

Running Head: Situating The Social Studies Situating The Social Studies Curriculum In John Dewey’s Theory Of Nature: Promise And Possibility

Daniel W. Stuckart

City University New York Lehman College

Abstract

No subject matter comes closer to modeling Deweyan philosophy than the modern social studies. Yet, social studies scholars have been debating for decades whether Dewey actually supported the curriculum resulting in a perceived paradox between Dewey’s interdisciplinary approach to problem solving and his writings about traditional, stand-alone social sciences. This paper situates the problem in Dewey’s Theory of Nature and argues that (1) the paradox is a myth; (2) Dewey is misunderstood and marginalized in the literature; and (3) Dewey offers a middle position for addressing problems and supporting social studies learning with myriad theories.

Keywords: Social studies, John Dewey, philosophy, theory

Introduction

It was no accident that the Pragmatism branch of philosophy emerged around the 1870s, about the same time as the social welfare crusades, which were the precursors to the modern social studies movement (Saxe, 1992). Both were strong reactions to the social tumult of the late nineteenth century Industrial Revolution. Although the term, Pragmatism, first appeared around the turn of the century (James, 1898), this particular offshoot of philosophy was well established by then, and John Dewey rose to prominence as one of the most influential philosophers in American history with his unique synthesis of it, which he later labeled “Instrumentalism” (Dewey, 1929, p. 151).

Although Dewey’s system of ideas saturated the deliberations and final report of the Committee for Social Studies in 1916, he was not a participant nor did he ever offer a resounding endorsement for the Committee’s recommendations (Evans, 2004; Fallace, 2009; Lybarger, 1983; Mraz, 2004; Saxe, 1992). Despite his absence, Dewey’s influence was

enormous and as Saxe (1992) asserted, “[C]learly, no part of the school curriculum (past or present) appeared as close to Deweyan thought as social studies” (p. 266). Further, evidence from the proceedings suggested that Dewey’s philosophy and theories played a role in bridging the participants’ differences. The compromise document coalesced around two major themes, centering the proposed curriculum around present needs and problems; and developing aims for improving society (Fallace, 2009).

Deweyan philosophy served as both method (i.e., bridging differences among competing factions) and content (i.e., focusing on present problems and aims) for what would become the modern social studies curriculum in the late 1930s. At the same time, the public record only contained two clear instances when Dewey commented about the nascent curriculum. On the surface, the pronouncements offered ambiguous support, which has led to much consternation and misinterpretation about a paradox between a philosophy built on an interdisciplinary approach to problem solving versus emphases on the stand-alone significance of history and geography in some of his major writings (Fallace, 2009; Saxe, 1992; Stanley & Stanley, 1977). The purpose of this paper is to situate the social studies curriculum in Dewey’s Theory of Nature using his philosophy as a tool to resolve the paradox. The resolution will reveal that Dewey offers a middle position where (1) the problem is illogical, and therefore, the paradox is nonexistent; (2) Dewey is marginalized and broadly misunderstood in the social studies literature; and (3) the field is missing out on a source of philosophy and multiple theories to enhance learning.

The Great American Philosopher

John Dewey rose from humble origins to become one of the most prolific philosophers of the modern age. He was born on October 20, 1859 in Burlington, Vermont living to the ripe old age of 92 years before passing away in New York City on June 1, 1952. His birth also marked the publication year of some of the great intellectual works of modern times including Marx’s *Critique of Political Economy*, John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty* and Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species*. While all of these works had a profound influence on the young Dewey, Darwin’s evolutionary theories and scientific discoveries formed the foundation for Dewey’s Pragmatism, essentially undergirding his Theory of Nature (Dykhuisen, 1959; Westbrook, 1991).

Dewey began his college studies at 15 years of age when he enrolled at the University of Vermont where the faculty exposed him to radical philosophical ideas. Following graduation, he taught high school in Pennsylvania for a couple years and then headed to graduate school at Johns Hopkins University where he studied philosophy. One of his professors was

Charles Peirce, a founder of Pragmatism thought. In 1884, the university awarded Dewey a doctorate degree (Dykhuisen, 1959).

Armed with his new credentials, Dewey migrated to the Midwestern, United States where he served in three university faculty positions over the next 20 years. First, he received an appointment at the University of Michigan (1884-1888), followed by the University of Minnesota (1888-1894), and then lastly at the University of Chicago (1894-1904). In Chicago, Dewey established the Laboratory School where he was able to implement many of his philosophical and theoretical innovations including child-centered instruction based on manual activities and the cultivation of student interests. The Laboratory School approach stood in stark contrast to the predominant modes of teaching in American schools characterized by rote memorization and recitation. Further, Dewey's experimental approaches contributed to his first education-focused books, *School and Society* (1899), *How We Think* (1910), and *Democracy and Education* (1916) (Tanner, 1997).

After accepting a dual appointment at Columbia University and Teachers College, Dewey returned to the East Coast in 1904. As his academic star continued to rise, he engaged in nearly nonstop, intense scholarship while organizations aggressively solicited his speeches. For over 71 years he wrote extensively beyond philosophy and education to include topics such as war, immigration, politics, and many other contemporary issues. Remarkably, he produced over 1,000 publications including 40 books, 140 journal articles, and many essays and speeches (Boydston, 1992/1993).

Dewey's works were the living embodiment of his philosophy where he articulated problems, devised solutions, and then tested those solutions in experience. Because the vast scope of his work was also deep and complex, the compilers forsook a thematic approach and opted for a chronological one (Boydston, 1992/1993). Boisvert (1988) divided the Dewey compendium into three phases each lasting about 20 years: the *idealistic* phase (1882-1903), the *experimental* phase (1904-1924), and the *naturalistic* phase (1925-1953), which included the posthumous publications of items he produced to nearly his passing. For purposes of the present manuscript I will primarily be focusing on *Democracy and Education* (1916) from the experimental phase, and *Experience and Nature* (1925) from the naturalistic one. Of Dewey's major works, these two capture both his Theory of Nature as well as his most extensive treatment of philosophy and school subject matter.

Dewey and the New Social Studies Curriculum

Perhaps because schools were implementing the new social studies curriculum, Dewey finally offered public comment in the late 1930s about the new subject area, first in a speech, and then later in a journal article. Speaking before the Eastern State Regional Conference of the Progressive Education Association in November 1936 during the depths of the Great Depression, he admonished officials and administrators to reform school relationships. Citing the rise of totalitarian regimes around the world, he advocated for a democratic approach to teaching and learning particularly in the areas of methods, content, and school relationships with the broader society. He described a curriculum where students analyzed social problems and synthesized solutions. Within this context, he first mentioned the nascent social studies,

It certainly seems as if the social studies have a more intimate relation with social life than a great many of the other subjects that are taught in the school, and that accordingly their increasing introduction into the curriculum, the increasing emphasis upon them ought to be a means by which the school system meets the challenge of democracy.

But the crucial question is the extent to which the material of the social studies, whether economics or politics or history or sociology, whatever it may be, is taught simply as information about present society or is taught in connection with things that are done, that need to be done, and how to do them. If the first tendency prevails, I can readily imagine that the introduction of more and more social studies into the curriculum will simply put one more load onto a curriculum that is already overburdened, and that the supposed end for which they were introduced—the development of a more intelligent citizenship in all the ranges of citizenship (the complex ranges that now exist, including political but including also much more) will be missed. (Dewey, 2008, p. 185)

Nearly one and one-half years later in May 1938, *Progressive Education* published a Dewey manuscript entitled, “What is social study?” In the article, Dewey again returned to the theme about *all* school subjects needing a social focus and whether the social studies was truly necessary,

The problem of congestion of studies and diversion of aims with resulting superficiality is a pressing one today...[I]n the end emphasis upon social studies as a separate line of study may only add to the confusion and dispersion that now exist! Not because they are not important, but precisely because they are so important that they should give direction and organization to all branches of study.

In conclusion...Social studies as an isolated affair are likely to become either accumulations of bodies of special factual information or, in the hands of zealous teachers, to be organs of indoctrination in the sense of propaganda for a special social end, accepted enthusiastically, perhaps, but still dogmatically. (Dewey, 1946, p. 183)

As far as the public record was concerned, these were the only two times that Dewey actually addressed the social studies curriculum, and on the surface, he neither fully embraced nor rejected it.

Today, Dewey's seeming ambivalence toward the social studies curriculum has produced a major unintended consequence. In effect, the ambivalent perception has created a paradoxical myth suggesting that Dewey supported a traditional approach to social science instruction with stand-alone subject matter such as his treatment of history and geography in *Democracy and Education* (Fallace, 2009; Saxe, 1992) together with the signature interdisciplinary approach to problem solving. As Stanley and Stanley (1977) wisely posited nearly 40 years ago, "the resolution of this paradox must be sought in the total philosophy of John Dewey" (p. 365).

A Radical Turn in Philosophy

Beginning with the earlier Pragmatists such as William James and Charles Peirce, Dewey's Instrumentalism represented a new approach for philosophy. A minimum of five traits suggested that this turn was radical, (1) accessibility; (2) being as continuous with the natural world; (3) experience as the minimum unit of analysis; (4) democracy as an ethical and moral ideal; and (5) school reform.

Accessibility. The Pragmatists—and especially Dewey's Instrumentalism—liberated philosophy from the rarefied world of philosophers and placed it in the hands of the masses. While philosophy's concern has always been to delve into the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, Dewey insisted that it serve as a tool in *human experience* to solve every day problems. Therefore, philosophy in the widest sense possible was a tool for studying, criticizing, and reconsidering a perceived problem. While never being the answer, it was a way of casting a wider net, examining the issue over a longer time period or contextualizing it within an overarching phenomenon, and then evaluating the consequences (Dewey, 1929, 1991).

Being as continuous with the natural world. In an evolutionary way, anything that existed adapted in a changing environment, but on all levels, the rates of changes differed (Think about changes within a being and changes between the being and the environment). Therefore, Dewey characterized existence as a process of ebb and flow, or in metaphysical

terms as *form* and *change* where stability, ideal matter, and permanence established an equal partnership with change, movement, and adaptation. Beginning with the Ancient Greeks, philosophy and science were synonymous, but with the advent of the Scientific Revolution in the fifteenth century, their paths diverged (Ihde, 1993). However, science continued to inform philosophy and vice versa. By the time Dewey arrived on the scene, the scientific world had blossomed into a cornucopia of new ideas and technological wonders. Being deeply affected by Darwin's evolutionary insights, Dewey placed the organism's experience at the center of his philosophical universe, and articulated a metaphysics—meaning the sub-branch of philosophy concerned with existence, being, and inquiry into the forces of nature—as the centerpiece of his system of ideas. Dewey's metaphysics, which by the end of the nineteenth century was also known as “ontology,” reflected Darwinian principles with “experience, interaction, and possibility,” (Boisvert, 1988, p. 204) or put another way, Dewey envisioned all live creatures as continuous with nature (Dewey, 1929).

Experience as the minimum unit of analysis. Human beings engaged in one long series of continuous experiences or interactions with the world. Most of the time, individuals experienced the world in a primitive way, meaning non-cognitively. However, when presented with a problem, the individual could have *an* experience, which was cognitive and contained a beginning, middle and end. In this scenario, history was important in the forward movement of intelligence evaluating future consequences based on prior experiences.

Dewey's analysis of how we experienced the world fell into two general categories: primary and secondary. According to Dewey, most of our experiences were primary with little to no cognitive activity. Individuals felt, suffered, enjoyed, or engaged in knee-jerk reactions without any type of reflective component. These types of experiences also supplied much of the raw material for secondary experiences or as Dewey (1929) stated, “sets the problems and furnishes the first data of the reflection which constructs the secondary objects.” (pp.4-5). Thinking was a reconstruction endeavor where *events* in primary experience become *objects* in secondary experience. In secondary experience, a problem commenced the activity and the conclusion was tested back in primary experience. Because humans and other organisms were adapting in a changing environment—one that was precarious, sometimes dangerous, and riddled with obstacles—our phases of experience were continuous with nature. Further, by making experience the minimum unit of analysis, Dewey dissolved the dualisms that created the dead ends in traditional philosophy.

Democracy as an ethical and moral ideal. While Dewey clearly elevated the individual above all else, a person had a moral and ethical

obligation to contribute to the social realm. In other words, the ideal social system was democracy where all individuals had the resources and opportunities to flourish in her or his unique way. Moreover, each individual had a moral responsibility to nurture and enhance democracy so others had the chance to flourish as well. The key to this system was communication.

Deweyan democracy was about leveling the opportunity playing field. Every individual had the potential for growth, which conceptually was the same as individual freedom and self-realization. Because every individual was unique, she required varying types and degrees of resources to reach her potential. As Westbrook (1991) summarized, “Moral democracy called not only for the pursuit of worthwhile ends but for the pursuit of these ends in ways that enlisted the freely cooperative participation of all concerned” (p. 165). Or as Dewey (1916/2007) stated, “A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience” (p. 68). Despite offering a radical, broad interpretation of democracy, Dewey’s primary focus was always on the individual and how democracy enriched an individual’s experience (Cremin, 1959).

School reform. Dewey conceived of schools as an extension of the home. In a modern and complex world our ancestors developed schools to replace the traditional family and tribal roles for socializing young people. He placed great faith in schools as the only universal institution that prepared youth for community life; as such, schools must be reformed to take into account young people’s interests, emphasize manual and practical activities and to use the curriculum as a way to develop students’ ability to act *intelligently* in the world, especially through experimentation. Within the frame of experience, Dewey was able to dissolve many of the dualisms associated with an educational context such as content and method; theory and practice; knowledge and skills approaches. The old dualisms became unified in an experience.

Deweyan Philosophy in Action

We can view the question of whether Dewey supported the social studies or a stand-alone social science curriculum as a proxy war for the larger cultural conflicts around what the curriculum should be and who should control it, a skirmish over the teaching of history that has sometimes degenerated into total war for at least the last 100 years. Acknowledging that many factions have competed for influence over that time, the two main opposing camps today are the social studies approach versus the social science approach groups (Evans, 2004; Leming, Ellington, & Porter, 2003; Wineburg, 2001).

Key differences between the social studies and social science groups include what courses should be offered in schools, the purpose and source of the curriculum materials, and the arrangement of the subject matter. While the social studies formal curriculum is comprised of social science subjects such as history, geography, government, economics, psychology, sociology, and others in a traditional sense, it also can incorporate courses such as peer mediation, current events or pre-law, among infinite possibilities. Another difference is that while the social science approach is more concerned with sources of material, the social studies is focused on cultivating student interests and engaging in interdisciplinary inquiry across the humanities. Another divergence is found in the arrangement of the curriculum, especially in the primary grades, where the social studies follows an expanding horizon beginning with the young student's study of family structures and emanating out into the wider community and world. The social science advocates, on the other hand, propose stand-alone social science and history courses where myths and storytelling help captivate young learners (Egan, 1980, 1983; Thornton, 2005).

The perceived paradox of Dewey's ambivalence about the social studies curriculum in light of his interdisciplinary orthodoxy presents a golden opportunity to put Deweyan philosophy into action. Did he really support a traditional, social science approach to history and geography because he addressed them distinctly in *Democracy and Education*? Situating the problem against a longer time period and the context of Dewey's writings reveals that (1) the problem is illogical, and therefore, the paradox is an apparition; (2) Dewey is marginalized in the literature and widely misunderstood; and (3) the social studies field is missing out on an opportunity to support and enhance the curriculum.

Contextualizing the Problem in Dewey's Theory of Nature

The centerpiece of Dewey's Theory of Nature was the live creature's experience with the natural world. Ontologically, anything that existed was *an event*, every individual *interacted* in some way with other things that existed; and all natural existences were *histories*. A human being continuous with nature was constantly adjusting and adapting to the vicissitudes of nature and striving for peace, harmony, and stability. Therefore, a central characteristic of existence was change and stability, and "what something 'really is' is a function of the changes, alterations, and reactions to surroundings that it undergoes" (Boisvert, 1988, p. 133). The central purpose of schools, according to Dewey, was to socialize young people to adapt in this social milieu, which in educational terms meant that all subject matter should be used to study current social conditions with an eye for improving the future. At the same time, the curriculum became a content *and* method

for enlarging individual experience for succeeding in the world (Dewey, 1916/2007).

Dewey believed that Darwin's greatest contribution to philosophy was his emphasis on flux and change, something that allowed him to criticize Greek thought that mainly focused on form or the stable and permanent aspects of existence. That is why the Greeks valued art such as statues and temples because they conceived of them as representations of an ideal beauty that the mind could come to know. The ideal representation also provided refuge from a dangerous world. In other words, Greek philosophy was built on dualisms akin to an ideal object and a spectator (Dewey, 1929).

Dewey turned everything upside down by reframing the philosophical questions in an evolutionary way. For him, *the object* was a specific ontological term for something that resulted from an inquiry within *an* experience. In this way, an individual could have *an* experience with aesthetic qualities as a production process rather than come to know ideal beauty. In this system of ideas, whether Dewey actually supported the social studies curriculum or favored a social science approach to instruction did not result in a paradox because the question was not logical in the context of Deweyan thought, particularly in light of the formal curricula and the needs of neophyte learners (Dewey, 1916/2007).

Social studies and history or geography were not mutually exclusive enterprises. In fact, all were instruments for enlarging a student's experience. Rather than an either/or question resulting in a paradox, being continuous with nature invited the question, "How did they interpenetrate each other?" In Deweyan terms, you could not have a social study without tapping into our forebears' experiences about human associations (i.e., history) and their interactions with the natural environment (i.e., geography). In educational equivalents, you could not have a social studies subject matter without a formal curriculum of facts and concepts in history and geography. However, teachers had to select and manipulate history, geography, and all traditional curriculum in a way that expanded an individual's experience "to gain in power to recognize human connections;" and "to perceive the spatial, the natural, connections of an ordinary act" (Dewey 1916/2007, p. 157). According to Dewey, this happened most effectively when a skilled teacher developed aims, cultivated student interest, and enlisted active occupations. Therefore, concluding that Dewey supported a social science approach in schools, revealed a fundamental lack of understanding in his Theory of Nature.

Misunderstanding the Middle Position

Dewey's Theory of Nature meant that he offered a middle position between respecting the traditional subject curriculum and acknowledging the

vital role the teacher played in enlarging students' experiences. Educators misunderstood him because he created a novel ontology based on intricate multidimensional relationships, and articulated how thinking was rooted in these circumstances. In Deweyan thought, history and geography “are the information studies par excellence of the schools” (Dewey, 1916/2007, p. 158). Yet, it would be an egregious and common mistake to conclude that Dewey was merely endorsing the subject matter as things to be learned.

In ontological terms, thinking of the curriculum as something students learned created an unnecessary philosophical dualism that emphasized the stable or permanent elements much like the Ancient Greeks. In fact, Dewey barely concealed his derision when he also commented, “The words ‘history’ and ‘geography’ suggest simply the matter which has been traditionally sanctioned in the schools” (p. 158). Furthermore, Dewey recognized that the formal curriculum, organized in an adult way, was completely alien to how young learners experienced the world. It was up to the teacher to bridge the abyss, and the best way to be continuous with nature, was to use active occupations.

Formal traditional school curriculum was a static, disconnected collection of information that only had the *potential* to enlarge an experience with the guidance of the skilled teacher. In nature, humans generated knowledge within social activities, and what they deemed culturally important, they passed from one generation to the next. For example, Dewey often talked about how the sciences emerged from the arts; the physical sciences from war, crafts, and healing; math from the removing of all existential materials; geography from the physical human connections; and history from the social connections throughout time. In other words, the curriculum became functional or instrumental when means and methods were unified in the learner's experience. Therefore, Dewey offered a middle position where the growth process reconciled the adult aims, values and meanings in the formal curriculum with the immature experiences and interests of the child (Dewey, 1929, 2007).

In experience, teaching and learning were really one transaction between the learner and the environment (including the teacher) similar to a painter moving a brush while drawing on past experiences and all the resources at her disposal to create a painting. First, in continuous experiences, humans did not think and then act on it in a physical manner; it all occurred in one flow. Second, an epistemology—or theory of knowledge—based on experience inherently suggested that humans incorporated all of their senses into the process. Third, the development of skills and habits became a crucial part of testing and reflecting on previous experiences and then predicting future consequences, freeing up the memory for new challenges. The stable element or form for Dewey was the *relation*

of means to consequences within an experience. And finally, within the confines of evolution, human beings most effectively progressed solving the obstacles of life using inquiry (Pring, 2007).

The instrumental value of geography, history, and all subjects was in relation to the degree of social connections one could make with the resources. For Dewey, active occupations offered the best means for bringing the learner in direct contact with the social elements. Active occupations included gardening, weaving, storytelling, conducting science laboratory experiments, cartography, or any of those activities with social aims bringing students in contact with crude and raw materials. These materials were histories and offered a mode to “gain the intelligence embodied in finished material” (Dewey 1916/2007, p. 149). The formal inherited curriculum like geography and history were important adult organizations of information, and it was up to the teacher, to make the materials relevant to young learners and their limited experiences.

The effective teacher set the aims, implemented inquiry activities incorporating occupations, and helped students discover and discipline their interests. Active occupations were the educational equivalent for continuity of experiences, and provided the conditions for thinking or intelligent action: An experience was an action with an end-in-view, results and an end. The *end-in-view* was to be aware of what completed an ongoing action and the willingness to adjust to changing circumstances. All the events and consequences of the action were sequential and causal *results*. An *end*, though, completed the action and led to another. To develop an aim meant to use intelligence with an awareness of the end-in-view. A person’s interest propelled the action with a purposeful direction of natural impulses like curiosity. By framing thinking within an experience, Dewey dissolved the dualism of content and method; theory and practice; and the knower and the object to be known. Because means and ends were inherently continuous, there were no fixed ends and the only goal was more growth with the enlarging of experience (Dewey, 1916/2007; Pring, 2007). The entire enterprise was based on establishing logical connections between the subject matter and the immature experiences of the learners, which has always resulted in misunderstanding.

The Marginalization of Dewey and Future Possibilities

In this paper, I have attempted to debunk a paradox about whether Dewey supported a social studies or social science approach to learning in the schools. Instead, I have offered the case that Deweyan philosophy is a middle position encapsulated in individual experience. Moreover, I asserted that because Dewey was broadly misunderstood, social studies academics have only nibbled on the edges of his philosophy, which was also rich with

theory. Philosophy can help us address some of the big questions in our field, while theories can guide and support courses of action.

One obvious sign of this misunderstanding was the marginalization of Dewey in the social studies literature. Deweyan thought appeared in three general categories from most to least prolific: (1) an individual citation usually to support some general assertions like this typical example,

Specifically, leveraging historical thinking skills, such as recognizing multiple perspectives; developing reasoned judgments of historical causality, consequence and significance; and facilitating modes of documentary inquiry will yield Dewey's vision of Democracy as more than a form of government, but of 'a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience.' (Swan & Hicks, 2006, p. 144)

(2) Dewey's influence and the origin of the social studies (Evans, 2004; Fallace, 2009; Lybarger, 1983; Saxe, 1992); and (3) partial Deweyan interpretation and analysis (Misco & Shively, 2010; Shaver, 1977; W. B. Stanley, 2010; Stanley & Stanley, 1977; Thornton, 2005; Vinson, 1999; Wheeler, 1977). In most of these cases however, Dewey was merely an add-on when he should be the gravitational center.

In addition to his Theory of Nature, Dewey provided theories related to experience, intelligence, curriculum, ethics, morality, democracy and many more. In fact, Dewey was the first philosopher since Aristotle more than 2,000 years earlier to conceive of a comprehensive philosophical system. Moreover, today most of the research-based publications in the social studies merely draw on parts of theories, meaning the social studies is highly undertheorized and Dewey offers promise and possibility. We can use Deweyan philosophy to address some of the most pressing questions in our field. One example is related to technology and learning.

Two questions asked in education, in general, and the social studies, in particular are, "Why has the spending of billions of dollars on technology over the years not resulted in more and better learning?" and "Why do teachers report low levels of technology integration in their classrooms?" (Beck & Eno, 2012; Combs, 2010; Cuban, 2001; Shively & VanFossen, 2009; Shriner, Clark, Nail, Schlee, & Libler, 2010; Whitworth & Berson, 2002). In the Winter 2003 issue of the social studies flagship journal, *Theory and Research in Social Education*, an article appeared entitled, "Constructivism as a Theoretical Foundation for the Use of Technology in Social Studies" (Doolittle & Hicks, 2003). Although the focus was on the use of technology, in every way this article was about developing a more coherent theoretical foundation for learning social studies. Essentially, the authors conducted a literature review and developed a spectrum of constructivist thought reflected in three categories: radical, social, and cognitive.

The writers cited Dewey and Vygotsky as the learning theorists for the social constructivist perspective. First of all, this was a major step forward in marrying theory to the field. Second, the nature of the article relegated Dewey (and others including Vygotsky) to these general notions of knowledge making that were not particularly illustrative for guiding classroom practice. And third, by failing to distinguish Dewey from Vygotsky, they diminished the significant contributions of both. In fact, belatedly today, Dewey is recognized as an early technology philosopher (Hickman, 2001; Ihde, 1990).

The beginning of Dewey's experimental phase signaled a remarkable philosophical and theoretical consistency during the remainder of his lifetime. Logical conclusions about digital tools and artifacts (DTAs) based on his theories of experience and intelligence include,

- (1) DTAs should *only* be utilized when there are clear connections to social studies aims, course goals, and lesson objectives.
- (2) Working with raw materials and first-hand experiences are valued over mediated experiences, particularly with young children.
- (3) When engaging students with DTAs, they should already know and be proficient with the manual processes underlying electronic shortcuts.
- (4) It is not enough to justify the use of DTAs because they are used authentically in the larger society, there must also be a clear connection established with student interest.
- (5) DTAs embody the most potential for enhancing student learning when schools provide them with maximum of freedom and use approaching the authentic ideal.
- (6) The student-teacher partnership is essential for identifying student interests, providing educative experiences, and avoiding mis-educative experiences when using DTAs.
- (7) DTAs should be situated in the praxis of social studies as a content and method for promoting intelligent action. (Stuckart, 2014, pp. 64-66)

This is illustrative of complex guidelines in a complex world of flux and change. The point is that when situated in Deweyan thought, we can clarify, enlarge, and offer new direction, which benefits social studies practice. Moreover, the clarification can lead to new research directions because in Dewey's ontology, research and practice are unified in experience.

References:

Beck, D., & Eno, J. (2012). Signature pedagogy: A literature review of social studies technology and research. *Computers in the Schools*, 29(1-2), 70-94. doi: 10.1080/07380569.2012.658347

- Boisvert, R. D. (1988). *Dewey's metaphysics*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Boydston, J. A. (1992/1993). The Dewey Center and *the collected works of John Dewey*. *Free Inquiry*, 13(1), 19-24.
- Combs, H. J. (2010). Instructional technology: Status in middle and high school social studies. *National Teacher Education Journal*, 3(3), 23-31.
- Cremin, L. A. (1959). John Dewey and the Progressive-Education Movement, 1915-1952. *The School Review*, 67(2), 160-173.
- Cuban, L. (2001). *Oversold and underused: Computers in the classroom*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Dewey, J. (1929). *Experience and nature*. London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.
- Dewey, J. (1946). What is social study? *Problems of Men* (pp. 180-183). New York: Philosophical Library.
- Dewey, J. (1991). Logic: The theory of inquiry. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925-1953* (Vol. 12, pp. 1-549). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Dewey, J. (2007). *Democracy and education*. Middlesex, U. K.: The Echo Library. (Original work published 1916).
- Dewey, J. (2008). The challenge of democracy to education. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1935-1937* (Vol. 11, pp. 181-190). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Doolittle, P. E., & Hicks, D. (2003). Constructivism as a theoretical foundation for the use of technology in the social studies. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 31(1), 72-104.
- Dykhuisen, G. (1959). John Dewey: The Vermont years. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 20(4), 515-544.
- Egan, K. (1980). John Dewey and the Social Studies Curriculum. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 8(2), 37-55.
- Egan, K. (1983). Social studies and the erosion of education. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 13(2), 195-214.
- Evans, R. W. (2004). *The social studies wars: What should we teach the children?* New York: Teachers College Press.
- Fallace, T. (2009). John Dewey's influence on the origins of the social studies: An analysis of the historiography and new interpretation. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(2), 601-624.
- Hickman, L. A. (2001). *Philosophical tools for technological culture: Putting pragmatism to work*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Ihde, D. (1990). *Technology and the lifeworld: From garden to Earth*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Ihde, D. (1993). *Philosophy of technology: An introduction*. New York: Paragon House.

- James, W. (1898). *Philosophical conceptions and practical results*. Berkeley, CA: University Press.
- Leming, J., Ellington, L., & Porter, K. (2003). *Where did the social studies go wrong?* Washington D.C.: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.
- Lybarger, M. (1983). Origins of the modern social studies: 1900-1916. *History of Education Quarterly*, 23(4), 455-468. doi: 10.2307/368079
- Misco, T., & Shively, J. (2010). Seeing through the forest through the trees: Some renewed thinking on dispositions specific to social studies education. *The Social Studies*, 101(3), 121-126.
- Mraz, M. (2004). Harold O. Rugg and the foundations of social studies. *International Journal of Social Education*, 19(1), 1-7.
- Pring, R. (2007). *John Dewey: A philosopher of education for our time?* London: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Saxe, W. D. (1992). Framing a theory for social studies foundations. *Review of Educational Research*, 62(3), 259-277.
- Shaver, J. P. (1977). Needed: A Deweyan rationale for the social studies. *The High School Journal*, 60(8), 345-352.
- Shively, J. M., & VanFossen, P. J. (2009). Toward assessing Internet use in the social studies classroom: Developing an inventory based on a review of relevant literature. *Journal of Social Studies Research*, 33(1), 1-32.
- Shriner, M., Clark, D. A., Nail, M., Schlee, B. M., & Libler, R. (2010). Social studies instruction: Changing teacher confidence in classrooms enhanced by technology. *The Social Studies*, 101, 37-45.
- Stanley, W. B. (2010). Social studies and the social order. In W. C. Parker (Ed.), *Social studies today: Research and practice* (pp. 17-24). New York: Routledge.
- Stanley, W. O., & Stanley III, W. O. (1977). Dewey: The role of social studies in education. *The High School Journal*, 60(8), 365-370.
- Stuckart, D. W. (2014). Philosophical guidelines for the social studies: Enhancing intelligence with digital tools and artifacts. In D. J. Loveless, B. Griffith, M. E. Berci, E. Ortlieb & P. M. Sullivan (Eds.), *Academic knowledge construction and multimodal curriculum development* (pp. 53-70). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.
- Swan, K., & Hicks, D. (2006). Through the democratic lens: The role of purpose in leveraging technology to support historical inquiry in the social studies classroom. *International Journal of Social Education*, 21(2), 142-168.
- Tanner, L. N. (1997). *Dewey's Laboratory School: Lessons for today*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Thornton, S. J. (2005). *Teaching social studies that matters: Curriculum for active learning*. New York: Teachers College.

- Vinson, K. D. (1999). National curriculum standards and social studies education: Dewey, Freire, Foucault, and the construction of radical critique. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 27(3), 296-328.
- Westbrook, R. B. (1991). *John Dewey and American democracy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Wheeler, J. E. (1977). John Dewey's philosophy as a blueprint for the future. *The High School Journal*, 60(8), 387-394.
- Whitworth, S., & Berson, M. J. (2002). Computer technology in the social studies: An examination of the effectiveness. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education*, 2(4), 471-508.
- Wineburg, S. (2001). *Historical thinking and other unnatural acts: Charting the future of teaching the past*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.