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Motivation and the Adult New Reader: Student Profiles in a Deweyan Vein

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Abstract

The educational philosopher, John Dewey (1916) defines growth as "the ability to learn from experience" (p. 44), which he elaborates on in *Democracy and Education* (1916) and *Experience and Education* (1938). This study focuses on this core Deweyan concept as a way of interpreting the learning history of three male students at an adult literacy learning center. Given a current emphasis in the field on outcome-based assessment, it is the argument of this essay that Dewey's concept of growth provides important insight on how students progress from desired ends to their actual attainment. This study focuses on progress toward such goals ("ends-in-view" in Dewey's terminology) or growth rather than on their attainment without ignoring the latter.

Growth is not something that is completed in odd moments; it is a continuous leading into the future....Because the need of preparation for a continually developing life is great, it is imperative that every energy should be bent to making the present experience as rich and as significant as possible. Then as the present is merged into the future, the future is taken care of (Dewey, 1916, p. 56).

Every experience is a moving force. Its value can only be judged on the ground of what it moves toward and into (Dewey, 1938, p. 38)

Between 1987-1996, I managed the Bob Steele Reading Center (BSRC), a site-based adult literacy tutoring program of Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford (LVGH). Through the course of the history of this program, my colleagues and I created an extensive collection of student-generated texts including essays, oral histories, and learning interviews. In this essay, I draw on these materials to trace the learning history of three male students with whom I also spent considerable time over the course of several years. Specifically I worked directly with these three in one-to-one and small group tutoring settings, observed tutoring sessions in which they participated, and engaged them in much informal discussion. My understanding of their development as literacy students was considerably formed by my on-site participation as a program manager.

Since what one perceives is not a direct reflection of experience, but an interpretation of it, my understanding of the development of these students inevitably reflects my own world view which has been significantly shaped by an extensive reading of the philosophy of John Dewey. Whether writing on education, aesthetics, politics, epistemology, or logic, Dewey (1938) emphasized the centrality of human experience as the focal point for philosophical reflection, the quest to create an "intellectual organization...worked out on the ground of experience" (p. 85). This essay

represents a sifting through such student experience through certain categories of Deweyan thought particularly his concept of "growth," an axial point in his philosophy of experience.

Dewey's Concept of Growth

Ends-in-View

In the broadest of terms, Dewey defines growth as the enhancement of experience through critical reflection and insightful action. What Dewey viewed as vital was not so much the phenomenon of lived experience, his starting point for reflection, but its transformation or in his terms, its "reconstruction" *toward* what he referred to as "ends-in-view." Dewey's philosophy of experience starts with the emergence of a problem that bursts forth within consciousness as some disruption of a given habitual mode of being in the world. Such disturbances may be large or small, but they impact consciousness sufficiently to be noticed by the individual, which requires some response. As he put it:

[V]aluation takes place only when there is something the matter; when there is some trouble to be done away with, some need, lack, or privation to be made good, some conflict of tendencies to be resolved by changing existing conditions" (Cited in Archambault, 1964, p. 90)

The ends-in-view represents the culmination of a particular problem or set of problems, which then leads either to a temporary stabilization or a new set of issues that such resolution unleashes. "They arise out of natural effects or consequences which in the beginning are hit upon, stumbled upon so far as any purpose is concerned" (p. 71). This stimulates reflection on their value and a sharpening and refinement of aims as both means and ends in resolving particular problems. Such

Ends are foreseen consequences which arise in the course of activity and which are employed to give activity added meaning and to direct its further course. They are in no sense ends *of* action. In being ends *of deliberation* (original emphasis) they are redirecting pivots *in* (original emphases) action" (p.72).

That is, they redirect activity to new areas with their own set of challenges and problems that require additional resolution, while signifying a certain finality to the earlier issues that can still crop up again under a new set of circumstances.

In Deweyan philosophy, growth is the movement from problem identified to ends-in-view, the "cumulative movement of action toward a later result" (Dewey, 1916, p. 41). Dewey (1938) sometimes uses mystical-like language like "extracting at each present time the full meaning of each present experience" (p. 49). On a literal level such a concept does not make sense for human beings that are in continuous process of creating and recreating meaning from experience, which in principle, could assume an infinite array of directions and amplifications. Yet, what Dewey is driving at is the need that "every energy should be bent to making the present as rich and as significant as possible" (p. 56). Although this, too, is far from completely clear,

particularly from a strictly empirical interpretation of language, it points toward a trajectory of human expansiveness, which is the basis of Dewey's concept of growth.

Key Concepts

Dewey builds his concept of growth on three sub-concepts, "continuity," "direction" and "interaction" which he concisely discusses in the important Chapter Three of *Experience and Education*, titled, "Criteria of Experience." For Dewey, "the principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after" (p. 35). Based upon the principle of continuity, the educative process is "identified with growth when that is understood in terms of the active participle *growing*" (original emphasis) (p. 36). Thus, in working from problem identified to ends-in-view, this sense of "active participle growing" is an essential aspect of the process.

Pragmatism has sometimes been critiqued for the lack of values it promotes in the purposes of such an elusive concept as growth. Dewey's (1938) response is to "specify the *direction* (emphasis added) in which growth takes place, the ends toward which it tends" (p. 36). By this, he does not refer to specific direction or ends, but rather, to a general tendency. For Dewey:

[T]he question is whether growth in this [a particular] direction promotes or retards growth in general. Does this form of growth create conditions for further growth, or does it set up conditions that shut off the person who has grown in this particular direction from the occasions, stimuli, and opportunities for continuing growth in new directions? (p. 36)

Admittedly, there is something existential (a word Dewey used) about this. The proof of such growth can only be ascertained by the results attained, in general terms, a more expansive life, which may not be easily evident in the near term.

Dewey draws in part upon the concept of the "moving force" in describing the trajectory from problem identified to ends-in-view. This has two components: coherence in the continuity of the direction of growth and in the extraction of "the full meaning of each present experience" (p. 49) as the dynamic force that propels energy from problem identified toward the ends-in-view. Dewey's mystical language is not always helpful. Yet his use of "full" symbolically points to the importance of potentiality as a critical force in galvanizing direction and motivation that shares a close resemblance to the contemporary concept of "self-realization," which, although a myth, contains a certain existential power in influencing behavior. However mystical, the concept is central to Dewey's notion of growth. As he puts it: "[f]ailure to take the moving force of an experience into account so as to judge and direct it on the ground of what it is moving into means disloyalty to the principle of experience itself" (p. 38). This is so because the concept is linked to the importance of *potentiality* as a primary force in the philosophy of American pragmatism, geared less to *interpret* reality, than to *reconstruct* it for the better as defined by the collective interests of the participants themselves in any particular social milieu.

"Interaction" is the other major concept Dewey draws on in his philosophy of growth. As he puts it, "[e]xperience does not go on simply inside the head of a person" (p. 39). What is important for him is not merely the consciousness of individuals, but the "situation" or environment embodied by individuals that account for both "objective and internal conditions" (p. 42). For Dewey, individual consciousness is not a myth, far from it. It is, rather, a manifestation of the environment that individuals embody and a focal point for an acknowledgement of an *ecological* disturbance that then requires a new fit not merely for the person in isolation, but within the context of the environment that shapes personal being. As he puts it, "[a]n experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at that time, constitutes his environment" (p. 43). Problems burst forth within the consciousness of individuals through the ecological contexts that they embody, growth or development takes place within the same, similar, or changing environments, while ends-in-view are realized through reconstructed relationships between self and society.

Since this essay focuses on Dewey's concept of growth, I will not elaborate on his concept of aesthetics (Dewey, 1934), except to point out that on his view, when experience becomes particularly rich, what he refers to as "consummatory," it is transformed into art. On his interpretation, aesthetics represents the acme of human experience, what he refers to as "the crown and consummation of nature" (Cited in Archenbault, 1964, p.43).

The literacy development of each student can be interpreted from a variety of perspectives. However, Dewey's concept of growth carries a certain imaginative power congruent with their lived experiences even if it is a stretch to always find an exact correspondence between them and the learning histories of these students. Not all problems move through the trajectory laid out by Dewey. Yet it is the pull toward what Dewey calls "ends-in-view," as means and ends, whatever "finality" emerges that provides his concept of growth with its force. In the following case presentations, I draw on Dewey's concept of growth, while acknowledging that this represents more a poetical angle of vision than an exact correspondence, and only one interpretation among possible other's-though, a quite fruitful and largely neglected one. Whatever its limitations, the Deweyan perspective can provide insight on how and what adult literacy students learn over time.

Orlando

Initial Plans

When he came to the Reading Center program, Orlando was in his late twenties. He was married and had an eight-year old son. Orlando was born in Puerto Rico and moved to the mainland as a boy. He attended bilingual school programs that by his account failed to help him. This was due in part because his single parent mother moved often, which destabilized his education (Smith et. al., 1993, pp. 6-10). He left school at sixteen viewing himself simply as "a normal kid having a hard time" (p. 7). He entered our program in January 1990 in a desire to gain increasing control over his life. He had ambitious goals; he wanted to attain his GED certificate, which would qualify him to attend auto mechanics school.

Throughout his eighteen-month stay, Orlando remained matched with a single tutor while also participating regularly in small group tutoring. He put in well over 200 instructional hours. In the LVA system fifty hours per year is deemed significant. His effort, therefore, represented a major commitment. As his reading ability increased, so did his self-confidence. Orlando attended some of the occasional student support meetings that our agency held. I was moved, though I cannot recall exactly what he said when he spoke with power and conviction about the valuable role literacy was playing in his life. I recall that he also spoke about being linked with other learners who shared similar feelings and experiences, which was a new revelation to him.

Orlando's learning history at the Reading Center was complex and rich which included extensive gains on standardized testing. In the instrument developed by LVA, the *Reading Evaluation Adult Diagnosis (READ)*, Orlando jumped from B to J level in his basic reading ability. This is roughly analogous to four school grades, from first to fifth based upon "the use of a readability formula to fit certain grade levels of written material" (Colvin and Root, 1982, p. 46). On the *READ*, students read passages of varying difficulty, with the interviewer assessing for reading fluency and basic comprehension. The scoring results in a letter grade such as "B," that in this case roughly corresponds to a grade-level equivalency of "up to grade 1.5" (p. 47).

There are problems with equating adult literacy learning with school grade equivalencies, as the authors of *READ* point out. As they put it, "[t]he general knowledge and vocabulary of adults are far different from that of school-age students and therefore grade level designations of adult reading seems inappropriate in describing the range of competencies which are displayed" (p. 46). Thus, once adults increase their reading ability they invariably achieve a richer literacy experience than children, which is not to negate the sense of wonderment the latter sometimes experience once the world of books is open to them. Moreover, the grade school analogy has negative connotations for many adult beginning readers, particularly with someone like Orlando, who while attending school felt as if he were "nobody." For all its limitations, the *READ* score increase presented *one* visible manifestation of Orlando's significant literacy development during his eighteen month stay in the program. Yet there was much more to his growth than increased test scores.

Orlando entered the program with a traditional goal of obtaining a GED, though the gap between his then current ability and its achievement was considerable and not practically attainable without much basic skill development. In my contacts with him since leaving the program, first in his move to upstate New York, then later to Texas, he had stated that he was attending GED classes and making progress, though I lost touch with him before finding out whether or not he achieved that goal.

Given the gap between that initial goal and his then current ability upon entering the program, it became important to work with Orlando to identify additional, shorter range goals and interests that would sustain his motivation and simulate a sense of progress while ultimately working toward long term aspirations. Thus, it was the learning along the way while at the Center, including new areas of interest that emerged, that is of particular interest in depicting the *process* that enabled Orlando to make significant breakthroughs in his literacy development and self perception. Our basic literacy program did not, in fact, include a GED focus, though we did eventually set up a pre-GED group tutoring session for advanced students (Demetron, 1999).

The primary focus with Orlando in our program was to provide as much instructional time as he desired through a combination of one-to-one and small group tutoring and to work on basic skill development through content areas that interested him and stimulated his imagination. It was in the supportive *community* of students and tutors provided by the program that he thrived. Throughout his stay he expressed a desire to master basic skill development, particularly the sight-sound relationship of written language. His tutors helped Orlando with that in which he attained considerable mastery over time. He overcame his "deficiency."

Developing Plans and Interests

It is important, though, not to view the development of this basic decoding skill in isolation, but as part of a broader quest, as he put it, "to know the roots of things" (Smith et. al., 1993, p. 11). During a schedule change, I briefly worked with Orlando and obtained a decent understanding of the sources of his motivation, to grasp the root or structure of things. This appeared evident in the material he studied on automobile mechanics. We read several chapters of a book available at the Center and he obtained more material at the public library. He read the chapters on how the engine works with methodical detail. Some of the vocabulary was above his normal reading ability. However, his interest was piqued in linking book knowledge to his own understanding of how the engine works, though it was not clear to me the extent to which the text opened up new learning for him rather than providing a confirmation of what he had already known. In any event he combined book knowledge with the practical knowledge he obtained by working on his own engine. This enabled him to move back and forth from reading, discussion, and life-experience in a recursive manner connecting his own knowledge, practical experience, and interest to the written text that engaged him. Although the extent to which the book work represented new knowledge is not clear, Orlando implies that it helped fill in gaps of what he had already known. Orlando explained the source of his motivation and learning process in the following way:

Like in mechanics I take things and I put them in my head. It fascinates me. One of the first cars I had I took it apart, fixed the pistons and it worked. Definitely I want to get into mechanics, on my own or professionally. Now I know I can learn. I can do it. If I could master reading and writing I will do it. When I went to fix my car, with the little I can read I was able to do it. I like being a grease monkey. There's a lot to know about (Smith et. al., 1993, p. 11).

In order to put his desire to learn about auto mechanics in perspective, it will be helpful to describe what led up to his decision to focus on that. Preceding his systematic study of the engine, I worked with Orlando to develop a five-year life plan leading from the advanced groups at the Center to entrance into a GED program with the ultimate educational goal of attending mechanics school. In the meantime he would obtain as much practical experience as he could, and if at all possible, obtain a job in a garage.

As we discussed the plan, I wrote key points on the white board, enabling him to turn our discussion into a meaningful literacy lesson, further internalizing the content by integrating orality and literacy. Until this time he had no career guidance, so that our lesson in some small degree, enabled Orlando to turn a partially believed hope into a concrete plan. This was then

followed up almost immediately by our work on the engine. In our lessons, we worked on the complicated vocabulary, but it was the quest for specific knowledge and its personal relevance, driven by the hope that it was within his grasp, which propelled Orlando's intense motivation. The act of reading became subordinate to the thirst for knowledge. Orlando absorbed much during that period, about auto mechanics, reading, and himself. His goals, moreover, had remained coherent and intact as of my last contact with him (personal correspondence).

There is more to consider in the quest to understand Orlando's sources of motivation. Despite his great relish in becoming a "grease monkey," he exhibited an indomitable hunger for humanistic knowledge as well. He spent months reading articles about geography and in an interview, expressed interest in the *Our Century* television series. He enjoyed reading history, geography, and science. "All of these things are pretty exciting. It keeps me motivated" (Smith et. al., p. 12). His goals, interests, and aspirations *expanded* throughout his journey at the Center and that is the critical point. As his learning increased, so did his sense of possibility. He certainly desired to master the basics of decoding, a quest that remained pervasive throughout his struggle to achieve increasing literacy. Yet as his ability and confidence expanded, he desired much more than that; from learning how to read, he wanted to read in order to learn. He sought to grasp the structure of things, from basic decoding skills of reading, to the intricacies of automobile mechanics, to the world around him, to the complex world of his own interior consciousness and his immediate social and cultural experience. At the Bob Steele Reading Center, Orlando obtained something denied him he felt was largely missing in his elementary schooling experience—an education that greatly expanded his world.

The "Moving Force:" of Growth: Seeking the Root of Things

For Orlando, the original impulse for his participation in our literacy program stemmed from a desire to overcome negative grade school experiences stemming from a limited mastery of English and the need to move to several elementary schools as his mother changed residencies within the city of Hartford. As he stated it, "[a]ll those years, I believed I couldn't learn anything....I didn't want to participate and I didn't want to be anybody. I was nobody" (Smith, Ball, Demetron, and Michelson, 1993, p. 6). Occasionally he would find a supportive teacher or a subject he liked, then he had to leave the school. When he completed eighth grade he received a certificate, what he called a "diploma." As he so poignantly put it, "I just looked at the diploma and went by this trash can and threw it in. It didn't mean nothing to me" (p. 7). He went on to high school for a brief period and dropped out as soon as he was able to do so.

As a young adult he had heard of the LVA program through a friend whom he had spoken about his desire to become a mechanic. Various friends encouraged Orlando to enter the program. He then saw an 800 number for LVA on the TV and wrote it down, but did not call. Then he was laid off from his job, which stimulated his immediate impetus to take action. Although he didn't feel particularly comfortable in becoming a student again, he "figured I have to do this and I'll see what happens. I always wanted to be a mechanic. The only way to do it is the right way, reading and writing" (p. 10).

He "came with the [general] idea [that he wanted] to learn to read" (p. 11) and what he found was a learning climate considerably different from what he experienced at school. Moreover, as

an adult, he had much more control in his interaction with the learning environment than he did as a child. He could *choose* to participate in the program that provided him with the extensive individualized support that he needed, which is what he did.

The development of basic competency, his growth in motivation and applicability of literacy to his personal objectives was a gradual process. As he put it:

At one time I thought this was going to be a bother and frustrating. But I said to myself, "What's this going to hurt?" Now that I'm able to read for a year, I'm able to tackle a few things and I might be able to learn something. Anything I learn will help me in the long run. That's what's motivating me to come to class (p. 11)

These altered experiences enabled him to reconstruct older patterns, what Dewey refers to as "habits" which "covers the formation of attitudes, attitudes that are emotional and intellectual; it covers our basic sensitivities and ways of responding to all the conditions we meet in living" (Dewey, 1938, p. 35). Although habits are deep rooted, not subject to easy change, what is critical for Dewey are the ways in which habits are modified in response to new situations. While new behavior is still rooted in earlier habit, "growth" allows for its gradual reconstruction:

The basic characteristic of habit is that every experience enacted and undergone modifies the one who acts and undergoes, while the modification affects, whether we wish it or not, the quality of subsequent experiences. For it is a somewhat different person who enters into them (p. 35).

This was the case for Orlando who, through negative schooling experiences as a child, had a perception of himself as a non-learner. Thus, he had formed a tough perceptual habit difficult to reconstruct, but this was the task that was central to the evolution of his educational plans. Certainly, he desired enhanced literacy to help him achieve his long-term career goal of becoming a mechanic and of obtaining the GED as one of the pathways to its realization. Even more fundamental, though, and a source of more immediate stimulation was a broader drive for knowledge stemming from an innate curiosity that seemed rather stifled in school, at least on his account. As he stated about his early schooling:

I got into math. I liked doing it because I was able to comprehend it better than anything else. Science, I did a little bit of that. It was interesting. I liked history. Music was good. I got involved. I played the trumpet for a little while (Smith et. al, 1993, pp. 6-7).

Hence, it was the quest and increasing capacity to grasp the structure of things, and his increasing knowledge base which served as a primary "moving force" in the means-end continuum leading to the desirable aims that he sought, self-reconstruction as an individual capable of and desirous to learn. As Orlando put it:

Here, I read about history and geography, and about the planets. It's a thrill to go back in time and live in that time. I now find that interesting and fun. I like to know about nature and stuff, human and animal. And all these things are pretty exciting. It keeps me motivated. Too bad I wasn't thinking before, when I was in school. I've been cheating

myself. You miss out on a lot you should be doing, things you like doing, because you can't read or learn about it (p. 12).

Orlando's capacity to reconstruct his identity as someone that enjoys and has the capacity for extensive learning in diverse areas of knowledge, from the more immediate practical concern with vocation to broader realms of culture and science represented a major growth achievement. His desire to get at the root or structure of things might be viewed as the "moving force" that propelled his quest for ends-in-view that he could not have likely fathomed before he began the trek toward adult literacy. Orlando's path diverged, somewhat from the more exacting application of Dewey's "new logic" (Burke, 1994). Clearly, it was not as rigorous as suggested by Dewey's scientific methodology which, in any event, Dewey did not expect to be literally applied in non-laboratory settings (Eldridge, 1998, p. 143). Still, in broad terms, his initial impulse to overcome a negative schooling history and to get on with important life issues he faced, were transformed into desirable purposes as he engaged the process of adult literacy learning and began to build on the successes he attained. In this respect, Orlando gradually shifted his focus from problem identified to ends-in-view. Means and ends also became blended into each other for him in the progressive mastery of learning both for "it's own sake" and in application to real-life situations.

David

Early Learning History at the Center: Seeking to "Break the Code"

David was nineteen when he entered the program in 1989. He was born and raised on a farm in Guyana, one of twelve children. His mother, a single parent, immigrated to the United States while David remained for several years in Guyana, living first with his "auntie," then with his grandfather. Formal schooling was not important for him in his native environment and David attended classes only sporadically. He never learned to read. His family instilled within David the values of hard work and a strong sense of loyalty for one another. Immediately upon arriving in Hartford, he entered into an adult education program, and soon thereafter, came to the Center (Smith et. al., 1993, pp. 16-24).

David came to our program as a virtual non-reader, although occasionally he would recognize the sound of a letter or a small word like "cat." The large class adult education program could not provide the individual attention he needed. During the course of five years, David worked extensively with five or six individual tutors and regularly participated in the small group tutoring program. By the time he left the program in the mid-1990s he logged in over 600 hours of tutoring and had learned how to read *and* write with some fluency.

In 1992, David moved up from a high beginning to low advanced group and began to write. He served as a representative on the short-lived LVA-CT student council and won an award in Washington D.C. as Connecticut's student of the year in the Coors Brewing Company sponsored Literacy Graduation Day. David had come a long way in his journey at the Bob Steele Reading Center and like Orlando, was a total participant in its life. David entered the program as almost a total non-reader who could not make an independent sound-sight connection between spoken and written language throughout his first year in the program. His gains in reading based on *READ*

were nowhere near as dramatic as Orlando's. Yet based upon the progress he made throughout his several year participation in the program (see below), they proved significant for him. Here, I concentrate on David's early experience at the Center that enabled this nonreader to attain the "critical mass" to "crack the code" of the sight-sound relationship between print and oral language.

David studied at the Center for about a year with his first two tutors with little visible gain and no measured increase on the *READ* test. When he moved to Florida at the end of 1990, David was still at the A level, or virtual nonreader by the standards of the test, although he did recognize a few sight words. His tutors were competent and motivated, while David was patient, hard working, and open to experimentation. Various, the tutors worked with phonics and word patterns and with whole language approaches such as assisted reading. The results appeared negligible. It would have been easy to conclude that David was one of those people who simply could not "crack the code" of reading, although that was not our judgment.

His first tutor, though, wondered if David had "an undetected learning disability, possibly dyslexia," since it appeared that he could not even master the most basic fundamentals of the reading process in making the sound-sight connection between the spoken and written word. According to Gerald S. Coles, (1990) "learning disabilities" is a contestable intellectual construct. That the vast preponderance of emerging adult new readers exhibit a wide array of problems with reading is self-evident to literacy practitioners. What is questionable is the extent to which these should come under the rubric of a "disability" construct, often, although not always, accompanied by a "stigma" (Beder, 1991) that the problem resides inside the heads of nonreaders.

Consider first, that the vast majority of adult literacy programs and supportive social service agencies lack an ability to diagnose any "neurological impairment" which a strict definition of learning disabilities requires (Coles, 1990, p. 20; Ross-Gordon, 1989, p. 3). By focusing primarily on symptoms, "learning disabilities" may serve as a catch phrase for some acute reading problems stemming from a multiplicity of causations both internal and external to the learner. A second concern is that the learning disabilities label tends minimize structural factors that contribute to illiteracy. Historically, there has been little focus among the LD community on poverty, racism, or other related social and cultural forces (Coles, 1990, p. 25; Hunter and Harman, 1985; Kozol, 1985) impacting on adult illiteracy, except for an emphasis on a "dysfunctional" social environment with higher incidences of impaired brain functioning. One learning disabilities specialist puts it this way:

[W]hy is LD more prominent in low-income populations? Because they are at higher risk to insults to the central nervous system (both in utero - and after birth) that can cause the brain issues - because of issues of poverty - Marian Wright Edelman's book called *Wasting America's Future* - says that living in poverty alone increases the likelihood of having a learning disability by 30% (and that is one of the more conservative estimates.) If you read the studies of children affected by lack of access to medical services, exposure to lead and having lead poisoning, being fetal alcohol or drug impacted, being low-birth weight, etc., etc. - they all say that LD is one of the major results of these issues

- Right now 65% of those in special education come from families with incomes of 25,000 or less (Young, 1997).

While it is beyond the bounds of this study and my knowledge to pinpoint with exactness the many complex relationships between environmental and cognitive "causes" of illiteracy, the case studies shed some light on this complicated issue. For example, Orlando had achieved only negligible benefits in his earlier decentralized tutorials when he initially entered the LVGH program in the 1980s. It was only at the supportive climate of the Center that he achieved the breakthrough toward becoming a fluent reader, as evinced by his capacity to read a broad array of texts produced by adult education publishing companies that he and his tutors often drew on for instructional material. Yet his *symptoms* could easily have been diagnosed as learning disabled which his negative self-image might very well have reinforced (Smith et. al., 1993, p. 2-12).

In my judgment, David's mental equipment seemed fine. He never learned to read during the traditional school years, so consequently, he had to acquire a new form of learning from the bottom-up in ways that resonated with his unique personhood. There was no particular reason why learning to read should have been easy for him. Besides, David made important, although barely perceptible breakthroughs during his first year through supportive "scaffolding," which was hard to measure in any standard way.

I occasionally worked with David and found his learning style receptive to the assisted reading approach where the learner gradually takes over more of the reading through modeling and practice. David "caught on" in this manner, although his tutor questioned whether assisted reading represented a form of "mere" memorization. That did not appear the case. Rather, David was engaging the process of fluent reading and was beginning to identify cues that slowly developed reservoirs of knowledge. At this stage, he sought schemas or organizational structures that would enable him to assimilate new knowledge (Smith, 1979, pp. 12-35). Memory played a minor role, but short-term memory can only hold a few items at a time. Depending even on long term memory is too cumbersome a way to affect fluent reading. According to Frank Smith, making meaning of print is the most viable way to foster literacy (1979, p. 46). For David, it was the entire environment of the Center that enabled him to make meaning out of print. The supportive climate resembled his family life and his good natured personality tapped into the altruistic motives of his tutors. These factors encouraged the experimentation that was so critical to David's developing literacy. His emerging literacy was a slow work that engaged the efforts of various tutors, myself, and, of course, David.

Focusing on the reading process, itself, whole language advocates maintain that there are a variety of cues: contextual, syntactical and phonetic (Cheatham and Lawson, 1990, p. 1). David's tutors tapped into all of these with varying emphases in the quest to identify and expand his learning cutting edge. With David, I found kinesthetic cueing particularly effective where for him, perception often preceded formal cognition. I attempted to tap into his intuition, based upon the limited knowledge of reading that he was developing, as an important vehicle by which to expand his capacity. At times when David was unable to identify a word, I merely began to form my lips to initiate the appropriate sound which, given the context of the text, often proved effective. Sometimes all David had to do was to look again at a word he missed; that is, to focus

his attention upon it. At other times I partially sounded out the word so that he could begin to "feel" the sound-sight connection between spoken and written language well before he understood it in any sustained cognitive sense. Only if he was completely stumped did I supply him with the word. I only drilled him on words he consistently mis-identified, even with an assisted reading approach. Here, I alternated between phonics, word patterns, and sight word identification, depending upon what I discerned his most effective learning required at any given time (Root and Colvin, 1987, pp. 19-45).

In effect, I sought to establish a dialogue with David, exploring with him his greatest learning potential at any given time however seemingly minute the instructional episode. Within such a context, I attempted to provide him only with the most minimal cueing that he required to stimulate a fluent and constructive learning process. That is, I drew upon a Vygotskian scaffolding paradigm well before I understood the concept intellectually (Vygotsky, 1978).

Usually, I stressed assisted reading approaches based on the conviction that reading is "caught" at least as much as it is taught which requires a long term process of conscious and unconscious assimilation (Smith, 1979). Moreover, much of the vocabulary from one story to the next contained many of the same common words that he would eventually need to know. It was not essential, therefore, for David to completely master one text (an impossible task at this stage) before moving on to another. Such shifting of texts seemed valuable in order to sustain a sense of moving forward and to stimulate interest in the content of the material.

In November 1990, David moved to Florida, but came back to the Center the following spring. In Florida he had found another literacy program where he had begun to crack the code of reading. When he returned to our program, he was beginning to make the sight-sound relationship between spoken and written language and had mastered a rudimentary sight vocabulary. Whether the breakthrough took place as a result of the specific approach to reading the Florida program provided or simply through an accumulation of reading practice is difficult to discern. David stated that the methodologies used in the Florida program were similar to those at the Center. In any event, something "kicked in" for him in Florida that enabled him to cross a certain threshold.

Developing Capacity

When David returned to the Center in the spring of 1991, his progress in reading became discernible, although not yet "measurable" on the *READ* test. That is, he was able to make some rudimentary connection between the sight/sound relationship between spoken and written language. However minimal, a foundation had been established upon which to build. David began to participate in the small group tutoring sessions and was assigned to his third individual tutor. By the spring of 1992, he began to read lower-level adult literacy texts with limited fluency, even though words like "he" still stumped him. Once David internalized the sight-sound connection, he began to draw on phonetic cues extensively, which became his strong suit.

By 1993, David was able to read with intermediate fluency. Independently, he post-tested at level D on the *READ* test which translates to about a second grade reading level (Colvin and Root, 1982, p. 47). This was a major accomplishment for one who had been a complete non-

reader. David picked up a flow in his reading, which remained halting, but reflected considerable progress from his beginning point in 1990. He drew on his reading ability at work, packing meat, and also in reading road signs. He began to work on his reading on his own at the Center while waiting for his individual tutor or the small group tutoring sessions to begin. He eventually advanced into the higher level groups and began to write and spell with reasonable accuracy. His "inventive spelling" was instinctively sound. He desired to progress further and had the capacity to do so.

David enjoyed a variety of topics focusing on work, culture, personal development, and human interest. His interests were more diffuse than Orlando's because his life goals were not as sharply focused. Neither had he endured the intense alienation, self-doubt, and pain that had marked Orlando's life experience. For both of these students, the Reading Center's environment provided the necessary support to sustain their efforts over long periods of time. In David's case, his warm loving family provided him with the emotional sustenance to take a relaxed, gentle approach to learning. The Center accommodated both Orlando's intense drive for learning and David's more gradual unfolding.

Ends-In-View: Assimilation Into the American Mainstream

In 1993, three years after beginning the program, David articulated his "ends-in-view"-obtaining an education as a pathway to life achievement in the print-based society of urban America. As he put it, "I think the future has to come with school." Still, he took it slow, handling what he could at any particular time, but sustaining a steady commitment to the learning process as he gradually increased his aptitude and worked on his long-term goal of assimilating into a new culture. In his words, "I don't want to start thinking about [focusing on] the future as yet" even though he staked his long-range hope to education. Rather, "I get a good feeling, because one step I have already made" (Smith et. al, 1993, p. 23)-learning how to read. Commenting on his experience in the midst of his learning history at the Center, David realized he was very much "in process."

Some things I know and some I don't. Over here, you've got to fill out a lot of paper. But I can figure out words, and what I've got to do, and what I can't do. So it's working. It's working for me (pp. 23-24).

Of primary importance to David was his capacity to "crack the code" of reading, truly a major accomplishment given his initial almost complete non-reader status when he entered the program. He not only progressed in his reading well up the scale of the *READ* test, but also began to write. Since many non-readers never attain this level of proficiency, such mastery in itself can only be defined in terms of growth, on Dewey's interpretation, as the enhancement of experience through the exercise of critical reflection and thoughtful practice. During the first two years of his history at the Center the gradual attainment of such mastery represented the "moving force" of his motivation.

After attaining basic competency in rudimentary reading, his goals shifted more toward application, reading to learn both for practical purposes and for self-development, as well as continuing to learn to read. His participation in the small group tutoring program, in which he

was a major contributor to the discussions stemming from the various reading assignments, played a major role in this shift. As David put it toward the end of his career at the Center:

The one-to-one tutor helps me to learn more things. The group lets you share your experiences with other people. You tell the group about your ideas and the group tells you about their experiences, too (Demetrian and Gruner, 1995, p. 35).

It was not merely the availability of individual tutors, staff, and instructional resources that made the Center a stimulating site for students, but the collaborative environment where community and learning were joined (Demetrian, 1999a). David took full advantage of and helped to build the social atmosphere of the Center, which included nurturing and support, provided by other students along with tutors and staff, as well as cognitive stimulation.

Even though there was not a direct correspondence between what David learned inside the program and his utilization of literacy practices outside the program, what he learned at the Center he was able to apply to various environmental challenges. The developers of the Equipped for the Future (EFF) project identify "access to information so adults can orient themselves in the world" (Stein, 1997, p. 7) as one of the four purposes that adults chose as important in a study of 1500 adults in adult education programs across the country. Whether or not one of his several tutors focused specifically on access issues it is one of the outcomes David derived from participation in the program. As he put it:

What I learned here has helped me to move around a lot, to go places by car because I can read the signs that I could not read before and find streets. At first I could not read the road signs, my own street name and stuff like that. Now I can read the street names (Demetrian and Gruner, 1995 p. 35).

David further elaborated:

If I go to Massachusetts, I have to know where the exit is. You have to know where you're going. If somebody writes it down for me, it is easy for me to find some place. Like last week, I had to go somewhere for my aunt. I had directions and it was easy to find the place (p. 38)

In addition, David began to read the newspaper, religious material at church, and books on babies and child care with his then new wife. In the terminology of the EFF project he was not only gaining access to new information, but also gaining voice and becoming increasingly independent. As Fingeret and Drennon (1997) put it, "basic self-concept begins to change as adults begin to view themselves as writers and readers" (p. 84).

Self -Reflection

David initially sought to "crack the code" of reading which characterized both the "moving force" of his day-by-day motivation and the "ends-in-view" that he sought. Once attained he broadened his goals to gain competency through literacy in application within real-life settings. As Dewey (1938) put it, "new facts and new ideas thus obtained become the ground for further

experiences in which new problems are presented. The process is a continuous spiral" (p. 79). Becoming increasingly self-reflective as a writer of texts was an aspiration that David could not have easily fathomed when he joined the program in 1990, but such capacity emerged through an accumulation of knowledge leading to a changed self-perception. Although long, David's reflective essay, *Knowing Myself* depicts a significantly different person, an American young man on the road to life achievement and independence, than the illiterate teenager recently migrated from Guyana, dependent on his mother.

There are many ways to define a person. By a name which are just words, by their looks which is their outside, or by the real person inside. I have written about the real person inside of me and what it means to know myself.

Knowing myself helps me relate to other people in different situations. Because I know what I like and what I don't like, I can find friends with things in common. Knowing my role at different places helps me relate with other people, because I know how to act in different situations. I know my feelings and what causes them. This helps me avoid conflicts. For example, when my brother and I get in an argument, I know my reaction will be to hit him. So I do the right thing. I walk away.

Knowing myself helps me understand the tools I need to solve problems. I know that I work best when I have lots of time. I also know that I have trouble asking for help. I do things best when I'm doing them for myself. Knowing these things helps me to set the right conditions for solving my problems.

I can't know everything about myself, because I learn more every day. It is impossible for me to know everything about myself, because I grow and change every day. Knowing myself is important and I will continue to learn more every day for the rest of my life (Smith et. al., 1993, pp. 15-16)

I am uncertain how long it took David to write this piece, but I suspect that he and his tutor labored over it for a considerable period of time. I would also assume that the ideas as finally written did not easily flow from his mind. I suppose, rather that they reflected as well the thoughts of his tutor who, in all likelihood, negotiated the process of meaning making with David through the construction of a text that embodied the language and ideas of both. The level of abstraction of some of the concepts, while evidently not beyond David's conceptual ability, indicates the strong influence of the tutor. Even so, without argument, this is a profound essay. Moreover, on Dewey's reading, the instructor is to be far from passive in the "development of the intellectual content of experiences" (Dewey, 1938, p. 86). What is important is

...for the teacher to be intelligently aware of the capacities, needs, and past experiences of those under instruction.... The teacher's suggestion is not a mold for a cast-iron result but is a starting point to be developed into a plan through contributions from the experience of all engaged in the learning process. The development occurs through reciprocal give-and-take, the teacher taking but not being afraid also to give. The essential point is that the purpose grow and take shape through the process of social intelligence (pp. 71-72).

Although evidence is not available to depict with any certainty the specific dynamics between David and his tutor in the construction of this essay, it is not far-fetched to assume that something like what Dewey described took place. Whatever the specific dynamics, this essay represents a profound reconstruction of self-identity from the youth who entered the program several years previously. As David put it:

When I first came here I was afraid because I didn't know how to read. I understand better now when people talk to me. I can communicate better now. Literacy Volunteers means a lot to me because if LVGH [Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford] didn't exist I wouldn't know where to go (Demetron, 1995, p. 66).

As a bare statement, Dewey's concept of growth as the enhancement of experience through critical reflection may seem elusive. David's reconstruction of his identity through his five year career at the Bob Steele Reading Center provides concrete specificity to Dewey's (1916) contention that "[s]ince growth is the characteristic of life, education is all one with growing; it has no end beyond itself" (p. 53). Of course, such growth requires actual embodiment in the interaction between the individual and the social environment over specific issues and problems, wherein potentiality is transformed into reality if it is going to mean anything. For Dewey, "the value of school education is the extent to which it creates a desire for [such] continued growth and supplies means for making the desire effective in fact" (p. 53). As evinced by David's learning history, it is "growth" or growing, what Fingeret and Drennon (1997) refer to as "the process of adults' moving into an identity as literate persons, with literacy practices integrated into their lives" (p. 85) which established the bridge between problem identified and ends-in-view. Through a five year process, at least in part stimulated by the literacy program, David shifted from a newly arrived illiterate immigrant living at home with his mother to a literate married young man regularly employed and well assimilated into the culture.

Anthony

Motivated to Learn

Anthony, a young African-American, was in his early twenties when he joined the program. He was a graduate of one of Hartford's high schools. He entered the Center's program initially in 1990 while taking non-credit developmental reading courses at the Greater Hartford Community College. Those courses and the thick textbooks from them that he brought to the Center proved well beyond his ability. After about three months, Anthony left the Center. Approximately a year later, he returned, no longer enrolled in the college program, which proved beyond his ability to handle. We found space for Anthony in our advanced small group program, which he attended several times per week. At that time, Anthony was not able to articulate the sources of his desire to enhance his literacy skills to us and perhaps even to himself. However, by his intense participation it was evident that he viewed the Center as a very invigorating learning and supportive collaborative environment focused at his ability and interest level. Several months later an individual tutor became available which enabled Anthony to put in about ten hours of study per week. A couple years later he was able he was able to speak to his goals, both short and longer term:

I want to comprehend and read better. And I'm hungry for knowledge. I'll be more independent. I won't have to depend on anybody. I want to be an art teacher. I want to share my knowledge with a younger generation (Demetrian and Gruner, 1995, p. 49).

The extent to which Anthony was operating out of these motives from the beginning of his journey at the Center is uncertain, although his consistent desire for learning was evident to those of us who worked with him. What is clear is that the progress that he made within a sustaining, supportive learning environment over several years enabled him to claim an identity as a learner, reader, and writer of texts that provided him with meaning and some strategies for embracing the future.

Whatever the precise sources of his motivation, they were enduring as indicative of his over 600 hours of tutoring sustained over several years. Improving his reading skills itself represented a powerful source of motivation for Anthony in his shift of identity from someone who cannot to someone who can learn in formal schooling settings. That may appear insufficiently concrete given an emphasis in the field to link literacy to specific outcomes like employment, community involvement, and family education (Stein, 1997). Yet given Anthony's situation as a somewhat isolated young urban black male with limited educational and vocational skills, he may have viewed the expansion of his capacity to read, write and to learn, in themselves, as self-evident, necessitating no further explanation. That he was able ultimately to articulate specific reasons is an indication of the progress he had made, both in his level of general competency with literacy and in his sense of identity as an educated person.

Anthony, therefore, identified the capacity to communicate through speech and writing itself, as a significant goal. After participating in the program for awhile, he sensed that he could "talk to people better" and "explain himself better" due to his vocabulary expansion and enhanced self-esteem. He also linked a prospective career in carpentry with a need to effectively interact with his customers. On a more visionary note, he also aspired to "become a great artist like no one else before." Whether through art, speech, or literacy, Anthony sought to enhance his communication skills.

Seeking "Voice"

Through literacy Anthony sought to overcome a sense of isolation that gripped him for years intensified by limited education and failure to master the basic academic requirements to succeed at the community college. In the language of the Equipped for the Future (EFF) project (Stein, 1997) he desired to articulate his own *voice*, "to be able to express ideas and opinions with the confidence that they will be heard and taken into account" (p. 7). That is, he sought to organize and refine his own thought processes both for the purpose of self-expression and to more adequately equip him for the challenges he faced in his social environment. Consider the following passages written by Anthony, which although long, merit our full attention in the illumination of his rich and provocative life experience and "voice."

What is Art Without Human Life

Without humans, art would not be the same: it would be loneliness. Art brings the beauty out in some people. Some people have the talent in it.

Art make you realize that it is important to human life. It helps you to understand what you want out of your career in your life time. Art also helps you to understand how to communicate with people who don't understand what you are going through in life.

Art is like love that can help people respect one another in life as human beings. It is a way to communicate with jealous people who can't understand someone with talent. Art has many understandings (Demetron, 1995, p. 15).

In the next piece, Anthony spoke more directly about the dilemmas and challenges of his personal life experience:

Painful Experiences

Sometimes I wonder where I have been, who I am, and where I am going and where I am in life today. How do I fit in this world as a human being? How do I make my beliefs respectful so I can feel like a human being in life and respect people who are true to themselves like me?

Some people don't understand what I am going through in life. Sometimes I have trouble getting my words across with people. In life, it is hard to survive, to believe that you can go on.

My beliefs are of value to me. Some people wouldn't accept me as I am because they are jealous of the beliefs that I cherish. Some people wouldn't respect your beliefs that you have in life. They would put you down for every little thing. They can't accept a person like me.

They have two faults. Everything they do and everything they say. Because these people have so much hate in them, they don't understand what is going on with people like me. We shall come together and understand each other in life to make a better world to live in today (p. 15).

At the Bob Steele Reading Center, Anthony realized some of his more deeply rooted aspirations for personal authenticity and "voice." Like other adult literacy students across the country who have found in literacy the power of autobiographical expression both in speech and in writing, Anthony began to exercise the "power to be able to make [himself]...heard and felt, to signify" (Schuster, 1990, p. 227). Through the articulation of his "voice," and through that, discover new potentialities about himself both in terms of his self-perception and in his capacity to better negotiate the terrain of his social environment.

Unlike Orlando and David who entered the program as low-level readers, Anthony's decoding skills were much more extensive. His growth process would revolve around an increased ability to critically interpret text as well as to *create* narratives that provided him with greater capacity by which to "signify." This provided him with a certain critical distance from enmeshment in a social environment that engulfed and oppressed him in significant ways, through his increased capacity to think, to express his ideas in writing, and to take limited, but important action in shaping his responses to his environment. Thus, the transition from impulse to purpose that he traversed revolved around his increased mastery of knowledge as a student who could signify and thereby express previously untapped potential unleashed through the supportive atmosphere of the Bob Steele Reading Center.

Expanding Racial Consciousness Through African American History

An exploration of some of Anthony's specific learning will illuminate the sense of "growth" he achieved. In a 1994 interview he discussed his learning history in a simple, straight-forward idiom without much elaboration, which nonetheless provides an understanding of his journey particularly when juxtaposed to his essays and a companion interview with one of his latter tutors. "I learned how to comprehend and a little grammar and history" (Demetrian and Gruner, 1995, p. 43) is how he put it. More specifically, what he learned about was "Black history. When I was in high school they had it, but I thought it was too difficult for me to understand" (p. 45). In fact, this was a major topic upon which he focused as he linked it inextricably to his own autobiography. With the strong support of his tutor he wrote extensive essays about Frederick Douglass, Thurgood Marshall, and Martin Luther King, Jr. In the interview I asked him to comment about the importance of African American history. His response was terse, but incisive: "Black people had invented a lot of things and fought for a lot of rights" (p. 48). He then provided short descriptions about the various contributions made by African American leader, which do not begin to capture the depth of study that he undertook in preparation for the several essays he wrote.

Anthony's research on African American history is capstoned in a personal essay that contains the quest for racial integration, but also a powerful critique against the legacy of racism that has marked his personal experience as well. As he put it in *Open Your Mind to a Different Race*:

Why do the majority of white people think that black people are outspoken when blacks stand up to white people who try to own black people? Some whites don't want the blacks to stand up for their rights. Blacks are tired of hearing, "that's a black problem." Many whites have problems understanding how blacks go through life because they don't know the black race. That's why both races have much to hate in society.

We all face difficulties about different races and heritages. We lost hope in the American creed of being equal and the respect for goodness of one another. Luxury and material things are taking the place of goodness and equal rights. Each individual should take a step to make peace by trying not to judge one another by their ancestry.

There will come a day that we will realize all races are equal. We can then live together in peace (Demetrian, 1995, p. 26).

It is very likely that Anthony may have *experienced* some of these thoughts and feelings before entering the program, but without argument, he lacked the capacity to express them in the articulate way he did in this essay and thereby to truly own such thoughts as his. The growth that he achieved is reflected, in part, in being the person who could utter such thoughts in writing which sprang both from the depths of his personal life experience and from his reading of African American history and culture.

Expanding Interests and Competency

Anthony's growth in learning was facilitated by the culture of the Bob Steele Reading Center. As he put it, "[p]eople here hear" (Demetron and Gruner, 1995, p. 43). Tutors were extremely supportive of Anthony and they understood something of the passion to learn that drove him, as expressed particularly in his essay and participation in the small group readings and discussion (Demetron, 1999a).

Anthony also derived much insight from the oral history narratives created at the program in collaboration with Trinity College of Hartford (Smith, Ball, Demetron, and Michelson, 1993; Lestz, Demetron, and Smith, 1994). Anthony chose not to write about his personal life experience because it was too painful for him. Yet he enjoyed reading about the experiences of other students. "It's interesting and it's a learning experience. There are other people like you struggling to survive" (Demetron and Gruner, 1995, p. 47). Commenting more on the oral histories he described them as:

[v]ery interesting. People have to work hard to get where they're at today. Their experience is more complex than someone else's history. You can put yourself in their situation; it's more like my history (p. 48).

Comparing the oral history narratives to the type of history encountered in textbooks, Anthony stated that "[t]hey each have their history and someone is writing about it. It's kind of a neat way to understand their history" (p. 48). Furthermore, "[t]hey have a pattern; like this person had a hard time, the other person may have had good times, but it always came back to the past" p. 48).

Whether exploring the oral histories of other adult literacy students or "famous" African American leaders, history was his favorite topic. Through such probing into the past he was also exploring the archeology of his own life as evinced in the provocative essays he wrote about race, self-perception, and the ardent desire to communicate-to hear and to be understood by others who were important to him.

He was also developing important basic skills including the utilization of the computer. For example, he and his tutor spent three months exclusively working on his extensive essay of Martin Luther King, Jr. As his tutor Pat put it, "[w]ith Anthony I've discovered it's important to work with him on the same thing from beginning to end" (Demetron, 1997b, p. 121). In the process Anthony experienced much learning. The work entailed research. Anthony and his tutor used three books as background to put the essay together. One of the books was too difficult for him, so he and the tutor read that together and Anthony took notes. There was also much focus on getting chronology straight, which initially eluded Anthony. He also learned much about

editing on the computer starting with initial notes stemming from brainstorming sessions. As put by Pat:

I made him write it down. Then we'd put it on the computer. And this was a breakthrough, having him do a lot of this on his own. Because even though it took us months, he had to do this, to read, to write down, and not to copy. That's still a big thing, to use your own words to re-write something. He's becoming much better at that (p. 129).

On the computer Anthony learned to cut and paste, delete, spell check, save, and open a file. In short, through the three-month process of constructing this extensive essay, Anthony learned much about the Civil Rights Movement and the basic skills of research, editing, writing, and the utilization of the computer. The essay was more of a summary than a personal analysis, but through such work on King as well as on Douglass, Marshall, DuBois, and Washington, Anthony developed his own voice in expressing the impact of racism on American society as well as on his own personal life. For one who dropped out of developmental courses at the community college several years previously, because the work was too difficult, such accomplishments were no mean feat. Anthony experienced considerable growth.

As put by Dewey (1938), "[n]atural impulses and desires constitute ...the starting point [of learning]. But there is no intellectual growth without some reconstruction, some remaking of impulses, and desires in the form in which they first show themselves" (p. 64). Anthony came to the program with a negative experience at the community college about his capacity to learn which he nonetheless intensely desired.

Continuing Hunger for Knowledge

Stimulated by a learning environment more akin to his needs and learning style, Anthony soon developed an appetite, in his words, "[t]o be hungry for knowledge" (Demetron and Gruner, 1995, p. 44). Through hard work and attention to "means" as well as to "ends-in-view" Anthony gained a great deal through the program as he transformed impulses into purposes. He eventually returned to the community college for a semester, this time enrolled in credit courses, one in art, the other in composition. He attained a grade of B in the composition course with very intensive support from his tutor in helping him to write his essays. After completing the semester Anthony decided, at least for the time, not to continue with college as he sensed how difficult it would be without the strong support of a tutor who would not always be available. Instead, he preferred to remain active in the literacy program that provided him with a securer comfort zone to keep on learning at a pace that he knew that he could handle.

Thus, in a supportive learning environment, with the guidance of a knowledgeable and empathetic tutor, Anthony achieved at least some success within a college setting that previously had proven well beyond his ability. While his independent learning had not risen to the same level of capacity he nonetheless gained a great deal. Dewey (1938) claims that "growth depends upon the presence of difficulty to be overcome by the exercise of intelligence" (p. 79). Based upon this definition, Anthony had overcome a great deal in the quest to reconstruct his life in a manner more satisfactory to his desires, as previous aspirations attained became pivots for further growth in his ardent pursuit of learning and self-enhancement. This was no small matter.

Conclusion

For Dewey (1925), the purpose of both learning and living "is to render goods more coherent, more secure and more significant in appreciation" (p. 408). Education, broadly defined is the royal road to the attainment of such goods through the exercise of intelligence in problematic situations wherein experience ultimately becomes transformed into the "consummatory" phenomenon of art. Thus, for Dewey, the purpose of his instrumental logic was aesthetic. As he stated, "[i]f instrumental efficacies need to be emphasized, it is not for the sake of instruments but for that sake of that full and more secure distribution of values which is impossible without instrumentalities" (p. 412). For Dewey, then, "[n]othing but the best, the richest and fullest experience possible is good enough for man" (p. 412). Although this represents an ideal not always attained, it does point to the importance of potentiality that the learning process sometimes stimulates that helped to motivate and sustain the students described in this essay who sought various forms of life transformation through literacy.

Dewey defined the pathway toward such development as growth, the progressive attainment of aspirations within the stream of time where "fulfillment is as relative to means as means are to realization" (p. 397). That is, traces of the "ends-in-view" are deposited along the means-end continuum and are as important because they bring about *and* embody the potentialities of the ends throughout the process of moving from the desirable to that which is attained over time. I described something of the means-end continuum with each of the three students. David's sought to master basic reading and writing skills and to draw upon literacy to help him assimilate into his new social setting. Orlando, like Anthony, sought to create a new self-identity as an individual who has the capacity to and enjoys learning and as one that could make plans to realize self-identified aspirations. In addition, Anthony achieved through writing the capacity to communicate some of his innermost thoughts and through a study of African-American history a means by which to situate his own personal story within a meaningful social, cultural, and racial context. These divergent ends-in-view were progressively "deposited" throughout the learning history of each of these individuals while participating in the program, and gradually brought to fruition, which in turn began to serve as new means for more expansive life projects.

In the late 1990s the field of adult literacy has been characterized by an emphasis on "standards," of which the Equipped for the Future (EFF) Project is the most comprehensive in linking self-identified purposes for participating in adult education to critical social roles. EFF is based on the assumption that through the progressive mastery of "generative skills," learners are better equipped to meet the challenges of the future as workers, citizens and community members, and as parents and family members (Stein, 1997). The EFF program developers have made a major contribution in wedding a learner-centered philosophy with the functional context theory of adult literacy education (Sticht, 1997). As attested through the NIFL-EFF listserv, practitioners throughout the country have embraced the EFF framework as a powerful heuristic that has opened new realms of learning for students and new motivational energy for instructors. On the EFF model progress is discerned to the degree to which students have mastered the highly qualitative standards or generative skills in application to self-defined goals.

This linkage of student-centered learning to the mastery of important environmental contexts is an important contribution to the field as is the creation of standards based upon the generative

skills. What is still missing is an acute attention to developmental factors in moving from desired ends to their actual attainment throughout the course of a learning history for which Dewey (1938) sheds important insight. As he puts it:

The next step is the progressive development of what is already experienced into a fuller and richer and also a more organized form, a form that gradually approximates that in which subject-matter is presented to the skilled...person (pp. 73-74).

It is attention to that next step, to use Dewey's symbolic language, of "extracting at each present time the full meaning of each present experience" (p. 49) in moving *toward* desired ends-in-view. As depicted in the case studies, acute sensitivity to the nuances of growth throughout the learning history of these students was indispensable to their literacy development. In the increasing call for standards and in the mastery of external outcomes, the role of "growth" or attention to such development needs to take a central place. We can only move to where we want to be from where we are.

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