



Corrales Institute for New Education Instituto Corrales para una Nueva Educación

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Saludos Everyone,

APRIL GENERAL MEETING

Thank you to all who attended the April General Meeting on Zoom.

Our April 2nd meeting featured guests **Alice Goodenough and Stephen Sterling**. Both from the U.K., they share goals of transforming the dominant education paradigm toward experiential, participatory, environmentally and socially sustainable, holistic learning that acknowledges, incorporates and manifests our ecological, reciprocal relationship with others and the Earth.

From the Countryside and Community Research Institute at the University of Gloucestershire, **Alice Goodenough** focuses on researching human and environmental relations and the benefits of being and learning in the outdoors. Her work with Good from Woods supports people in woodland activities, including arts, recreation, and social forestry. She's also worked with Forest Schools that include social and emotional goals while using the natural environment to support learning.

Alice's work with Treescapes involved nature-led activities for a community of multi-generational learners. Other work with Woodland Trust involved service-learning type projects including tree-planting and other environmental stewardship. Her involvement with Timber Girls focused on how heritage and experiential learning can inspire girls' perception of forestry. The original Timber Girls goes back to World War I when female foresters were more involved with timber production, providing an important war-time contribution. Now, the program involves women teaching girls traditional forestry methods and helps to challenge their perceptions of gender views and norms.

Alice's work and presentation of ideas prompted several questions among meeting attendees. Her on-the-ground experience, teaching and research provided us with many ideas and inspiration for CINE's Learning Parks, including ideas for the environments and activities in a Learning Park.



Our second guest, **Dr. Stephen Sterling**, Emeritus Professor of Sustainability Education at the Centre for Sustainable Futures, University of Plymouth, UK, has worked in environmental and sustainability education for over 40 years. As a prime thought leader in the field, he poses the BIG question: "How should – and how can – education and learning be re-thought and re-configured to make a significant and central contribution to achieving a more sustainable and just world?"

Stephen spoke to us about educating for the future we want - stressing the need for reflexivity and critical thinking. His extensive research and writing focuses on transformative and regenerative education as a social learning revolution with three key aspects: an awareness and intentioned un-learning of habits and ideas that got us to the point of systemic crisis; a re-learning and reclaiming of approaches that are more sustainable and life-affirming; and new learning that has the potential to sustain human and natural systems wellbeing into the future.

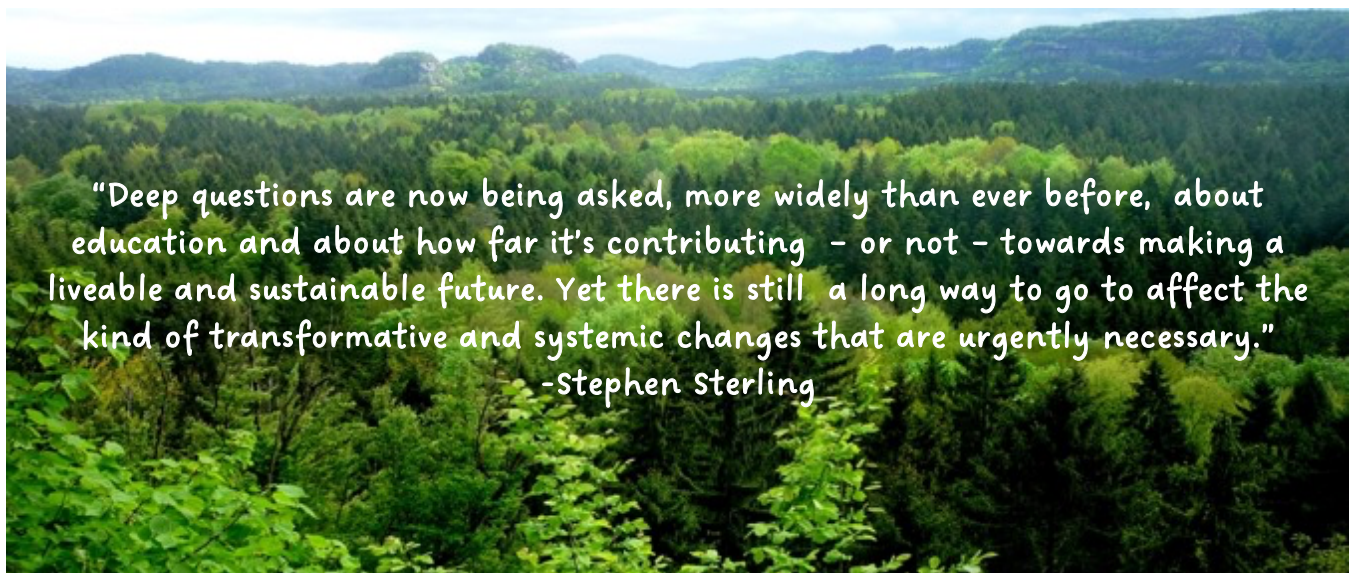
Stephen's discussions prompted questions and further discussion from attendees, including:

- How do we get there from here?
- What is it to be educated?
- What does he think of our Learning Park concepts?

Stephen supports our Learning Park ideas and encourages us to work at connecting with people and partners at local levels. He added that before we think about what the educational system should look like, we need to know what's wrong; "Why we are where we are." He believes in "fierce hope" to make this shift.

In closing, several attendees added their own thoughts, such as:

- The importance of communicating good success stories
- We are part of the solution
- Importance of involving kids with growing food and local food systems
- Enabling learners (kids and adults) a way to converse to have more immediate action
- Learning about how to deal with 'power' relationships
- Helping the younger generation learn how to engage with the power in the world, to have an influence.



**Stay tuned for more details about our
upcoming General Meeting
August 26th-28th in beautiful
Corrales, New Mexico!**

ADDITIONAL READING



John Dewey
Experience and Education
NY: Collier, 1963 pp. 20-49
Excerpted by Paul Tatter

I take it that the fundamental unity of the new philosophy is found in the idea that there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education.... I assume that amid all uncertainties there is one permanent frame of reference: namely, the organic connection between education and personal experience....

The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other, for some experiences are mis-educative. Any experience is mis-educative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience....

It is not enough to insist upon the necessity of experience, nor even of activity in experience. Everything depends upon the *quality* of the experience which is had....Hence the central problem of an education based upon experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences....

I have already mentioned what I called the category of continuity, or the experiential continuum. This principle is involved, as I pointed out, in every attempt to discriminate between experiences that are worth while educationally and those that are not....At bottom, this principle rests upon the fact of habit, when *habit* is interpreted biologically. The basic character of habit is that every experience enacted and undergone modifies the one who acts

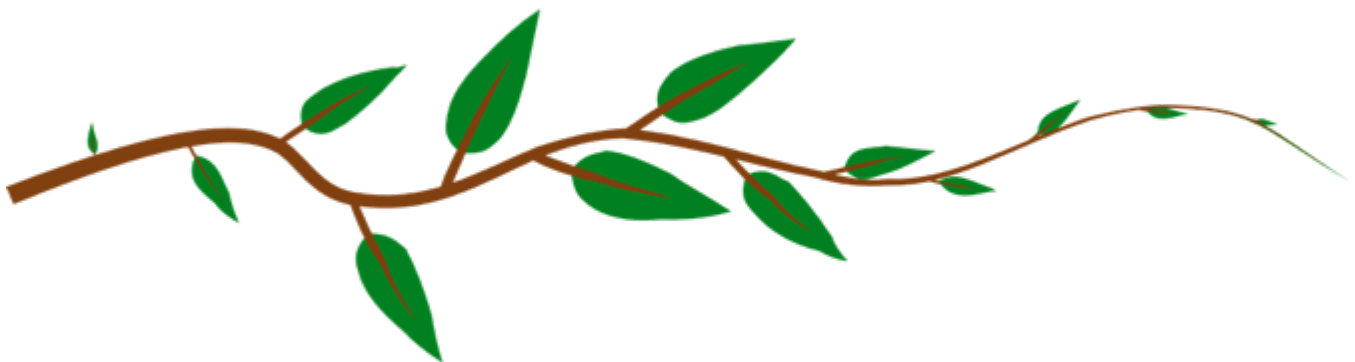
and undergoes, while this modification affects, whether we wish it or not, the quality of subsequent experiences. For it is a somewhat different person who enters into them....

But there is another aspect of the matter. Experience does not go on simply inside a person. It does go on there, for it influences the formation of attitudes of desire and purpose. But this is not the whole of the story. Every genuine experience has an active side which changes in some degree the objective conditions under which experiences are had....

A primary responsibility of educators is that they not only be aware of the general principle of the shaping of actual experience by environing conditions, but that they also recognize in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth. Above all, they should know how to utilize the surroundings, physical and social, that exist so as to extract from them all that they have to contribute to building up experiences that are worth while....

An experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment....

We often see persons who have had little schooling and in whose case the absence of set schooling proves to be a positive asset. They have at least retained their native common sense and power of judgment, and its exercise in the actual conditions of living has given them the precious gift of ability to learn from the experiences they have. What avail is it to win prescribed amounts of information about geography and history, to win ability to read and write, if in the process the individual loses his own soul: loses his appreciation of things worth while, of the values to which these things are relative; ...and, above all, loses the ability to extract meaning from his future experiences as they occur?



Loris Malaguzzi, founder of the Reggio Emilia Approach, invited David Hawkins to speak in Italy. David's note about "changing schools" applies to CINE's goals, perspectives, and mutualism. Following is a photocopy of David's typescript with his handwritten note.

1992
Lecture in Italy
! M. Connected -
DH
From Dewey to Today's Education:
Reflections by Moonlight

David Hawkins

I wish first to express my great pleasure in being again in Italy among all of you who are so deeply concerned, and deeply versed, in the arts of childhood education. Frances Hawkins and I are deeply grateful to Loris Malaguzzi for the opportunity to be among you here in Riccione.

Recently, just after I had received this invitation, I spoke about it to a good friend in Colorado. "Tell me, please," I asked him, "How is it possible, in 15 or 20 minutes, to say anything important about the educational philosophy of John Dewey?" His answer was prompt, and disconcerting: "You can't!" Not being willing to accept this abrupt denial, I persisted. Finally my friend made a laughing suggestion.

"There is one way to find the guidance you need", he said, "You must summon the ghost of John Dewey himself!" Of course I don't believe in ghosts, except sometimes, I must admit, when I am walking alone, among the trees, on a moonlit night. But I realized there was wisdom in my friend's joke. Walking home that very night, among the trees, in the moonlight, I began to recall certain passages of Dewey's later writings, passages relevant to childhood education today. These remembered writings, I thought, would be the only ghost I would encounter.

But as I was bringing his pages back to memory, I suddenly became aware of a dim figure standing in the shade of a large plane-tree [Italian: platano?]. I never had met John Dewey, but I recognized this figure from photographs. It was the very ghost my friend had urged me to summon! He stood looking into the distance, not at me; that was his habit, I had been told, before beginning a lecture. He glanced at me for a moment, and began to speak.

I thought, at first, that he would not address my need. Instead of speaking about what he considered most important in his educational philosophy, he began instead to cry out against those of his followers who had failed to understand, who had in essential respects vulgarized his philosophy. He seemed almost to be asking for some kind of retribution. For a moment I even thought, nervously, of the ghost of Hamlet's father. But as I listened more carefully, I realized that in this complaint he was indeed summarizing the deepest and subtlest part of his educational philosophy --as if he knew what I was seeking! It was the part most relevant to education today.

It was not a long time that he spoke, perhaps just the 15 or 20 minutes I had asked for. I soon began to recognize some of what he said. To recapture his exact words is impossible, but I think I have found the essence, for the most part, in passages from Experience and Education, Art as Experience. So from these passages I shall paraphrase. Some of what he said toward the end I could find, some not. I could not find, though it may well be found somewhere in Dewey's voluminous writings.

The first remark was one to be found in many passages. The history of educational thought is defined, he said, by the opposition between the idea that education is development from within, and the idea that it is formation from without. The first view is controlled by the metaphor of the teacher as horticulturist, one who needs only to weed, trim, and water. The second is controlled by that of the teacher as potter, solely responsible, with strong hands, for the shaping of the clay. This history has been characterized, largely, by thinking in terms of such extreme opposites, committing the fallacy of Either-Or. In traditional educational thought children are conceived as clay to

be shaped, and failures are to be explained by the potter's lack of skill or the poor quality of the clay. For progressive education, as Dewey and his followers agreed to define it, the metaphor of development from within is at the center, defined and supported by a recognition of the self-organizing character of the continuum of experience. But in the child's development the part played by the teacher is far more complex than either the image of the horticulturist, or that of the potter, suggests.

Indeed, these two philosophies do not, by their very names, stand equally before us. The philosophy of traditional education is tied to a long and familiar history, to relatively well-defined institutional patterns of organization and modes of teaching. The philosophy of progressive education, on the contrary, is still very open to the definition of specific aims and procedures. It represents only basic guiding principles, elaborated in part by the critique of traditional forms, in part from a study of the successes of bold and creative teachers, and of their bold and creative children. These have been teachers able to build new patterns of work, freeing children to be inventive, even sometimes within the old institutional framework. But their practice, their art, is still in statu nascendi, in the state of being born.

Many have been attracted by the "progressive" philosophy who then thought they followed it. They have taken too simplistically Froebel's metaphor of the Kinder-garten, treating children with benign permissiveness and therefore failing to uncover their individual strengths and talents, trusting rather their transient impulses to lead them well. Such treatment is typically un-educative, and sometimes disastrous. Froebel himself did not make this error, not at least in his detailed designs. Coming later, with her powerful recognition of children's potentialities, neither did Maria Montessori. Both these two great pioneers failed to trust the inventiveness of teachers who would come after them. They built systems which, if followed unimaginatively, could err on the opposite side from the ultra-permissive.

Because the older education imposed on the young the knowledge, methods, and the rules of conduct of the mature person, it does not follow that the knowledge and skill of the mature person has no directive value for the experience of the immature. Nor does it follow that the flowering of children's talents can be guided along any single, predetermined curriculum, however opposed to the older tradition it may be.

On the contrary, basing education upon children's personal experience may mean more multiplied and more intimate contacts between the mature and the immature than ever existed in the traditional school. But this association, and the guidance it implies, are of a very special character. Observing children's performance, or their withdrawal, joining with them in their work and in their associations with each other, teachers can begin to learn their uniquely individual strengths, and to match these with appropriate materials and thoughtful support. Such channels of communication can then be widened and deepened with time. A group of children, so studied and so supported, can in turn create their share of a vital atmosphere, an ambience of serious work-in-progress and of expressive play. This ambience, required for optimal learning, is thus a joint creation. Observed enthusiastically by a poorly-informed visitor, however, one accustomed to traditional classrooms, teacher-dominated, this atmosphere of heightened inventiveness, commitment and enjoyment, may seem to be entirely the work of the children. Such an illusion may be one source of the major "progressive" errors just criticized.

My ghostly companion wished, apparently, to emphasize this artful role of teachers even further, and of the professional support they in turn continue to need. Even in some of his early lectures, in 1898, Dewey had spoken of the need to select and reorganize worthy subject matter so that it is accessible to children's investigative talents and native curiosity about the phenomena of the world around them, a curiosity that is the precursor of all scientific and artistic creation. To value and support this curiosity requires that teachers share it, that for them also Galileo's book of nature is never closed. The appreciation they need to develop, of the many ways of entry into elementary subject-matter, is not less but greater than it ever has been for traditional education. The latter typically selects only a single curricular sequence. Progressive education, on the other hand, must be prepared for the diversity of ways in which different children may fruitfully extend their experience and find order in it. Children must thus be offered diverse choices, choices that can help extend their understanding and the range of their curiosity. The ability to do this well often exceeds the education that teachers have themselves received. They need at their own level a kind of continuing support related to that which they can offer their children.

The richness of children's choices, therefore, does not preclude well-defined educational guidance, even though this cannot all be charted in advance. Many of the world's phenomena, however, have nearly universal appeal. Inventive teachers have long since learned to provide many of these, such as sand and water and clay, the phenomena of light and shadow, materials and tools for construction. But no planning could anticipate and provide all that is needed. The ways children and groups of children learn, like the children themselves, are never twice the same. Such teachers can also find new material resources, and take advantage of special occasions --as a baby bird fallen from its nest, a sudden snowstorm, the appearance of a power shovel near the school. Such accidents can provide fresh choices, not anticipated.

After he had made these observations the ghost stopped speaking, and I feared would fade away. But soon he began again, this time in a somewhat altered tone. Here I try to quote directly, since the tone was now personally self-critical, a tone unusual among philosophers. "It may be somewhat unfair", he continued, "to criticize some followers of the progressive philosophy, as I have, without at the same time acknowledging certain failures of emphasis, and of warning, by those of us who were so careful in our development of it. We may have failed to recognize sufficiently that when established institutions increasingly show signs of failure, the easiest response involves just the fallacy of Either-Or. In opposing traditional coercive notions of authority, the easiest reaction is simply to adopt its opposite, the policy of *laissez faire*. This then invites the traditionalist reaction, equating liberty with the absence of adult responsibility."

"It should have been emphasized more strongly, perhaps, that the new education does not abandon the ideas of discipline and authority, of subject matter and curriculum, but that it rather seeks to redefine these ideas in ways that do not violate, but instead support, the principle of learning through individual and group engagement. This emphasis could not have been one of educational theory alone; it should have been more convincingly demonstrated in practice, in the observation of successful practice.

"Perhaps" --I continue to quote, "I myself have insufficiently recognized the need for the early and continuing education of teachers, their needs for continuing support --in theory and in their practical understanding of the diversity of children's talents, of the matching diversity of opportunities, within any important area of human knowledge, for children's entry into it. In such matters our own education, as teachers, has often been deficient, and needs refreshment."

"When I first lectured at the University of Chicago I saw this need and began to define it --what I called the reconstruction of subject matter, a major re-examination and transformation of what was traditionally taught. Modern scientific knowledge, in particular, is too new, even in its broad and elementary character, to have found its way into the general culture, into the subsoil of mind. Lacking this depth of familiarity, our appreciation of children's ways of understanding and expression may be equally uncomprehending. Their powers of expression, in particular, can reach beyond the stiff formalities of the sciences and mathematics we were taught, or of the genres of art as adults usually conceive them. Human expression, whether in the recognized media or in the completion of any satisfying work, is not an outpouring, like the song of the bird. It comes after long absorption in subject matter, subject matter that has been freshly explored.. The task of the new education needs be much more than a refreshment of method, it must seek also for a continuing reconstruction of subject matter, a reconstruction needed always to match the growth and continuity of experience."

Dear Friends: If you think you *might* join us in person in Corrales for part or all of our August Meeting, please let us know as soon as possible. It's better for us to plan for too many people than for too few.

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Corrales Institute for New Education
P.O. Box 1148, Corrales, NM 87048.

