by the values which represent the character of human life. Dewey (1925/2008) writes, “The more sure one is that the world which encompasses human life is of such and such a character...the more one is committed to try to direct the conduct of life, that of others as well as of himself...” (p. 309). To properly direct life, human beings must search for the meanings of things through interactions. Dewey (1925/2008) puts it this way: “...there is search for the meaning of things with respect to acts to be performed, plans and policies to be formed...” (p. 309). The meanings of things revealed through interaction constitute new knowledge, and this knowledge should affect future actions, plans, and policies. Dewey (1925/2008) writes, “...we are brought to a consideration of the most far-reaching question of all criticism: the relationship between existence and value, or as the problem is often put, between the real and ideal” (p. 310). This means that human beings are led to undertake a process of moral assessment of current conditions by reference to the requirements of an envisaged ideal.

In Part II of this dissertation, I briefly engaged a process of moral assessment. Using a method of purposive sampling for politically important cases, I selected six educational aims and six cases of educational policies or practices for examination and assessment by reference to generative community as a regulative ideal.

The educational aims I examined were: 1) the dissemination of knowledge; 2) the pursuit of economic efficiency; 3) the achievement of individual self-realization; 4) the promotion of cultural assimilation; 5) the promotion of democracy; and, 6) the advancement of social justice. I concluded that each of the six proposed aims, if understood in a particular sense, would be consistent with and conducive to generative community. And yet, there are senses in which those aims might be understood which are inconsistent with generative community.

The educational policies and practices I examined were: 1) the current practice of market-based textbook development; 2) the current policy of parental empowerment, as represented by parent trigger laws; 3) the current policy of curriculum standardization, as represented by the Common Core State Standards Initiative; 4) the current policy of promoting the ethnic and cultural diversity of teachers; 5) the current practice of teaching for civic engagement; and, 6) the current policy of teaching for “whole child” development. Three of the selected cases were found to conflict with generative community and three were found to be consistent with, and conducive to, the development of generative community.

### **Implications for Further Research**

Through this dissertation I have worked to develop a conception of generative community which can serve as a regulative ideal in the Deweyan sense of the ideal. Conceptual development, however, is a dynamic process. It serves as a tool to make more clear the ideas, and ideals, that society is pursuing, and ought to be pursuing. The conditions of society, and the ideas and ideals of society, are constantly changing. This means that the work of conceptual development is never fully complete. That said, more conceptual work needs to be done to elaborate and refine generative community as a regulative ideal. To have such a regulative ideal is essential for the process of reflective morality, in the Deweyan sense. On this theory of ethics, the merit of particular

educational aims, policies, and practices is assessed by reference to their relation to the long range regulative ideal of generative community.

I have started the work of explicating particular conceptions of educational aims. More empirical and conceptual work needs to be done to elaborate and refine the broad underlying aims that currently guide the United State's system of education. In addition to the continual conceptual work that is necessary to make particular conceptions more clear, more work still needs to be done on the moral assessment of educational aims, policies, and practices in the United States, by reference to generative community as a regulative ideal. I have started this work, but, if the system of education is to meet its moral responsibility, this work must be extended. It is hoped that the development of the ideal of generative community will encourage the growth of the critical assessment of the aims of education, and the values underlying them.

## **APPENDIX**

### **CONTRASTING THEORIES OF ETHICS**

In this appendix I will briefly indicate the nature of three theoretical positions in ethics that are in contrast to Dewey's theory of reflective morality. This is intended merely to provide some basic context for the reader, and to highlight some problems with these alternate theories.

#### **Teleological Ethical Theories**

In teleological theories, morally right action is wholly tied to the consequences of one's actions or decisions. According to such theories, what is morally right is determined by determining the amount of good produced by the action, and comparing this to the amount of bad produced. An action that produces as much, or more, good than the amount of bad it produces is considered to be right or morally good. In other words, decisions or actions that lead to the greatest balance of good over bad are right or morally good. In this way, goodness in a moral sense is tied to goodness in a non-moral sense. Actions are morally good if they produce the intended non-moral consequence (Frankena, 1963/1973).

There are three primary types of teleological theories: act-utilitarianism, general utilitarianism, and rule-utilitarianism. In act-utilitarianism, one is obliged to consider each circumstance anew and evaluate which action would most likely produce the greatest amount of good. In general utilitarianism, one is obliged to consider what action would most likely produce the greatest amount of good if everyone in all similar circumstances acted the same way. In rule-utilitarianism, one is obliged to consider what rule would most likely produce the greatest amount of good (Frankena, 1963/1973).

A major problem with all utilitarian theories is that they tie the moral good to the non-moral good and hold a person morally accountable only for the actual consequences of his or her actions. Using the only the consequence of a person's action is a problem because the person acting is not accountable for his or her will or conscious intention.

For example, a person could act unconsciously, accidentally selecting conditions and actions that increase good over bad and be regarded as morally good. Another person might consciously attempt to bring about good consequences by following a moral principle such as “seek justice”, or love, or beneficence. But the intentions of the person are irrelevant to the moral judgment about the person. If the well-intended actions end up causing more harm than good, the actions are morally wrong and the person is judged morally bad.

There is another major problem with some forms of utilitarianism, particularly act-utilitarianism and general utilitarianism. It is simply not possible for human beings to accurately determine in each circumstance the amount of good that will come from a specific action. It is also not possible for human beings to accurately generalize to decide what type of action would most likely produce the greatest amount of good if everyone in all similar circumstances acted the same way. I will refer to this difficulty as the feasibility problem. The feasibility problem is still a problem in rule-utilitarianism. This is because, on this theory, human beings are expected to draw on the vast experiences of humankind throughout history to make moral decisions, based on historically developed “rules of thumb”. But, the rules of thumb may conflict, and there is no method that allows one to decide between conflicting rules.

All three forms of utilitarianism require decisions to be made based on some idea of what is good, i.e., on some value theory. One must have an idea of what is good or bad, in order to decide which actions will produce the greatest amount of good over bad. This has led many ethical philosophers to theorize about what is good.

In value theory, there are two basic ways to understand goodness; there are hedonistic conceptions of goodness, and non-hedonistic conceptions. Hedonists, such as Bentham (1789/1823), claim that *the* good is happiness and that happiness is pleasure. Mill (1863/2007) refined the concept of pleasure, distinguishing intellectual and aesthetic pleasures from mere physical pleasures, and giving greater value to the intellectual and

aesthetic pleasures. Non-hedonists, such as Moore (1903/2004) claim that pleasure is a good but not *the* good. In non-hedonism, other principles or ideals, such as justice, beauty, or love, also have a place in the conception of goodness.

A major problem with all forms of utilitarianism, hedonistic or non-hedonistic, is the means by which the conception of moral goodness is justified. Some ethical philosophers rest claims of moral goodness on human nature (i.e., naturalism). For example, some argue that, by nature, all human beings seek to increase pleasure and decrease pain. Although human history may suggest that this is in fact the case, it is often thought not acceptable to justify an “ought” with an “is” or to get a value from a fact. Suppose that human beings are naturally inclined to steal and do derive pleasure from stealing. Even if humans naturally steal, and naturally derive pleasure from stealing, it remains an open question whether stealing is morally justified. This scenario illustrates Moore’s (1903/2004) open-question argument.

Some ethical philosophers rest claims of moral goodness on intuitionism (i.e., non-naturalism). According to this line of thought, basic principles and value judgments are self-evident and all fully functioning human beings intuitively know what principles and value judgments are good. This is problematic because history shows that human beings intuitions vary widely and intuitionism offers no way to deal with inevitable conflicts.

### **Deontological Ethical Theories**

Deontological theories deny that what is morally good is wholly tied to the non-moral consequences of one’s actions or decisions. Act-deontology and rule-deontology are two primary types of deontological theories. One major problem with both deontological theories is the very fact that they do not take into account the actual consequences of actions.

In act-deontology, moral goodness is determined by the specifics of each situation (Frankena, 1963/1973). To identify what is morally right one must examine the specific

act in a specific context and then make a particular moral judgment. A major problem with act-deontology is that one must make a judgment without being able to appeal to a set of rules or generalizations. There is a best course of action, which is morally right, but in act-deontology there are no rules to help you decide what that action is. As a moral actor, one is on one's own.

In rule-deontology, an action is morally right if it is taken as a matter of obedience to the rules of right moral action. Rules are thought to be intrinsically right and need no consequentialist justification (Frankena, 1963/1973). One major problem with rule-deontology is the very fact that it does not take into account consequences. For example, the actions of a person who violated his or her duty to a specific rule, even with the knowledge that violating that specific rule would lead to a more desirable consequence, would be regarded as morally wrong. Or, recast another way, the actions of a person who dutifully followed a specific rule, even with the knowledge that following that rule would lead to a less desirable consequence, would be regarded as morally right.

There is another major problem with rule-deontology. One question that immediately comes to mind is, what makes one rule (e.g., "be honest") count as a genuine moral rule, and another rule (e.g., "be deceitful") not count as a genuine moral rule? The justification of the claim that a rule is a genuine moral rule is problematic. There are two major forms justification. The Divine Command theory and Kant's theory are two primary categories of rule-deontology that provide different forms of justification for various rules (Frankena, 1963/1973).

Followers of the Divine Command theory believe that the rules of right action are set by the will of God (Frankena, 1963/1973). For example, the Ten Commandments are rules understood to be rules given by God directly to humankind. A major problem with the Divine Command theory is that it rests claims of right action on what people claim to be the will of God. This raises questions about who has the right or power to recognize or claim that they indeed know the will of God. Some may argue that to know the will of



God requires historical and theological knowledge. Others may claim that knowing God's will is a matter of following one's conscience. In any case, the will of God and how it is best understood is always subject to personal interpretation.

Philosophers following a Kantian theory justify claims of right action by reference to Kant's categorical imperative (Frankena, 1963/1973). In Kant's (1785/1998) words, "Act only on that maxim which you can at the same time will to be a universal law" (p. 81). This means that for a rule to be morally good, one must be able to consistently will everyone in all similar circumstances to act on that rule. For example, if one thinks that crossing the street only inside a crosswalk is a morally right rule, one would be required to hold oneself and everyone else accountable to that rule. But, for such a rule to be plausible, one would have to account for an infinite number of exceptional circumstances. This is simply not feasible. Even without very much thought, one can imagine a host of exceptional circumstances that would need to be considered. For example, there are circumstances when using a crosswalk would not be possible (e.g., there is no crosswalk), circumstances when using a crosswalk would not be in anyone's best interest (e.g., saving a child who has wandered into the street), and circumstances when using a crosswalk would indeed be a good rule to follow (e.g., there is a crosswalk at a busy intersection).

The need to account for such a vast number of circumstances reveals a rule-deontological version of the problem of feasibility. It is highly improbable that we as human beings have the ability to generate all the necessary rules to actually capture all possible circumstances. Even if humans did have that ability, so many rules would be generated that one would be in a constant state of confusion trying to figure out which rule must be used to guide one's action in a specific circumstance.

### **Virtue Ethics Theories**

In virtue ethics, a virtue is a way of being. Virtues are character traits, not actions. A few of the virtues identified by ethical philosophers, e.g., Aristotle (ca. 350

B.C./1881), are wisdom, justice, courage, and temperance. For Aristotle, virtues are all said to represent a golden mean between a vice of deficiency and a vice of excess. For example, justice is the golden mean between submissiveness and tyranny. Courage is the golden mean between cowardice and recklessness. Virtues are then used as the standard of goodness. Individuals whose character is virtuous would be regarded as morally good. Virtuous persons need merely act naturally, according to their character, to be acting rightly.

In virtue ethics, moral goodness is not tied to rules of right action or to the value of the consequences of action. One who regards oneself as virtuous in character is free to act without the necessity of recourse to a process of reasoning about the action. But, commitment to engaging in a well-warranted process of reasoning, with respect to moral problems, should be regarded as the chief virtue. If this commitment is taken to be the chief virtue, then virtue ethics would be consistent with the Deweyan theory of reflective morality.

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