Introduction

FOR THE LOVE OF LEARNING AND THE JOYS OF READING PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

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Every editor's dream is for readers to excitedly flock to the latest issue of a journal, captivated by the contents, thinking deeply about the material, and thoroughly enjoying each page. This expectation is magnified in philosophical disciplines that trace a long lineage to Aristotle's notion of *eudaimonia*, a happiness that can result from intellectual stimulation and engagement with ideas while reading. Surely, there is much to be said for the love of reading philosophy! And yet, during the Presidential Address at the 2014 Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education Society Conference, Bryan Warnick took many of us by surprise when he argued "against the love of reading"—a proposal that on the face of it would appear nearly blasphemous to philosophers who devote much of their time buried in texts.

Warnick urged his audience to reconsider this oft celebrated aim of education, showing that the love of reading is an aim and rationale that raises several problems. He rightly demonstrates that the motivations we provide to children for their academic pursuits matter. Indeed, we agree that such justifications should be taken seriously and should themselves be subject to critical examination. This is especially important when the aims and motivations of learning in today's world are often tied to capital accumulation or earning certificates that warrant high paying jobs. In those cases, learning may be reduced to merely instrumental purposes, concerned only with materialistic ends, goals, and justifications that might not truly serve the public good or even one's individual well-being. As a case in point in the realm of higher education, consider the newly proposed Ohio budget, which lays out a plan for basing the degree programs offered at universities on the needs of industry, thereby making the aims and motivations for learning explicitly occupational and economic.

Returning to Warnick's attack on the love of reading, he correctly notes, via Plato and Emerson, how we can be tricked by books or become complacent and inactive because we are swept up in stories. Oh how we have lost track of time when overcome by a moving tale! And he goes on to show that our expectation to love reading leads us to books that are easy to digest, require little effort, or rarely push us to engage critically. Perhaps this argument is less relevant to philosophers, but it certainly rings true for a wide swath of the population because, as he says, "the problem is that reading educationally involves work, labor, and concentration of a very intense sort." So he turns

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instead to argue that we should encourage a love of learning, which may lead students to want to read, but might also inspire them to choose challenging materials and to read from a more discriminating stance.

Approaching learning in this way might entail encouraging reading as a moral obligation to, as Warnick says, “engage with the world in intelligent and informed ways.” Warnick was met with a less optimistic view of students by his respondent Kevin Gary, who doubted that students would read out of moral obligation or accept the challenge of becoming fuller selves due to their preoccupations with pleasurable activities. Instead, Gary describes a contemplative reader who seeks out texts that confront and challenge us to be our best selves, thereby bringing together some of the pleasures of reading with the moral ideals that Warnick desires.

We present this collection to you in a similar spirit. Reading it involves work, and reading it well involves criticality. It also entails a moral duty to seek out an array of perspectives on pressing issues in education. We invite our readers to accept Warnick’s challenge to take on the laborious task of engaging with the finer and complex ideas in these articles and to enact your love of learning. And we encourage readers to be contemplative in the sense suggested by Gary in that you may find pleasure in the reading, while also using it to challenge and confront yourselves to be fuller persons, and thereby accept the moral duties that come with this. Along the way, we hope that you will find this issue to be engaging, producing pleasure and intellectual happiness.

Dwelling at the Hyphen between the Ideal and Non-Ideal

We open our collection with the Phil Smith lecture, delivered by esteemed philosopher of education, Nicholas C. Burbules. He picks up the 2014 theme of our national organization, The Philosophy of Education Society, on “Ideal vs. Non-Ideal Theory” and brings it to our colleagues in the Ohio Valley to chew over in more detail. Being careful not to too quickly join other philosophers of education who have celebrated non-ideal theory as a better fit for the messy work we do in schools, Burbules first strives to clarify different ways in which this distinction is made. He begins by examining the work of John Rawls and then moves into significant distinctions dividing (and uniting) the two camps from there.

Burbules then applies these distinctions to analyze some of the work that has garnered him acclaim in our field, from defining an educated person to prescribing good educational dialogue, and from debating rationality and reasonableness to pretending to listen. With each example, he shows us how ideal theory “provide[s] concepts and principles that should inform human judgment and action, not models that we should try to emulate.” In this way, he sets up his most significant contribution to the discussion of ideal vs. non-ideal theory: the “binocular” view. This is a way of keeping in view an ideal vision alongside the elements of a particular situation that work against that ideal.

This juxtaposition can then bring into focus the "gap between our aspirations and our accomplishments," thereby rendering us more conscientious about our goals and shortcomings. Surely such a contribution is not only helpful to the field as a whole, but also offers a lens for looking back on the work of this noted scholar and how it has been taken up by others as well.

One of Burbules's former students, Natasha Levinson, responded to his address. Referring to the connecting element of the term "non-Ideal," she intriguingly describes Burbules in terms akin to his binocular metaphor as "a thinker who dwells conscientiously at the hyphen—attached to the Ideal, but vigilantly attentive to the conditions that make it less than Ideal in the real world." Later, she adds, "Burbules's central concern in all of his writings is the question of what it means to think *educationally* about a phenomenon." While aptly noting some of the strengths of Burbules's work, she does push back on his use of liberal theory via Rawls as ideal, pointing out that such an approach is already non-ideal because it has to grapple with the lived tensions between equality and liberty. Levinson is left struggling to locate Burbules's collective work, as well as his invited lecture here, within the camps of ideal and non-ideal. She closes by turning to Burbules's writing on and around the tragic sense of education to show that he actually has much more in common with ideal theorizing when it comes to encounters with hope and social transformation than with the limits and constraints of the non-ideal, suggesting that perhaps one aspect of his binocular view is in greater focus than the other.

Awareness, Accountability, and the Moral Work of Teaching and Learning

Taking Burbules's binocular view back into the trenches, this year's authors provide both ideal ways of examining educational policy and practice, and discussions of some unfortunate circumstances that make up the non-ideal in current educational paradigms. They tackle very real dilemmas schools and teachers face through policies of finance, measurement, accountability, standardization, and efficiency, the moral quandaries of teaching and learning within these parameters, and the ways in which the alternative promotion of diversity, authenticity, and humanness might alter the conversation.

We begin the issue exploring the tensions between careful philosophical analysis and the current drive for efficiency. Angela Hurley reminds us how once education was spoken of as a measured task, where scholars and learners carefully debated and weighed information and experience to arrive at new ideas. However, measured is now used as an active verb denoting data collection and performance standards, jeopardizing some of the more spatially proximal, carefully reasoned, and time consuming elements of education that were once celebrated by many philosophers of education as well as practitioners.

Robert Fitzgerald continues this preference for careful reasoning, proposing that it would be better to employ philosophical frameworks to analyze and improve school funding structures than those based in financial

analysis that have traditionally dominated the debate. By exposing inequities in school funding in Illinois and discussing central financial issues and court cases related to funding struggles, Fitzgerald draws our attention to these issues in new and different ways, and alternatively argues that viewing them through philosophical notions of justice might better enable scholars and policy makers to advocate for a fairer restructuring of the funding mechanism.

Our next two articles openly ponder the moral dilemmas inherent in a climate of high-stakes accountability. Keri L. Rodgers and Sheron Fraser-Burgess present an interesting analysis of how the ability to teach morally and to execute genuine ethics of care has been jeopardized by the accountability movement, which treats relationships in economic terms and forces teachers to succumb to some pressures that are not in the best interests of their students. Specifically, the authors describe how teachers often must choose between helping all their students equitably, or focusing their attention on those few students who will be most likely to boost the school's test scores so it can achieve adequate yearly progress. Accountability regimes thus promote the kinds of pedagogical decisions about time and resources that perpetuate unequal access to learning.

In her piece on test-based teacher evaluations, Chloé Bolyard correspondingly asserts that through methods of surveillance and "blame games," the new Ohio Teacher Evaluation System leads teachers to normalize themselves to mediocre performance. She raises the intriguing point that because such evaluations conflate responsibility and accountability, those who argue against accountability are seen as supporting irresponsible action. Teachers can respond to the evaluation system by complying, resisting, or subverting it. Resisting would be to prioritize the student-teacher relationship over the economic relationship of neoliberal accountability, yet resisting leads one to be seen as irresponsible.

Shifting our focus to the learning experience, authors of the next few articles posit that current educational and cultural trends objectify and demean students, overemphasizing the student as a vessel to be filled, rather than a subject capable of his or her own authentic interaction with knowledge and existence. We begin with Morgan Anderson's analysis of a section of the Common Core State Standards, which highlights the centrality of the terms "critical thinking" and "skills" within the standards while showing that the accompanying interpretations are problematically focused on a narrow range of results in students. Anderson suggests, instead, a view of students as innately critical and agentive and argues that we should be focused on creating better educational experiences and humanizing engagement with learning, rather than being so restrictedly focused on specific results that are often distinct from the lived experiences of the children themselves.

In a turn toward thinking of learning from a more experiential perspective, Ryan Ozar compares the heroes of experiential learning, Rousseau and Dewey, revealing the surprising extent to which the "natural" experiences

they encouraged for students were often carefully crafted and heavily dependent on the teacher to facilitate. He follows this development into contemporary experiential education theory, which he claims to be equally contingent upon staged opportunities and teacher interference, to suggest that for learning to ever be truly experiential, students must instead be better positioned to critique this reliance on the teacher in their process of learning.

Dan Mamlok next brings our attention to the role of technology in our culture and its effect on education. He draws on the concepts of "aura," reproduction, globalization, and consumerism in a virtual world to show how turning objects into commodities through such representation transforms education and the process of illumination. Mamlock closes with a call for students to become artists of their own lives, seeking out original and authentic experiences within their increasingly simulated and standardized world.

Finally, our last two authors address the enigma within the modern educational system that inculcates us with a disregard for difference in pursuit of a repressively humanistic notion of commonality. In her critique of school uniform policies, Samantha Deane argues that such policies teach students to avoid interfacing with the race, class, and gender differences that such uniformity masks. Difference is seen as dangerous; a restrictive dress code serves as a constant visual reminder that the goal of education is to avoid the emotional in favor of rational action. Deane demonstrates how these policies may lead people to ignore difference instead of attending to it as a vital, messy, unpredictable aspect of public living that they need to learn to navigate.

Confronting the issue of diversity at the level of higher education, Shilpi Sinha addresses the well-intentioned statements of belief in colorblindness that we often hear from pre-service teachers. Sinha traces these beliefs to the spirit of humanism which has historically simultaneously served in oppressive ways, where the standard of humanness operates as whiteness. She delineates how some racial minority individuals can also crave being recognized for their essential humanity, in spite of the racialized structures these terms tend to conceal. Sinha urges educators to move away from the existing problematic notion of humanness toward an awareness of difference that produces a more liberatory version of humanness.

We were grateful for the opportunity to organize the 2014 conference, and to edit this volume of some of the best papers growing out of the participants' presentations. In reading it, we hope you will not only enjoy their ideas and perspectives, but will be motivated by your love of learning toward further inspired inquiry and productive action.