

The Education of *Eros* and Collateral Learning in Teacher Education

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On its face, this essay makes, for me, a sensible and incontrovertible claim. Students learn more from teachers than what is explicitly taught. While subject matter and pedagogical expertise are important, the attitudinal, emotional, and personal qualities teachers bring to their encounters with students in classrooms bear significantly on the quality and efficacy of learning. Thus, educational programs must attend to a wider range of qualities and abilities that enable and distinguish educational encounters than those captured by epistemological and behavioral expertise.

I am less clear on the way this claim is linked to its intellectual antecedents. Certainly, Dewey wrote about collateral learning and not only the need, but also the necessity of educating by indirection. For example, to cite just two instances of the multiple ways he makes this point, Dewey writes, "Speaking accurately, all direction is but re-direction," and that "we never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment."¹ Dewey's intent here, however, is to point *not* to the personal, but rather to the social environment as the primary educator. Dewey is very clear about this. Though he does not de-value the personal qualities of individuals, his discussion of collateral learning is intended to move us *away* from the personal and toward the social and intellectual. As he writes,

The net outcome of the discussion is that the fundamental means of control is not personal, but intellectual. It is not "moral" in the sense that a person is moved by direct personal appeal from others, important as is this method at critical junctures. It consists in the habits of understanding, which are set up using objects in correspondence with others, whether by way of cooperation and assistance or rivalry and competition.²

Thus, for Dewey, the recognition that significant learning occurs collaterally and indirectly requires us to focus on constructing environments where intellectual growth can develop through shared use and activity. In *Moral Principles and Education*, which Zigler uses for his references on direct and indirect instruction, Dewey makes this point another way.³ Criticizing the way methods of instruction cultivate individualistic motives and standards and fail to cultivate the social spirit of the school, Dewey writes,

Some stimulus must be found to keep the child at his studies. At the best this will be his affection for his teacher, together with a feeling that he is not violating school rules....I have nothing to say against these motives so far as they go, but they are inadequate. The relation between a piece of work to be done and affection for a third person is external, not intrinsic. It is liable to break down whenever the external conditions are changed. Moreover, this attachment to a particular person, while in a way social, may become so isolated and exclusive as to be selfish in quality. In any case, the child should gradually grow out of this relatively external motive into an appreciation, for its own sake, of the social value of what he has to do.⁴

Of course, we can argue about whether Dewey was right or wrong on this point. My concern here, however, is that, for Dewey, the significance of collateral or

indirect learning calls for attention to aspects of the school as a social environment and the possibilities such an environment provides for using instrumentalities with others in such a way as to enable learners to grow *beyond* personal and affectional attachments into self-directed members of a learning community. For Dewey, the “weightiest problem” of philosophy of education is keeping a balance between what we consciously know and unconsciously know, where the latter is a consequence of “intercourse with others.”⁵

I will not go into such detail with the other primary intellectual antecedent appealed to in the essay, Jim Garrison’s work on *eros*, but a few comments are in order. Zigler summarizes Garrison’s claim that the education of *eros* should be the supreme aim of each level of teacher education in this way, “Garrison’s primary recommendations appear to focus on a direct, active, explicit educational encounter: most notably, the reflective, deliberative encounter afforded by themes embedded in literary work,” what Garrison calls a “critical-creative theory of intelligent deliberation.” Zigler then writes, “what is inadvertently omitted is an acknowledgement and appreciation for an element of human experience that is best described as subtle, tacit and indirect...non-deliberative experience.” Again, Zigler may be right that Garrison does not give due emphasis to “non-deliberative experience,” although my own reading of Garrison suggests otherwise. However, it is certainly incorrect to state that Garrison’s claim that the education of *eros*, the supreme aim of teacher education, rooted in direct, deliberative, reflective encounters with literary texts, *inadvertently* neglects non-deliberative experience. We must assume that Garrison thoughtfully and intentionally stated his case for the education of *eros* the way he wanted to. Nothing about it is inadvertent. In summary, I find the references to Dewey and Garrison as foundational sources, or at least theoretical supports, for Zigler’s case lacking or mistaken.

What is Zigler’s argument then, on its own terms? It seems to me to be this. Students learn collaterally from teachers as models of personal inspiration. Thus, good or exemplary teachers need to be good or exemplary models of personal inspiration. Exemplary models of personal inspiration are those moved by the ideal of growth. The ideal of growth is grounded in positive emotions and undermined by negative emotions. These emotions are transmitted or ground the transmission of ideals to students unconsciously. Thus, to prepare exemplary teachers, it is just as important to prepare their emotional unconscious as their subject matter and pedagogical competence. To stimulate the emotional unconscious for the positive and inspirational, we may need to direct the personal habits and lifestyles of teachers. And this effort, says Zigler, may be controversial.

Why is this controversial? Zigler writes of a continuity between personal and professional roles. This makes sense. We do not expect much good teaching from someone who climbs out of their KKK robes to go teach an inspiring lesson on Martin Luther King, Jr. And, more important, we deliberately and intentionally direct the personal habits and lifestyles of teachers already in countless ways. We want them to be readers, get up on time, use articulate speech, keep their hands off kids, refrain from cursing, smoking, doing drugs, and groping themselves between

7:30 and 3:30. What is it about touching teachers' personal habits and lifestyles that is controversial? One way, I think the correct way, of understanding Dewey's point about collateral and indirect learning is that, for Dewey, this kind of learning is *always* going on, sometimes profoundly, through our associations in institutions and environments, below the radar, unconscious. Is it that Zigler wants to educate the unconscious consciously? Is it that Zigler wants to make the collateral education of prospective teachers overt, direct, and intentional?

This is the place where claims about brain research become important in the argument. I think Zigler's full argument is this: (1) inspirational, growth-pursuing teachers produce collateral learning and are themselves collateral teachers; (2) these personal qualities and ideals are grounded in an emotional unconscious; (3) this emotional unconscious is rooted in the brain and can be manipulated by particular "priming stimuli"; and thus (4) prospective teachers should be exposed to the priming stimuli necessary to activate their brains to develop the emotional unconscious necessary to be inspirational, growth-seeking teachers.

In short, I believe Zigler's essay has little to do with Dewey or Garrison, but rather is an argument for an approach to teacher education grounded in brain research. Further, the claim is that brain research shows us how certain stimuli can be used explicitly and directly to produce particular positive emotions and habits, and that these positive emotions and habits ground inspirational teaching.

This position *is* controversial. It has little to do with Garrison's idea of the education of *eros* through deliberative, critical encounters with texts as the supreme aim of teacher education or Dewey's idea of constructing and creating social environments where growth into a shared freedom and habits of understanding, what Dewey called a socialized mind, is encouraged through generous and non-deferential relations with others. For all the talk about collateral and indirect learning, non-deliberative experience, and emotional unconscious, I read Zigler's essay as a call for a deliberate, direct, conscious program of training teachers with "positive" emotions and lifestyles by changing their brain processes through the intervention of selected priming stimuli. It is the questions that emerge out of this program that are controversial and that need to be explained and defended.

1. John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Free Press, 1966), 26, 19.

2. *Ibid.*, 33.

3. John Dewey, *Moral Principles in Education* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975).

4. *Ibid.*, 23.

5. Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 9.