Teaching as consummatory experience: the aesthetic dimension of experience in the later works of John Dewey and its relevance to teaching and teacher education

Sevket Benhur Oral
Iowa State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd
Part of the Curriculum and Instruction Commons, Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education Commons, and the Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons

Recommended Citation
https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd/15591

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Iowa State University Capstones, Theses and Dissertations at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Retrospective Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
Teaching as consummatory experience: 
The aesthetic dimension of experience in the later works of John Dewey and its 
relevance to teaching and teacher education

by

Sevket Benhur Oral

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty 
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Education

Program of Study Committee: 
Carl Smith, Co-major Professor 
Robert Hollinger, Co-major Professor 
Geoffrey Abelson
Katherine Bruna
Betty Wells

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
2007

Copyright © Sevket Benhur Oral, 2007. All rights reserved.
For my parents, Çolpan and Hürkan Oral,

who have always been there for me

Seygilerimle!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Despite the hardships over the last three years, I have tremendously enjoyed writing this dissertation. The whole process has been a consummatory experience for me. I would like to express my gratitude to all the members of my committee whose constant support, encouragement and patience enabled me to complete this project.

My most sincere thanks goes to Robert Hollinger. Thank you for your guidance, wisdom, sense of humor, generosity, and most of all, friendship. Thank you for being there all along the way. I am also indebted to Carl Smith whose support, flexibility, encouragement, and interest in my work have been essential for the completion of this project. His ability to calm fears was especially helpful. I would also like to extend my thanks to the members of my committee: Betty Wells, Geoff Abelson, and Katherine Richardson Bruna. I am grateful to all of them for their rigorous questioning that helped me clarify my ideas. Their suggestions proved invaluable to strengthening the project.

I also owe my sincere gratitude to David Owen, without whom this dissertation would not have been undertaken.

To family and friends, for all their years of support and encouragement, I offer my deepest appreciation. Most of all, my thanks go to Miriam Nechama bat Shoshe Golda for renewing the world for me in the most unfathomable and bewildering ways.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ABSTRACT**

**CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION**

**CHAPTER 2. THE CONTEXT**

  - Part 2.1 Positivistic Ethos and the American Bildung Tradition 22
  - Part 2.2 Dewey’s Characterization of Educative Experience 44
  - Part 2.3 The Research Questions 71
  - Part 2.4 The Methodology 76

**CHAPTER 3. DEWEY’S CONCEPTION OF “EXPERIENCE”** 86

  - Part 3.1 The Situation 87
  - Part 3.2 The Temporal Structure of “Experience” 116
  - Part 3.3 The Consummatory Experience 139

**CHAPTER 4. THE DIALECTICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE “CONSUMMATORY EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING” AND “EDUCATIVE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE”** 145

  - Part 4.1 Being and Becoming a Teacher 148
    - 4.1.1 Chronological and phenomenological time. 155
    - 4.1.2 Two cognitive moments. 160
    - 4.1.3 Phenomenological mode of time and non-coincidence. 174
  - Part 4.2 Two Examples 179
    - 4.2.1 Example 1: Fourth grade science teacher. 179
    - 4.2.2 Example 2: Consummatory experience of an early literacy methods teacher. 196

**CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS OF TEACHING AS CONSUMMATORY EXPERIENCE FOR TEACHER EDUCATION** 215

  - Part 5.1 Clinical Work 216
  - Part 5.2 Bildung as Self-Cultivation 230

**REFERENCES**

**FOOTNOTES**

237

246
ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, what I would like to call “the ideal of teaching as consummatory experience” is discussed in relation to John Dewey’s concept of “experience” as the latter was elucidated in his later works, especially, *Art as Experience* and *Experience and Nature*. Dewey, particularly in *Art as Experience*, focuses on the aesthetic dimension of experience as its most fulfilling and complete mode. The articulation of the ideal of teaching as consummatory experience is grounded within the American *Bildung* tradition in which John Dewey was schooled and is necessitated as an attempt to reassert an alternative against the unabated dominance of the positivistic ethos that underlies much of the contemporary reform movements in teacher education. The implications and possibilities of a restoration of such an alternative for teacher education reform in the face of positivistic and late-modern skepticism are fleshed out.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This work is a philosophical research in the field of foundations of education. It inquires into an ostensibly simple question. What does it mean to be fully alive as a teacher? This philosophical research therefore focuses on the quality of teachers’ experience. It explores in a philosophical way what it means to be fully alive as a teacher and what happens when teaching is experienced in such a manner. In other words, what is the relationship between teaching that is truly fulfilling for the teacher and experience that is truly educative for the student(s)? There is no doubt in my mind that the two are intimately connected. Truly fulfilling teaching and truly educative experience go hand in hand. It is not only possible to be fully alive as a teacher, it is also essential for educative experience to unfold in students.

In addressing this crucial issue I draw upon my own journey of thinking about what educative experience means and what it entails for teaching in general, and for my own teaching in particular. In very general terms, educative experience is about being connected with the world in a meaningful manner. It is about making sense of things. As a teacher, when you experience the world and therefore yourself with a heightened sense of meaning, you provide the essential condition for creating educative experience for your students.

The relevance of this philosophical research lies in the fact that most of us teachers most of the time do not experience teaching in a fulfilling manner. There is a lack of a heightened sense of meaning in what we are doing. More often than not, teaching becomes a routinized activity and turns into a deadening experience, not only for
us but for our students as well. This, in turn, leads to miseducative experience in our students.

In order to experience teaching with a heightened sense of meaning, that is, in order to feel integrally connected with our students, our surroundings, and ultimately with ourselves, we as teachers have to be in touch with the world we live in. We are in touch with our world when we actively participate in it. When we risk touching and being touched, we fully participate in the unfolding drama, that is, life. When we have the courage to go out there and engage, we experience life with a heightened sense of meaning. We are not in touch with our world when we are merely spectating. We are not in touch with our world when we cringe in fear from it.

Being in touch with the world requires a deliberate interaction with the world with an attitude of openness to the world, which entails a sense of trust. The world is a locus of meaning. This meaning, however, is not always simply given and transparent. It needs to be understood and interpreted by the individual. It requires a sustained effort on our part to be willing to engage with it, and not just once but at all times. In the process of engaging with the world as a locus of meaning, ambiguities, uncertainties, disruptions, confusions, and anxieties are encountered. Despite these difficulties, we maintain our trust in the world and in our ability to engage with it in the most fulfilling way possible.

Such an attitude of openness does not emerge of its own accord. It is something that needs to be brought into existence and deliberately cultivated in each individual. This is the goal of educative experience. When experience is educative, the individual is open to the world in such a way that her interactions with it provide a heightened sense of meaning. Similarly, providing an environment that makes the formation and cultivation
of such an attitude possible in teachers is the goal of teacher education. To attain this goal, a broad liberal arts and sciences education that is firmly rooted in practice needs to be in place. We cannot be in touch with the world with an attitude of openness merely by acquiring some narrowly defined technical skills designed to manipulate a limited sector of the world one lives in. The goal of teacher education programs should be to help teachers engage in their self-formation to become individuals who do not fear to be open to the world as a locus of meaning.

In attempting to articulate what it means to be fully alive as a teacher and how teacher education programs should be structured to foster an environment where teacher-candidates become fully alive, I will draw upon—besides my own journey of teaching and learning—the works of one of the most prominent American philosophers, John Dewey. As a great thinker, as well as a great educational philosopher, Dewey continues to exert an enormous influence on our thinking regarding education and our times. It is my conviction that in order to comprehend what it means to be fully alive as a teacher we must strive to come to terms with his thought, and to understand it anew.

This philosophical research, then, is a contribution to the very process of understanding Dewey anew in the context of experience of teaching and teacher education. The call for a renewed understanding of Dewey is especially relevant since Dewey’s later works, in particular, Art as Experience, bring his commitment to be fully alive into sharp focus. It is important to realize that Dewey’s concept of “consummatory experience,” that is, experience in its most fulfilling mode, and his understanding of what makes experience educative are intimately related to one another.¹ The present work is meant to bring out the significance of this intimate relationship. The originality of this
dissertation lies in its focus on the experience of teachers. A philosophical discussion of
the Deweyan concept of consummatory experience from the perspective of teachers has
not been attempted before. Dewey’s own articulation of what constitutes educative
experience is very well-known. When the object of philosophical analysis is educative
experience, Dewey scholars (and Dewey himself) focus on students. When it is
consummatory experience, the focus I argue should be the experience of teachers.

The attempt to focus on consummatory experience is not without its difficulties
however. The traditional approach to teaching (and teaching-learning relationship, that is,
pedagogy), in which the emphasis is exclusively placed on the transmission of
information and the control and predictability of outcomes through the most efficient
organization and delivery of curriculum (Martusewicz, 2001), still reigns supreme and is
not prone to engage in a re-evaluation of the goals of education. The traditional approach,
which is based on a philosophical framework commonly referred to as “positivism,” does
not have the analytic tools to answer what it means to be fully alive for such a question
does not even arise in the first place within the parameters of this framework. Therefore,
it is essential to provide an alternative framework, in our case, based on Deweyan
pragmatism, to counter the one-sidedness of the traditional approach. So providing an
alternative framework to disclose what it means to be fully alive as a teacher constitutes
the purpose of this dissertation.

Deweyan pragmatism is firmly rooted in what is referred to as the American
Bildung² tradition (Good, 2006). Situating Dewey’s project—which, by the way, has
reached its pinnacle in his later works—within the American Bildung tradition is very
significant for our purposes. For the essence of the American Bildung tradition is about
what it means to be fully alive. *Bildung* as self-formation and self-cultivation is about experiencing the world in the most heightened and unified manner possible. In one sense, then, this work is a critique of positivism in education in support of a revitalization of the American *Bildung* tradition.

To restate what I have expressed so far in a compact form, the purpose of this dissertation is to contribute to the revendication in education of the American *Bildung* tradition represented by John Dewey as a vigorous alternative to the dominant authority of positivism in teaching and teacher education through the conceptualization of what I would like to call “teaching as consummatory experience.” The American *Bildung* tradition in education represented by John Dewey has a more expansive notion of experience (in contrast to its positivistic conceptions) and focuses on the primacy of experience, its unitary (holistic) nature, and its growth and development. Dewey’s expansive conception of experience achieves its ultimate expression in his aesthetics. The term “consummatory experience” therefore refers to the core of John Dewey’s discussion of his aesthetic thought in *Art as Experience*. It has been claimed by the revitalized world of Dewey scholarship that his writings on matters of aesthetics constitute the philosophical nub of his body of work. I would like to follow the lead of this rejuvenated scholarship to explore the implications of Dewey’s notion of “consummatory experience” for education. In particular, I would like to focus on the importance of consummated experience in teaching and teacher education.

It should be noted at the outset that consummation, for Dewey, is not merely an embellishment of his earlier formulations of the notion of “experience.” Rather, it brings his all-important concept of experience to fruition through a sweeping re-examination of
much of what he had concerned himself with all his life (Zeltner, 1975). In educational
circles the realization of the significance of this critical re-examination has unfortunately
been minimal. It is my conviction that the reason for this regrettably slow reception is
that positivism—based on traditional British empiricism—in educational practice and
research has always been the dominant force and framework in which experience is
regarded as something principally psychical, that is, “a ghost in a machine, a rational
observer spectating on nature” (Zeltner, 1975, p. 7). Dewey’s entire work as well as life
can be seen as a testimony against this epistemologically-centered philosophical outlook
and research paradigm, which fails to recognize the underlying unity of experience and
nature. Valuing the pursuit of practical wisdom (phronēsis) over epistemology and logic
is the defining characteristic of Deweyan pragmatism. The body of Dewey scholarship
until recently, however, did not share this opinion. It was “largely made up of
examinations of Dewey as an epistemic thinker [that is, someone who privileges the
problems of epistemology above other, often more vital philosophical questions] which
cast his aesthetics, if they treat it at all, as something of an afterthought” (Kallo, 2004).

As I was convinced that Dewey the epistemologist cannot be the central character
in the story of Deweyan pragmatism, I had the good fortune of coming across James
Good’s work on the “permanent Hegelian deposit” in the philosophy of John Dewey,
which has consolidated my conviction that the Dewey that privileges the more vital
philosophical questions was indeed the Dewey that belonged to the Bildung tradition in
American philosophy. The American Bildung tradition—which is the American version
of the Hegelian (German) Bildung tradition—“rather than assume the Cartesian notion
that knowledge is gained by reducing complex wholes to their constituent parts,

maintains that knowledge of the part comes from attending to the ways it is related to other parts and the way it functions within a larger whole” (Good, 2006, p. xx).

That larger whole, for Dewey, is designated by the word “situation,” which is “not a single object or event or set of objects and events. For we never experience nor form judgments about objects and events in isolation, but only in connection with a contextual whole” (Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, LW12: 66).³ The larger contextual whole which Dewey is talking about is not an object of cognition for the whole can never be objectified. The whole, by reason of being a whole, is never a single isolated object that faces us and can be known. Although it is not an object of knowledge that can be known, the whole is there and we know that it is there not because we see it in front of our eyes and analyze its components. Rather, we know that it is there because we feel the way it encompasses us. The holistic context, which Dewey calls the situation, is immediately experienced through its qualitative nature.

In contrast to an atomistic conception of knowledge, Deweyan holism is acutely sensitive to the qualitative character of experience that always occurs in a situation. For Dewey, quality “is not solely the simple color, sound, texture, or smell” (the traditional primary and secondary qualities that the British philosopher John Locke discusses within the context of his theory of ideas) registered “within the exclusive province of subjective ‘mind’” (Zeltner, 1975, p. 10). Rather, qualities “are felt, not by a specific faculty or category of the mind, but rather by the organism as a whole” (Zeltner, 1975, p. 10). The organism as a whole, furthermore, is not an isolated organism. The organism is of and in nature, that is, the organism is a complex of mutually interacting processes that form the situation as a whole. This situation is experienced qualitatively and immediately.
These are some of the most basic elements within Dewey’s philosophy which are indispensable to have a firm grasp of his notion of consummatory experience. Therefore, they will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3 to set the context as we engage the primary task of this dissertation in Chapters 4 and 5, which is the elaboration of the ideal of teaching as consummatory experience and its implications for teacher education.

The second chapter aims to establish the larger context whereby the need for a revitalized look at Dewey’s conception of experience, and therefore the need for this study, is justified. In the first part of Chapter 2, two clashing frameworks, namely, positivism and the American *Bildung* tradition (neo-humanism) are contrasted for the purpose of situating John Dewey’s oeuvre—in particular, his mature works—within the latter. The first part starts out by citing three examples to illustrate the inappropriateness of the positivistic ethos in matters of education. The disenchanted freshman, the behavioristic definition of learning and the current standards movement bring us face to face with the limitations of this framework. The questions of what the positivistic ethos is and how and why it is still alive and flourishing are taken up next by appealing to the central claims made by David Granger (2003) in his article “Positivism, Skepticism, and the Attractions of ‘Paltry Empiricism’: Stanley Cavell and the Current Standards Movement in Education.” Granger (2003) applies the contemporary American philosopher Stanley Cavell’s definition of skepticism to provide an analysis and critique of positivism. Here it is claimed that positivism as a form of the skeptical impulse rejects the primacy of the everyday lifeworld and instead seeks an unattainable certainty beyond the everyday. This is most inappropriate and unfortunate especially for a field of study such as education.
The discussion of the American Bildung tradition immediately follows the treatment of positivism. As an alternative paradigm to the positivistic conception of education in the U.S. that feels at home with the inherent uncertainty of the human condition, the American Bildung tradition affirms our trust in the everyday. As definitively argued by Good (2006), John Dewey was schooled in this tradition of practical philosophy—philosophy as phronēsis— which was greatly influenced by German Idealism, particularly, Hegelianism, and he is one of the most important 20th century figures in the transformation of the German Bildung tradition into American pragmatism in philosophy. Working on the assumption that readers of this study may be unfamiliar with the German Bildung tradition—after all, the American Bildung tradition is the American version of the German Bildung tradition—the concept of Bildung, its historical and contemporary forms are articulated. We first briefly examine the viability of the notion of Bildung in the late-modern educational context and subsequently look at its articulation in the Hegelian tradition. This brings us to the Deweyan concept of “consummatory experience,” which, in this dissertation, is going to be presented as a viable telos—meaning and goal—of Bildung. This interpretation of “consummatory experience” as the telos of Bildung is meant to bring out the meaning of Hegelian Bildung and therefore to revitalize the neo-humanistic tradition in education.

Having established the context from which we can embark on a closer look at Dewey’s idea of “educative experience” in the context of his aesthetics, in the second part of Chapter 2, the topic of wisdom—another way of referring to the idea of philosophy as Bildung—is taken up in relation to Alexander’s (1993) notion of “the Human Eros.” The whole tenor of this section is to emphasize the primacy of the
everyday experience and the ever-present possibility of its transformation into “consummatory experience,” that is, everyday experience in its most fulfilling most meaningful mode whereby we feel completely at home in the world. Overall, it is argued that this state of at-home-ness (a state of being in touch with the world, being connected with it) is not primarily a knowledge affair, that is, it is not merely and exclusively cognitive. Rather, first and foremost, it is experienced as a qualitative whole. In contrast to conceptions of experience characteristic of modern epistemology—Cartesian and/or modern empiricist view of experience—Dewey’s empiricism attempts to treat experience “as a field in and as a part of which thinking takes place” (Burke, 2000). This implies that thinking as the cognitive value of experience is part of and continuous with a larger process of experience for which the qualitative wholeness of a situation is taken to be central. Philosophy as Bildung advocates this more expansive notion of experience to understand the dynamic process of the integration of self and world.

In relation to Dewey’s rehabilitation of the concept of experience (guided by the “permanent Hegelian deposit” in his thinking), the basic movement or rhythm of experience—starting with a qualitative whole, viz. an overall equilibrium of a given situation followed by a disruption that transforms the unified situation into a problematic one, and finally the attempt through inquiry to establish a new equilibrium, a new unified situation, a new qualitative wholeness—is discussed next. For Dewey, Bildung as educative experience is about this basic rhythm of experience. Furthermore, it is pointed out that the basic rhythm of experience is only possible in a world characterized at once by stability and precariousness. Only in such a world, it is asserted, is it possible to have what Dewey calls an experience.
Dewey uses the terms “an experience” and “consummatory experience” interchangeably in his *Art as Experience* and in conjunction with his opposition to Cartesian dualistic thinking of experience\(^5\)—where discontinuities that cut off the realms of matter, life and mind from each other lead to “modern man’s alienation from society, nature, and his highest ideals” (Good, 2006, p. xxv)—emphasizes the holistic nature of actively participating within an immediately given qualitative whole. In other words, as opposed to the British empiricist conception of experience, where mind as the faculty of reason whose abode is the neocortex is given a central role and experience is subordinated to a peripheral activity, Dewey, in the manner of Aristotelian *phronēsis* and German *Bildung* tradition, turns this picture upside down and asserts the centrality of experience in its qualitative immediacy and wholeness and redefines mind as a course of action and situates it within experience, that is, within the activities of everyday life.

When Dewey replaces “mind” with the term “a course of action in so far as that is intelligently directed; in so far, that is to say, as aims, ends, enter into it” (*Democracy and Education*, MW9: 139), he conceives experience as “embodied movement in time” (McClelland, 2005) directed towards some consummation, that is, a process with a beginning, a middle, and an end, moving continuously through various phases of activity towards some more acceptable, fulfilling and meaningful way of being in the world. For Dewey, the possibility for consummation is aesthetic in nature. It is of the first importance to point out the sense in which Dewey gave primacy to the aesthetic. For him, as for German romantics, the aesthetic implies organic wholeness, that is, developing all one’s human and individual powers to compose them into a single beautiful whole (Beiser, 2003, p. 28).
At this point, the central task of the dissertation is formulated as the exploration of the aesthetic possibilities, that is, consummatory possibilities, of experience’s embodied movement in time in relation to teaching and teacher education reform programs. It is argued that “the aesthetic possibilities of experience’s embodied movement in time” constitutes the telos of Bildung and can be actualized by cultivating what I call “the quality of openness to the temporality of the present.” The positivistic objection to the incomprehensibility and therefore impracticality of such a telos is addressed next in the context of Higgins’ (1998) argument that is designed to undermine the culture-utility dichotomy tacitly assumed by the positivistic ethos. Following that it is suggested that Greene’s (1977) rendition of the idea of “wide-awakeness” and Nodding’s (1992) description of “caring” can be seen as two instances in the literature that come close to what I have in mind by the idea of “the quality of openness to the temporality of the present.” Finally, the second part of Chapter 2 comes to an end as I briefly discuss the philosophical kinship in terms of theoretical orientation, and moral and methodological concerns between the focus of my endeavor, that is, Deweyan pragmatism, and the so-called poststructuralist approaches in education exemplified in the work of Martusewicz (2001).

Chapter 2 Part 3 specifically addresses the main argument of the dissertation and formulates the two research questions, which will be respectively taken up in Chapter 4 and 5. The first research question is concerned about explicating the meaning of authentic teaching, that is, teaching pervaded by the quality of openness (attunement) to the temporality of the present through which the teacher becomes fully alive. The second research question explores the implications of such teaching for teacher education
curriculum and programs. The basic tenor of the argument is that the cryptic phrase “the quality of openness to the temporality of the present” is bound to remain cryptic to the extent that it is taken to be a mere piece of information to be learnt. The quality in question is no mere information—something that can be presented in a textbook. Rather, it is engagement—something that must be experienced in an active as well as receptive way in a particular situation. Furthermore, since it is not merely a static form of knowledge, it is not something that can be easily taught and declaratively communicated, but it is something that can be cultivated. The cultivation of the quality in question requires that we have a much more expansive view of what experience means. That is, a holistic understanding of human experience is the key here. The commonly used term to refer to the latter is wisdom, traditionally called *phronēsis*, and it is argued that wisdom is the project of human meaning, which can only be disclosed in human experience as it is experienced. In other words, human experience is temporal in nature. In the last part of Chapter 2, the phenomenological method of reflection is discussed as the most suitable (and favored) approach for this study to gain an understanding of the *temporal* nature of human experience, especially in its most fulfilling, that is, consummatory, mode.

In Chapter 3, the crucial issue of the temporal structure of experience is taken up. This section is largely based on Matthew Robb’s ingenious work on the comparative analysis of the philosophies of Martin Heidegger and John Dewey, “revealing convergences in their thought stemming from their shared thematization of human being as a temporal structure” (Robb, 2005). Robb (2005) underscores the fact that the “ontological role of time in the constitution of experience” (p. 169) has been misunderstood in the Western philosophical tradition. Dewey, by focusing on the
“experiential meaning of time,” attempts to critique the obsession of Western philosophy with the quest for absolute presence that excludes all movement and change, or, as Dewey calls it, “the quest for certainty.” Despite the fact that “Dewey’s ‘philosophy of time’ is nowhere expressly stated and presented as such” (Robb, 2005, p. 170), Robb manages to piece together from Dewey’s massive body of work the way Dewey thematizes “the experiential dimensions we identify as present, past, and future in terms of the technical concepts transaction, habit, and intelligence, respectively” (p. 170). The bulk of the second part of Chapter 3 is devoted to the explication of these three concepts.

Initially, it is argued that contrary to the modern preoccupation with science and with industry based on science the aim of Bildung is the individual and cultural renewal. In Dewey’s terms, such renewal is expressed as “the demand of the soul for joy, or freshness of experience” (“Art in Education—and Education in Art,” LW2: 111-115). This freshness cannot come from “intellectual analysis and formularized information” (“Art in Education—and Education in Art,” LW2: 111-115). That is, “the quest for social unity, as well as the existential unity of the individual” (Good, 2006, p. 3) cannot be equated with the “quest for certainty.” Rather, the depth and richness of immediate experience has to be plumbed. For only at the level of the immediacy of experience “the reconciliation of oppositions or dichotomies that [create] rifts in the social fabric and within the lives of individuals” (Good, 2006, p. 3) can be made possible. The telos of Bildung is based on the principle of individual and cultural unity, which is not so much of knowledge as of the unity of experience. This, therefore, brings us to the task of elaborating the most basic element of Dewey’s philosophy: his concept of experience and the recognition of the underlying unity of experience.
Dewey endeavors to convey the unitary nature of experience by analyzing the
generic traits of what he calls “situations.” Experience occurs in a situation. A situation,
by its very nature, is a temporal structure. Explication of what this means is the primary
task of the second part of Chapter 3. Admittedly, this section is the most technical part of
the entire work. Those who are not formally trained in academic philosophy proper might
find this section quite esoteric despite my efforts to make it as accessible as possible. For
this reason, before the formal analysis is engaged, in Chapter 3 Part 1, a thick
phenomenological description of an actual classroom situation is provided as a means of
grounding and guiding the subsequent discussion.

Finally, in the last part of Chapter 3, Dewey’s aesthetic theory as “the capstone of
his entire philosophy” (Zeltner, 1975, p. 3) is presented. The focus here, however, is not
on the traditional treatment of the fine arts. The reader will not find any discussion on the
elements of aesthetics ordinarily understood, such as expression, emotion, rhythm, form,
substance, etc. Although the main chapters of Art as Experience appear to be focused on
the fine arts, for Dewey, this seminal work is the culmination of his general philosophy.

Art as Experience

presents an analysis of aesthetic experience within the context of our ordinary life experience. Dewey draws forth an aesthetic interpretation for experiences of
immediately enjoyed possession. In other words, our ordinary daily lives are filled
with aesthetic, or potentially aesthetic, experiences, and Dewey not only points
them out but analyzes the circumstances and meaning of their occurrence. Hence,
one need not interact with the fine arts for such experiences to occur, indeed they
occur there, but not solely there. (Zeltner, 1975, p. 3)
In other words, Dewey’s aesthetics is not merely a theory of art that exclusively deals with the meaning of, say, Picasso’s Guernica, Michelangelo’s David, Woody Allen’s Manhattan, Dostoevsky’s Notes from Underground, Rachmaninov’s Piano Concerto No. 3, and so forth. Dewey’s concern and all his efforts are geared towards “recovering the continuity [italics added] of esthetic experience with normal processes of living” (Art as Experience, LW10: 17). The broader context of aesthetic experience is meant to emphasize that “aesthetic experience could very well be a function of any normal experience when properly structured” (Zeltner, 1975, p. 5). Any normal experience includes any normal teaching and classroom experience as well. This dissertation explores the aesthetic potential—what Dewey calls the “consummatory”—of teaching experience in a classroom. It is not primarily concerned about teaching art or the role of art education in K-12 schooling, for instance. Although these are relevant topics, the focus is on the broader understanding of aesthetic quality of any experience including teaching and learning experiences.

Chapter 4, the core of this study, then undertakes the task of relating the esoteric discussion of consummatory experience to the everyday experience of teaching in a classroom. This is no easy task. The main thrust of the argument is that true education (educative classroom experience) is made possible only if teaching is experienced in a consummatory way. The reason it is not painless to establish the link between educative experience on the one hand and consummatory experience on the other is that, as is hopefully established by now, experience is not an object of cognition. It is not possible to demarcate the boundaries of educative experience from consummatory experience. The two interpenetrate each other. They mutually constitute each other for experience is a
matter of meaning, which is a field process unfolding temporally in a situation. Only a dialectical understanding of this process provides insights into how it works. As Paulo Freire (1998) aptly puts it, “whoever teaches learns in the act of teaching, and whoever learns teaches in the act of learning” (p. 31). Teaching and learning are not separate things neatly demarcated by boundaries. They interpenetrate. The act of teaching is already contaminated by learning, if you will. That is, teaching is not something that only teachers do; learning is not something that only learners do. Rather, both teachers and learners teach and learn. Realization of this is consummatory.

Therefore, understanding the dialectical relationship between being and becoming a teacher, that is, the dialectics between learning to teach and teaching to learn, is crucial. For this dialectical relationship engenders growth in the individual, which is, in the American Bildung tradition, the telos of Bildung. Growth, in this context, is not mere growth. Growth is growing into an experience of unity, which is an experience of consummation.

In Chapter 3, the temporal character of experience was articulated in a universal fashion. In Chapter 4, we particularly focus on the temporal character of teaching. In this, the influential work of Wolff-Michael Roth (2002) guides us. I cannot think of a better way to illustrate the temporal character of teaching than his lucid discussion of the theory-praxis gap (and the priority of practice over theory) in relation to the concepts of chronological and phenomenological time. Inspired by this account of the temporal character of teaching, I then turn to the classroom situation thickly described in the first part of Chapter 3 in order to exemplify the differences between the two modes of time and how they relate to each other. This I do by giving a phenomenological description of
the basic motif (the cognitive picture or cognitive schema) I entertain in my mind’s eye that helps organize the educational foundations course I teach. Contrasting my big picture with that of another professor who happens to teach exactly the same course using exactly the same materials at exactly the same institution is designed to bring out the limitations of the positivistically-oriented approaches to curriculum building, which privilege the mode of chronological time over the mode of phenomenological (lived) time.

It is worth pointing out here that the content of the big picture I have in mind, viz. the chief concepts of “self-directed learning” and “modernity,” is intimately connected with the idea of Bildung, which essentially underlies the entire tenor of this study. It should come as no surprise then that the content of the subject-matter I teach in my class and the way I conduct it and the context of the argument of this dissertation, which is discussed in Chapter 2, parallel each other. This is not a mere coincidence. As a matter of fact, it is the outcome of an effort on my part to practice what I preach. The way I interweave my actual teaching practice with the articulation of it in this dissertation is itself an instance of the consummatory experience I am at pains to elaborate. The impulse for the theoretical discussion in this study emerges from the actual conditions of teaching and intends to go back to that praxis informing it in novel ways. The very non-coincidence that obtains between my actual practice and my theoretical understanding of it provides a fertile ground to plumb the depths of this whole experience.

This brings us to the idea of non-coincidences, which is taken up in the next section in Chapter 4, in which the relationship between the phenomenological mode of time and non-coincidences is analyzed. The distinguishing characteristic of the
phenomenological mode of time is related to the experience of time as a dramatic tensive duration. In the chronological mode of time, this dramatic tensive duration collapses into a Now point without a beginning and an end, and turns into a flat mechanical presence. It is argued that only in phenomenological time is consummatory experience made possible for consummatory experience requires a temporal unfolding of events that is experienced in a tensive dramatic unity. The dramatic movement experienced is made possible thanks to the various levels of non-coincidences that compose the field of possibilities in a given situation. Consummatory experience to the extent that it is consummatory always moves towards its possibilities. Possibility as a philosophical category as opposed to actuality emerges triumphant from this analysis.

In order to bring the message home, two concrete examples are provided next. First, a brief analysis of the way a reputable K-12 life science textbook is structured is carried out to demonstrate how the chronological mode of time works to eliminate ambiguity and uncertainty by attempting to exhaust all possibilities of action on behalf of those who are supposed to teach. The analysis of the inappropriateness of using textbooks is then supplemented by a discussion of why I use books rather than textbooks in my own teaching. This analysis is contrasted with a narrative account of the experience of a fourth grade science teacher who is open to the free play of possibilities. In the textbook analysis, it is pointed out that the positivistic over-eagerness to try to control every conceivable aspect of teaching and learning is not favorable to cultivate non-coincidences that lead to consummatory experience. In the second example, another narrative account of a teacher is presented. The story of a literacy teacher whose transformative experience with a young child is interpreted to be “an experience.” Her intimate account of the
pivotal first-year teaching experience with a young child and subsequent interpretations of it at three different times throughout the author’s career is analyzed to reveal the components of consummatory experience.

In the final chapter, the implications of consummatory experience for teacher education programs are discussed in two parts. Principally it is argued that any robust teacher education program functions on the basis of a unifying vision of what good teaching means. It is then pointed out that Deweyan consummatory experience provides such a clear unifying vision of what good teaching is all about. According to Deweyan consummatory experience, learning to teach has to be a unified experience to be meaningful, that is, practice (clinical work) and theory (coursework) have to be tightly interwoven. In the first part, the focus is on the clinical work. It is affirmed that essentially in order to become a teacher one has to be a teacher. Moreover, in order to become an outstanding teacher whose joy of teaching is contagious—that is, whose experience of teaching is consummatory—one has to work with such a teacher from the very start. The implication of this principle suggests that the clinical work has to precede and ground the coursework, which ought to be guided by the experience gained through the clinical work. The priority of the clinical work over the coursework necessitates that the framework for the curriculum of teacher education programs should be flexible enough to focus on the individual growth of teacher education practitioners. In the second part, the focus shifts to the coursework that fosters in the best possible way the self-development of individual teachers. It is urged that a strong and unified liberal arts and sciences curriculum that embodies the principle of Bildung as self-cultivation should
constitute the core of coursework that would encourage the individual growth of teacher education practitioners.
CHAPTER 2
THE CONTEXT

Part 2.1 Positivistic Ethos and the American Bildung Tradition

When asked to self-evaluate their progress in my “Social Foundations of American Public Education” class7 as well as throughout the semester as a whole, one of my perceptive students has expressed his disillusionment and dissatisfaction with his freshman year at a mid-western research university in the following way:

In my most redundant course (Biology 155) this year, my professor spent most of her time lecturing from a brief outline of the course she required everyone to purchase. Also, she required everyone to buy a “clicker” (a remote control) so she could take attendance. Taking attendance reminded me of when I was in high school. After a week of her monotone [sic] lectures, I decided to use the class as a study hall for differential equations [a subject he feels passionately about]. The only thing I learned from her class was always study for the final a week before then forget everything the next day. I am somewhat disappointed in myself for putting little to no effort into this course, but my frustration in my professor’s style of teaching got in my way with trying to make the best out of the situation.

As someone working in the area of educational foundations and whose mind and heart are devoted to the recovery and rejuvenation of the field, to see young people entering college with youthful hopes and excitement getting frustrated as they go through a deadening experience of sitting in classes where, instead of an invitation to “join in the rich conversation about human becoming [italics added]” (Higgins, 1998, p. 2), they receive, or rather spoon-fed, an education increasingly defined in terms of “efficiency,
quality control, measurable outcomes, standards, excellence, and professionalism”
(Granger, 2003, p. 146) is, to say the least, disheartening.

Yet it is not surprising considering the fact that learning is still being defined almost exclusively as “change in behavior”\(^8\) by a considerable number of tenured education professors in the U.S. who teach instructional methods, educational psychology, adult education, and similar topics within the repeatedly and definitively challenged but still pervasively appealing framework of what Granger (2003) calls “the positivistic ethos.” Unfortunately, the attempts to salvage the concept of behavior as an all-inclusive notion—as it is employed in research in the human sciences in the States—by incorporating the research findings on multiple-intelligences and emotional quotient, etc., that is, by analyzing “behavior” into its cognitive, affective, and psychomotor forms and calling cognitive behavior “knowing behavior,” affective behavior “feeling behavior,” and psychomotor behavior “doing behavior” are symptomatic of the limitations of the positivistic ethos.

Granger (2003) identifies the positivistic ethos as the culprit behind, for instance, the current standards movement which, according to him and his Philosophy of Education Society colleagues,

promotes an intellectually and socially impoverished “one-size-fits-all” form of education that confuses equality with sameness; leads almost invariably to passivity-inducing behaviorist pedagogies that neither engage genuine student interest nor foster life-long learning; puts excessive pressure on students to perform in certain narrowly defined contexts; exacerbates socioeconomic and other inequalities, while serving primarily moneyed interests and numerous allied
technocratic agencies; is demeaning of teachers, yet simultaneously places responsibility for “fixing” our schools squarely on their shoulders. (p. 146)

Be it the current standards movement, or the freshmen disenchanted with the education they are exposed to, or the reduction of the meaning of learning to “change in behavior,” what I am basically trying to point out is that, to my amazement, the positivistic ethos still holds sway unabated and is persistently attractive in education and educational research. But how and, even more importantly, why? That is, how on earth the positivistic models of inquiry still dominate the way research is carried out in schools of education and hence the way practice is shaped in schools by the latter? To come to grips with this mystery and to open up some room for a discussion of an alternative framework, that is, the American Bildung tradition epitomized in the mature works of John Dewey, let us first spell out what positivism entails and subsequently discuss why it is still persistent. Following the discussion of positivism, we will turn our attention to the life-affirming tradition of “philosophy as Bildung” and its foremost representative in the U.S., John Dewey.

Positivism, according to Granger’s (2003) assessment of Stanley Cavell’s idea of skepticism, is an expression of the skeptical impulse in the modern era for “the positivist essentially concedes ‘the correctness of almost everything the skeptic says’—for example, that we do not know anything about other people except their observable behavior (hence the positivistic underpinnings of behaviorism)” (p. 149). The impulse to skepticism, furthermore, originates in an attitude where we “turn away from or deny the uncertainty and disappointment that often attends our everyday affairs (Granger, 2003, p. 149). For Cavell, skepticism and positivism—the quest for certainty as John Dewey
would like to phrase—“are really two sides of the same coin” (Granger, 2003, p. 148) and “each embodies a desire to live beyond or transcend the natural parameters, the limits and liabilities, of the human condition” (Granger, 2003, p. 148).

In Cavell’s view of skepticism, “the primacy of the ordinary human world, the full-lived situation of the everyday” (Granger, 2003, p. 149) is rejected. For the withdrawal from the everyday is a result of a constant dissatisfaction with the ordinary way of being in the world—the felt uneasiness with its finitude, temporality, impermanence, and uncertainty—and therefore results in a fundamental mistrust of and uneasiness with everyday affairs, which tend to be rather chaotic, disarrayed and messy at times. This nagging mistrust leads in its turn to a situation where a demand for “a purportedly value-free God’s Eye View” (Granger, 2003, p. 149) is created. For only such a view—whereby the so-called “objectivity” that is deemed possible by a value-free spectator posture on the world is attained—can provide a satisfying, that is, secure and certain, relationship with the world. Fulfilling such a demand requires the establishment of a rigorous science of positivism, which “holds out the promise of a scientifically validated certainty” (Granger, 2003, p. 147). It is this positivistic ethos that maintains that science alone [positivistic science that is], can be trusted to provide us with knowledge about the world, and that what is truly real is solely a function of the known or knowable. Whatever questions cannot be answered by scientific (or rational versus creative) means must be left permanently unanswered. Moreover, this positivistic knowledge ultimately consists in certain discrete facts or atomistic truths, things that can be readily observed, measured, and quantified. In educational terms, that translates into precisely the kind of reforms we are
seeing today. We are led to believe that we can have certainty where education is concerned—happily, it can be ascertained by the concise tables found in our local newspapers—if teachers and schools would only teach, test, and make themselves accountable for a prescribed body of “official” knowledge. (p. 147)

The tendency to make the objects of the world fully, that is, positively and singularly—without remainder—present to our consciousness is understandable given the aleatory and manifold nature of our world and the human condition within it. We seek to attain certainty, a positive certainty, a firm hold on reality, to defy the capricious, fluid, inconstant, temperamental, unpredictable and multifarious nature of our short, brutal, nasty and topsy-turvy existence! We attempt to tame the intractable phenomena of the experienced world by eliminating the infinitely confounding contexts that constitute our everyday world. We progressively decontextualize our world to make it less confounding and more certain and singular; that is, we rid our world of its everydayness in its irreducible multiplicity.

It is only human to attempt to have some hold on reality, to seek some stability within the precariousness of existence, to long for some peaceful certainty. The trouble is not with this need. The trouble begins when this need for a degree of stability is blown out of all proportion and becomes an obsession by turning into an aggressive pursuit for an unchanging a priori realm of Truth, which, it is claimed, precedes and underlies the experience of everyday manifoldness. When the everyday need for some degree of stability turns into the positivist’s obsession, the result is disastrous for the obsession becomes destructive. It disfigures objects and people by attempting to rid them of the contexts of their existence. It becomes a form of violence against the richness of our
everyday human lifeworld by subjecting the inherent multiplicity of the human condition to a singularity that purportedly pre-exists any multiplicity.

Nowhere is a positivist attitude gone awry—that is, an attitude that seeks to flee the everyday world and rejects being embedded within its richly textured multiplicity, an attitude that disconnects itself from its own origins in the everyday world—more evident than in the case of a positivist schooling environment: a rather sterile constrained and dull atmosphere where anonymous students are huddled together and kept far removed from the vibrant and multi-colored phenomena of everyday life. A positivist schooling environment is a barren landscape where “the inherently uncertain process of teaching and learning, of interacting with concrete human beings” (Granger, 2003, p. 151) is largely replaced with “carefully controlled artificial conditions” (Granger, 2003, p. 151) where “individual [non-cooperative] learning, discrete facts, standards, high-stakes paper-and-pencil tests, and other paraphernalia of positivism hold sway” (Granger, 2003, p. 151).

I would like to maintain that, notwithstanding its own claims to the contrary, the way “the positivistic ethos” has handled the inherent uncertainty in the human condition has proved to be devastating for human growth and vitality, which essentially spring from and always return to the richly textured depths of everyday human existence. The positivistic ethos has failed “to be more attentive to the diverse elements of the everyday human lifeworld, to the claims they make on us, and to our endless capacity to receive and acknowledge them without guarantees of certainty” (Granger, 2003, p. 152). As the positivistic ethos has recoiled from the everyday, it has surrendered the opportunities for growth and learning the everyday human lifeworld offers (Granger, 2003, p. 152).
Positivism, as a failure to attend more fully to the possibilities of the everyday human lifeworld—skeptical of the value of its confounding vagueness—needs to be overcome by a non-skeptical attitude that necessitates that we relinquish the idea that our primary relation to the world is one of knowing or not knowing. The world’s contingent presentness to us, the way it is disclosed to us, is not principally a knowledge affair. Rather, it is a function of those immediate meanings that emerge from our shared forms of life and the intrinsic significance that people and things come to possess over time through the part they play in various life activities [italics added]. This suggests that we must begin to talk and think more of education as the quest for meaning—and diverse kinds of meaning—and less as simply the quest for knowledge or truth. (Granger, 2003, p. 152)

A non-skeptical attitude first and foremost affirms an attitude of trust regarding everything the everyday human lifeworld entails. This trust, however, is not a naive, blind, and passive acquiescence to the taken-for-granted claims about the world. Rather, it is the trust in our own ability to be actively involved with the things and the people around us. It is an attitude constituted, informed, and pervaded by what is traditionally called phronēsis. In short, it is the trust in our own ability to be concerned for the welfare of the things and the people around us. It is the trust in our own ability to rely on the value of the firsthand personal experience of particular persons and things in their own unique contexts. It is an attitude of “receiving and responding to the rightful claims the world and others make upon us” (Granger, 2003, p. 152).
A non-skeptical attitude thinks of education as a quest for attaining deeper and deeper meaning in, of, and for life. For we fundamentally trust our innate capacity for growth, vitality and renewal in relation to the world we inhabit. As an alternative to the positivistic conception of education in the U.S., a philosophical tradition that puts our trust in our capacity to grow at the center, the Bildung conception of philosophy, epitomizes a concerted and vigorous attempt at cultivating a non-skeptical attitude towards life. As Good (2006) persuasively argues in *A Search for Unity in Diversity*, the great American philosopher John Dewey’s mature thought provides us with an unsurpassed embodiment of the American Bildung tradition at work. According to Good (2006), as the pursuit of practical wisdom,

in the American Bildung tradition, philosophical thinking is persistent critical examination of one’s ideals, as well as the ideals of one’s society, toward the goal of exposing ways in which actual practices fall short of those ideals. The philosopher should not only labor to expose contradictions; she should also offer practical solutions and actively work to implement them. The American Bildung tradition is based upon an inherently expansive conception of philosophy because it requires its practitioners to be broadly educated, across academic disciplines, to better understand their society’s ideals, practices, and institutions. Moreover, it demands that philosophers keep one foot firmly planted in their social and historical context and one in their study. More theoretically, the American Bildung tradition rejects mechanistic, static views of reality in favor of an organic and historical model according to which individual persons and objects are interrelated within a dynamic process. (p. xx)
It is exceedingly important to elucidate some of the salient features of the American *Bildung* tradition in which Dewey was schooled to have a firm grip on the reasons why the various current reform movements in U.S. teacher education are detrimental for preparing prospective teachers. In their article “Traditions of Reform in U.S. Teacher Education,” Zeichner and Liston (1990) identify and discuss four distinct traditions of reform in twentieth century U.S. teacher education: academic, social efficiency, developmentalist, and social reconstructionist. They argue that it is important to have a clear understanding of “the historical roots of contemporary reform proposals” (p. 1) as well as their theoretical and political commitments to “help clarify some of the important differences among contemporary reform proposals that on the surface appear to be similar” (p. 2). The American *Bildung* tradition as a form of philosophical praxis in the tradition of Aristotelian *phronēsis* underlies the efforts of the developmentalist and reconstructionist reform traditions in contradistinction with the positivistic ethos that forms the basis of social efficiency movement.

Unlike the social efficiency movement as it embodies the positivistic ethos, which conceives public education as the “competence producing industry” (Prange, 2004, p. 506), the American *Bildung* tradition upholds the importance of radical individuality of the learning process. Inspired and influenced by the German tradition of the concept of *Bildung*, the American *Bildung* tradition keeps alive the vitality of the *autonomous* learning process that always takes place in the context of historically evolving cultural values as a means of fulfilling the ideal of personal perfection through growth as opposed to a process of educating that aims to eliminate “the unpredictable variability of human responses to the moral, mental and aesthetic qualities of education” (Prange, 2004, p.
Prange (2004) makes an all-important distinction between educating and learning and claims that the former has come to be dominated by what he calls “technicality—the priority of methods over aims, of organization over personal responsibility, of functional appropriateness over individual or common experience” (p. 506)—when the logic of the instrumental—that is, procedural as opposed to substantive—rationality is inappropriately extended into the sphere of education. This, however, has not completely succeeded in resolving the basic condition of the educational predicament. That is, the “point-to-point correspondence between educational input and learning output” has failed to obtain. The dream of the positivistic ethos to conceive education as technology where “what matters is measured and what cannot be measured does not matter” (Prange, 2004, p. 501) and to reduce it to a list of observable and measurable components that can be manipulated with certainty was bound to fail for educating someone is a social process, an activity that can be observed, whereas we do not see the learning process. It is invisible and it is strictly individual. There is nobody who can step in and continue in your place. Learning is like eating or dying. You do it or suffer it, but you cannot ask anybody to learn Hindi because you want to go to Poona on a tour of meditation [italics added]. . . . It is this radical individuality of the learning process that limits its objective observation and evaluation. We can measure results in terms of observation, but that represents only part of what is relevant to the learner. This is where Bildung comes in. It marks the difference between what is offered on the side of education and the receiving end of learning. It is an indication of what is indeterminate and beyond planning, monitoring and evaluating the education process as a whole
We can give marks as far as facts and the mastering of methods are concerned, yet it would be somewhat irregular, if not ridiculous, to give marks for the state of Bildung. We cannot measure the personal equation that characterises our interpretation of what we learn. This is just another way of saying that Bildung is a quality of reception rather than construction. It evolves, it is not produced by well-established methods. (Prange, 2004, pp. 507-508)

In short, Bildung is “a place for the autonomy of learning and human experience” (Prange, 2004, p. 509) untouched and untouchable by the positivistic (technicalist) encroachments. This autonomy, this radical individuality of the Bildung process, however, does not take place in a socio-cultural vacuum hermetically sealed for individuals “are not social atoms detached from social reality and contingent culture. Rather, they are always situated selves, that is, selves who try to make sense in what they do and say” (Reichenbach, 2002, p. 413). Take, for instance, one of the constitutive components of Bildung, the ideal of perfection, as it is now understood in post-modernity, or as Reichenbach (2002) calls it “an exhausted modernity” as opposed to the more optimistic grand narratives of early modernity of Western Enlightenment. According to Reichenbach (2002), notwithstanding the lofty modernist ideals of human emancipation, progress and justice in the form of juridical autonomy and personal authenticity, what characterizes our present age, late-modernity, is “the gap between the (modern) discourse of emancipation and the (modern) reality of injustice” (p. 410) and the feeling of helplessness on our part as late-modernites to do something about it. “As economic rationality [Prange’s “technicality”] continues to ‘colonialise’ (Habermas) the Lebenswelt
(life world), the old modern project of moral betterment of humankind is buried in the
graveyard of great human ideas” (Reichenbach, 2002, p. 410). Therefore, it is no longer
possible to be attached to the project of human betterment as the telos of Bildung.

In such a socio-cultural context, then, what would be the meaning and goal, that
is, telos, of Bildung? Reichenbach (2002) suggests that “from a late-modern view, processes of Bildung are perceived as processes of transformation with unknown outcomes [italics added], not as processes of perfection” (p. 411). He argues that the idea of Bildung cannot be reduced without remainder to the idea of a progressive increase in cognitive competencies defined positivistically and described in developmental terms that inevitably culminate in some highest stage—“such as the development of moral judgment, the ability to verbally express emotional understanding, or the sense of spatial orientation as well as the control of body function and physical fitness” (p. 412) [one is reminded of Gardner’s multiple intelligences]—as soon as one realizes that “the increase in cognitive competencies results in more possibilities of consciously experiencing unity and continuity as well as fragmentation, discontinuity and senselessness [italics added]” (p. 412). Higher intelligence, even if it is assumed that it can be positivistically defined and can therefore lend itself to be systematically inculcated in the young, does not automatically translate into higher forms of perfection, integration and wholeness. Something else is required and, to the positivists’ dismay, in late-modernity we do not really know what that is for it is no longer possible or even desirable to long for a Platonic objectively given world order.

In place of a positively defined Platonic order, Reichenbach (2002) offers “the metaphor of Bildung as an eternal building site” (p. 412) where “the idea of the human
being laboring at a task that will never be completed” (p. 412) is embraced. This suggests that “the process of working as well as its product can stand for Bildung” (p. 413). Referring to Dewey’s view of learning as experimental in nature, i.e., constituted with uncertainty and open-endedness, Reichenbach proposes to view “processes of Bildung as ‘experiments,’” (p. 413) where the one common feature to all experiments is that their outcome is not clear from the outset (Reichenbach, 2002, p. 413). This implies that, in late-modernity—that is, “in the age of globalisation and political suppression, of the Internet and the rhetoric of the media, of hybrid art and protesters against the World Bank taking to the streets” (Lovlie & Standish, 2002, p. 320)—it is no longer possible “to ascribe a common telos to processes of Bildung” (Reichenbach, 2002, p. 414).

For Reichenbach this is not something to be lamented for in his view the democratic form of living in late-modernity is possible precisely to the extent that the idea of democratic Bildung is defined in terms of the “idea of the impossibility to complete the process of Bildung” (Reichenbach, 2002, p. 417). In other words, “the ideals of personal autonomy (Enlightenment) and personal authenticity (romanticism)” (Reichenbach, 2003, p. 201), the ability to participate in a discourse, the ability to criticise, the ideal of perfection, the desire and longing for unity and wholeness, an intimate relationship with nature, a connection with God, expressivity, political participation, and so on cannot constitute the one and only one most true and appropriate telos of Bildung in an age where “the disconnectedness of modern ideas and modern reality” (Reichenbach, 2002, p. 419) has shattered the certainty in relation to the proper aims of Bildung.

There [Adorno] abandoned the hope that education for humanity—he used the term Bildung—could retain its normative power in our time. When educative experiences are products of the culture industry, when humanity has become a cheap political phrase, and when freedom is turned into an advertisement for Coca-Cola, then we live in the age of Halbbildung or half-culture. (p. 317)

Does such a grim assessment of our contemporary predicament leave any breathing room for the classical concept of Bildung as self-education to have any meaning and relevance? In other words, is Bildung possible at all in today’s late-modern world? My answer is emphatically in the affirmative. In my view, once what Bildung is all about is thoroughly understood, it will be realized that the classical concept of Bildung does still have a role in educational debate in the U.S. and elsewhere. To put it even more strongly, it is impossible to relinquish the possibility of Bildung once it is understood that, according to Wilhelm von Humboldt, “Bildung is about linking the self to the world in ‘the most general, most animated and most unrestrained interplay’” (Lovlie & Standish, 2002, p. 318). It is next to impossible to comprehend what von Humboldt means by “linking the self to the world” without basic insights into the discourses of German Idealism (and their neo-humanist and romantic descendants) in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. In order to fathom these insights and the profounder dimension of the notion of Bildung, we will now briefly turn first to Nordenbo’s article “Bildung and the Thinking of Bildung”
(2002), where he traces the historical origin of the word *Bildung*, and subsequently to Gadamer (2003).

Nordenbo (2002) points out that the word Bildung—related to the German verbal noun *Bild*, which means image—was first used in the mid 18th century in relation to the educational thinking of the Enlightenment. However, he indicates that “the idea implied by the word had existed as a phenomenon in education since ancient Greece” (Nordenbo, 2002, p. 342). He also remarks that the English word “formation” which seems to be a fairly common and obvious translation of *Bildung* “is a pale reflection of the German term” (Nordenbo, 2002, p. 342) and fails to convey the rich history of the term dating back to medieval mysticism.

*Bildung*, as we have already seen, refers to an image, even perhaps a model image, in agreement with which the student is to be developed. Thus, in an educational context, *Bildung* refers to an ideal ambition or telos. (Nordenbo, 2002, p. 342)

Nordenbo continues by stating that after Rousseau published his *Émile* in 1762, where he basically challenged the traditional idea of Christian upbringing delimited by the framework established by the Church according to which “upbringing consists in adapting the individual to suit the established social order and its values” (Nordenbo, 2002, p. 344), the role and purpose of the school were open to question. Two major responses emerged at this point in history: philanthropism and neo-humanism. The former sees the purpose of the school as happiness. Philanthropists’ position is “based on utility or usefulness—that is, a usefulness that helps society progress towards ‘happiness’ . . . . Their thinking develops later into educational utilitarianism—the idea
that education should serve the economy and, therefore, technology. Competence is the ideal of economics and technology, utilitarianism its moral and philosophical basis” (Nordenbo, 2002, p. 345). In other words, in educational utilitarianism, the individual serves the society and its needs and these needs are defined by and large on the basis of economic usefulness.

Educational theory has, therefore, become an *ancilla*, a serving girl or handmaiden to forces other than her own. Educational theory has become a technology, *Bildung* has given way to training, and the only measure of modern educational theory is what is known as ‘quality,’ by which is actually meant efficiency. (Nordenbo, 2002, p. 351)

In contrast, Wilhelm von Humboldt, the father of neo-humanism, as a reaction to Christianity’s dominant position regarding the meaning of schooling, proposes *Bildung* “as the harmonious development of spiritual powers and its realization through imitation of the classic Greek model” (Nordenbo, 2002, p. 345). For von Humboldt, the crux of the matter is that “*Bildung* manifests itself through an individual process of self-formation that can only succeed if external influences are not allowed to interfere with its [sic] impure material and impose demands from the outside” (Nordenbo, 2002, p. 345).

Against the one-sided emphasis on the demands of the society over the individual, which educational utilitarianism promotes, neo-humanist *Bildung* theory focuses on the individual-in-society and tries to integrate and harmonize the individual and the general. According to von Humboldt, this has already been achieved in the way of life of Classical Greece. In Greek *polis*, “*Bildung* stands for the ‘cultivation of man according to his own definition’” (Nordenbo, 2002, p. 346) rather than the needs and dictates of the society.
This, however, should not suggest that the individual is valorized at the expense of the society.

From the Greek point of view, Bildung is precisely neither private (that is, about personal or commercial usefulness), nor about public utility. The cultivation of man on his own definition (man’s Bildung) manifests itself instead as a general structure, within which the individual sphere and the public or general sphere are in harmony. Thus, thinking about Bildung undermines all attempts to limit man to specific social functions alone. (Nordenbo, 2002, p. 346)

The upshot is that the inner value that a person achieves in his life is never a private matter. It can only be done “by associating with the world in the most comprehensive, lively and freest interplay possible” (von Humboldt quoted in Nordenbo, 2002, p. 348).

In Chapter 1 of Truth and Method, where Gadamer (2003) discusses the significance of the humanist tradition for the development of the human sciences (Geisteswissenshaften) in the nineteenth century, he points out that the origin of the word Bildung lies in medieval mysticism according to which “man carries in his soul the image of God, after whom he is fashioned, and which man must cultivate in himself” (p. 11). He remarks that Bildung is not merely the properly human way of developing one’s natural talents and capacities. Rather human life derives meaning from its spiritualization. In other words, the claim is not that only man himself can endow human life with meaning. And when Wilhelm von Humboldt says “but when in our language we say Bildung, we mean something both higher and more inward, namely the disposition of mind which, from the knowledge and the feeling of the total intellectual and moral endeavor, flows
harmoniously into sensibility and character” (pp. 10-11), he basically evokes this ancient mystical tradition. As opposed to the positivist’s skeptical attitude which sees our primary relationship to the world as one of knowing or not knowing (Granger, 2003), that is, as a matter of pure cognition, von Humboldt here draws our attention to “the knowledge and the feeling of the total intellectual and moral endeavor.” In other words, our practical concrete engagement with the world as it dynamically unfolds within a particular context of shared meanings comes first and already situates us within the world before we even have a chance to be skeptical about it. So the neo-humanist perception of Bildung deeply understands the fundamental situatedness of human beings and rather than postulating a knowing consciousness separated from and anxious to secure the knowledge of an external realm, it views the self as an intentionally acting being desiring for and growing towards greater unity and wholeness.

Focusing on the inner process whereby “the unity and interpenetration of universality and individuality” (Hegel quoted in Stern, 2002, p. 19) obtains, Gadamer (2003) draws our attention to the fact that “the result of Bildung is not achieved in the manner of a technical construction, but grows out of an inner process [italics added] of formation and cultivation, and therefore constantly remains in a state of continual Bildung. . . . Like nature, Bildung has no goals outside itself” (p. 11). The goal of Bildung is rationality as this is understood in Hegelian philosophy. Gadamer (2003) accentuates the role played by Hegel in the articulation of the notion of Bildung and asserts that “in fact Hegel has worked out very astutely what Bildung is” (p. 12) and further points out that, in Bildung, Hegel saw the condition of philosophy’s existence (Gadamer, 2003).
Lovlie (1995) corroborates that, with Hegel, the German idealist idea of Bildung reaches its apotheosis.

For Hegel, the world is rational, and the goal of Bildung is to bring this rationality to consciousness. What this means for Hegel is that we can find deep intellectual and practical satisfaction in [the world]; there is nothing in reality as such that is aporetic to reason, which is truly incomprehensible, contradictory or inexplicable, and there is nothing in reality which makes it inherently at odds with our purposes and interests. As the world itself is rational in this way, once we can see that this is so, the world will thereby have shown itself to us in the right way, and we will have achieved absolute knowledge, which represents the highest form of satisfaction. (Stern, 2002, p. 12)

Associating the idea of Bildung with the notion of achieving absolute knowledge might make contemporary scholars cringe with discomfort. However, it should be borne in mind that for Hegel, and for German Idealists, “absolute knowing is not knowledge of eternal truth; it is knowledge that does not go beyond itself to posit a metaphysical foundation such as Descartes’ cogito, Kant’s noumenal realm, or Fichte’s self-positing ego” (Good, 2006, p. 8). “For the German idealists . . . the absolute meant the whole, that which is undivided or unqualified. . . . In order for such knowledge or action fully to make sense, to be fully meaningful, it has to be understood within the whole of human experience” (Good, 2006, p. 10). What all this means is that Bildung is a process of inner growth whereby we achieve the highest form of satisfaction, the most fulfilling meaning, in our relationship with the world within the whole of human experience without fragmenting it into one-sided sealed compartments.
For Hegel, the task of Bildung is therefore to overcome our estrangement from the world, that is, to be linked to the world, and not merely from outside in a mechanical-causal way but organically from within, by overcoming our inclination to think in a dualistic, that is, one-sided or oppositional way. “We believe that something is either finite or infinite, one or many, free or necessitated, human or divine, autonomous or part of a community, and so on. The difficulty is, Hegel argues, that if we take things in this way, then reason will find it hard to make sense of things, as it will then look at reality in a way that abstracts from the complex interrelation of these ‘moments,’ when in fact to see itself in the world, reason must grasp that there is no genuine dichotomy here” (Stern, 2002, p. 13). And as soon as it is realized that there is no genuine dichotomy, that the opposed terms are not independent categories but reciprocal moments in an unfolding process, we become at home in the world. Hegel calls this process “Bildung, as rising to the universal” (Gadamer, 2003, p. 12). Gadamer (2003) formulates this basic idea as follows: “to recognize one’s own in the alien, to become at home in it, is the basic movement of spirit, whose being consists only in returning to itself from what is other” (p. 14). Universal in this context is meant to suggest receptivity to the other, “keeping oneself open to what is other—to other, more universal points of view” (Gadamer, 2003, p. 17).

Good (2006) argues that “recent humanistic/historicist readings of Hegel [as opposed to the theological/metaphysical readings] suggest that Dewey’s mature thought is more accurately seen as a deeper understanding of Hegel’s most original philosophical insights” (p. xxi). In a similar vein, Lovlie and Standish (2002) point out that “anyone acquainted with John Dewey’s work will know that he was deeply inspired by Hegel in
his student days and very well read in German philosophy in general” (p. 321). Given this it is not outrageous to claim that notwithstanding the earlier Dewey scholarship’s assessment of Dewey as “a proto-positivist who sought to reduce meaning to scientific procedure” (Alexander, 1987, p. xiv)—the assumption was that Dewey’s primary interest was epistemology and logic—Dewey, influenced by Hegel, tried to “reverse a crucial hierarchy of post-Cartesian philosophy by making social and moral philosophy prior to epistemology” (Good, 2006, p. xxiv). This means that Hegel should no longer be seen as an embarrassment to Dewey. On the contrary, the German neo-humanist tradition, the Bildung model of philosophy, which Hegel very diligently worked out, constitutes the core of Dewey’s mature thought. Good (2006) goes on to say that both Dewey and Hegel rejected Cartesian mind-body dualism and like Hegel, Dewey never viewed dualisms as the technical, logical problems of philosophers; rather, he saw them as manifestations of modern man’s alienation from society, nature, and his highest ideals. For Dewey, western philosophy’s proclivity to set the mind off from the external world owed its appeal to the increasing depersonalization of the individual in large, bureaucratic organizations. His critique of mind-body dualism was fundamentally intertwined with morally laden functional distinctions between private and public, individual and society, the inward-looking professional philosopher and the more publicly focused amateur. In contrast to the isolated Cartesian self, an entity juxtaposed to its natural and social environment, Dewey consistently described the self as an integral part of its environment, enmeshed in a web of dialectical relationships within society and nature. (p. xxv)
Dewey’s account of aesthetic or “consummated experience” in his work on aesthetics, *Art as Experience*, is the most definitive repudiation of Cartesian mind-body dualism and its concomitant trappings. It is my conviction that the consummatory in Dewey’s general philosophy of human experience constitutes the *telos of Bildung*. “The longing of German idealists for re-unification of wholeness (integrity) at a post-traditional level” (Reichenbach, 2003, p. 202)—that is, in the context of modernity, where the security of tradition is gone—finds resonance in Dewey’s concept of the aesthetic as the most complete, unified, and fulfilling experience and as the potential of any experience including, especially, everyday experience. The fundamental underlying idea put forward in this dissertation is that in the context of late-modernity (or postmodernity) it is still possible to experience life in a fulfilling way without falling victim to a defeating skepticism in its positivistic or postmodern varieties. In other words, the meaning of *Bildung* is still relevant for education in late modern societies. More specifically, in our world today, where “a consensus is emerging that some kind of spiritual void exists for youth” (Kessler, 2000, p. x), it is still possible to experience teaching and learning in a consummatory way, that is, in a way when our life “becomes fulfilled in moments of intelligently heightened vitality” (Alexander, 1987, p. xix) and when “we genuinely come to inhabit the world; we dwell within the world and appropriate it in its meaning” (Alexander, 1987, p. xix).

Having established the context where we have situated the centrality of the aesthetic (the consummatory experience) to Dewey’s mature thought within the American *Bildung* tradition, which has itself been situated within the German *Bildung* tradition, and all of this against the background of the dominance of the positivistic ethos
in education (and practically in all sciences), we are now ready to move on to the second part of Chapter 2, where we will engage with a closer look at Dewey’s concept of “educative experience” in the context of his aesthetics.

**Part 2.2 Dewey’s Characterization of Educative Experience**

Guided by the overall aim of revitalizing the neo-humanist tradition in education against the unwarranted preeminence of positivism, this philosophical research is duly concerned about depicting a *way* of teaching where the teacher is fully grounded in the *art of being human*—that is, the art of being open to the temporality of the present. The primary task of this study is to argue that what I would like to call *the quality of openness to the temporality of the present*—*quality of openness*, in short—is the very heart and center of the way of teaching that is truly at home with the way Dewey conceptualizes *educative experience*. It is Dewey’s conviction that human beings must *grow* in order to become fully human.¹⁸ It is the present author’s conviction in convergence with Dewey that the process of genuine human growth (human *becoming*)—broadly speaking, educative experience, that is, *Bildung*—is to be grounded in a state of genuine human *being*, which is pervaded by the quality of openness.¹⁹ The task of this study then is to come to terms with what this state of being human means for it is this state that makes true teaching and learning possible.

Garrison (1995) remarks that we have an “overly intellectualistic and hyperrationalized²⁰ way of thinking about education,” which, he thinks, has subdued the topic of *wisdom*—that is, philosophy as *Bildung*—and in conjunction with it the discussion of the genuinely *good* within the contemporary educational conversation. The theme of wisdom is largely forgotten and is reduced to the mistaken quest in the field of
education as well as in the philosophical tradition in general for indubitable knowledge and certainty. “The impossible epistemological quest for certainty” (Garrison, 1995, p. 410) has overtaken our human desire “to live life with a profound sense of meaning and value” (Garrison, 1995, p. 417). It is this condition that compels the present project to reconsider the relationship between the quest for the good life and the quest for knowledge so as to restore the latter’s true function within the former. The project of human knowledge has once again to be located “within the wider and richer context of the project of human life” (Alexander, 1987, p. xiv).

“The search for wisdom,” Alexander (2003) asserts, “examines what it means to live a human life that exemplifies an art of existence [italics added], a life that reflects a qualitative, emotionally nuanced insight into the human condition as it exists in the world, which requires an equally extensive and sensitive awareness of the world itself” (p. 130). Despite the fact that as teachers “we all passionately desire the good for our students” (Garrison, 1995, p. 408), an education that takes seriously striving for the genuinely good is not recognized as an essential teaching competency (Garrison, 1995). Nor are teachers expected to exemplify an art of existence in their lives and classrooms. “A good education brings out the best in us by holistically unifying our character in knowledge, emotion, and action in service of desires directed toward the good—that is, those persons, things, and ideals that are deemed to be of most value” (Garrison, 1995, p. 409). Yet contemporary education deliberately evades the pursuit of education beyond knowledge and restricts the entire contemporary curriculum almost exclusively to the cognitive value of experience. The larger context of life lived with wisdom that funds
existence with reflective meaning and value is no longer deemed to be within the scope of the responsibilities of contemporary educational endeavors.

For Dewey, the concern of education is to be situated within the richly textured project of everyday human life, which is always open to possibilities beyond the actual situation. Wisdom, on Dewey’s account, is not to be identified merely with the “systematic and proved knowledge of fact and truth,” that is, it cannot simply refer to an “accomplished reality but to a desired future which our desires, when translated into articulate conviction, may help bring into existence” (“Philosophy and Democracy,” MW11: 44). In Dewey’s view, ours is a contingent, evolving, and unfinished world; therefore, it is always open to genuine novel emergent possibilities. In such a world, wisdom cannot merely be a form of knowledge, even if it is considered to be that of the eternal and absolute. Rather, wisdom is a form of desire driven by what Alexander (1993) calls “the Human Eros,” “the desire to experience the world as a fulfillment of meaning and value” (Alexander, 2003, p. 133). Alexander (2003) insists that “human beings experience the world as filled with meaning or value not primarily as the result of consciously deliberative or instrumental inquiry, but as a qualitative whole of continuous interaction [italics added] that has the promise of consummatory experience [italics added]. It is within this whole that instrumental inquiry itself takes on significance” (p. 134).

Eames (1961) in discussing the cognitive and the non-cognitive in Dewey’s theory of valuation draws attention to the fact that “the order of development in Dewey’s philosophy is from gross qualitative experience through mediation or inquiry and back to gross qualitative experience” (p. 180). In other words, the cognitive phase of experience,
which Dewey refers to as “mediation” or “inquiry,” is not a set of abstract relations of thought processes disconnected from the richly textured concrete everyday experience. It emerges out of the context of existential conditions, which are immediately felt and wholistically experienced, and it comes back to them. “Immediacy passes into mediation and again mediation comes back to immediacy” (Eames, 1961, p. 180). The instrumental phase of experience is preceded by the immediately felt qualities, which are not cut off from mediation that follows. The two phases are interconnected.

In Dewey’s view, the principle of interconnections overcomes “the problem of showing how ‘ideas’ of value, or thought-forms employed in thinking or mediation, somehow ‘agree’ with the antecedent reality of valuings that are given in experience” (Eames, 1961, p. 181). Put differently, the non-cognitive value of experience, which is immediately felt and undergone, is continuous with the cognitive value of experience. The process of “valuing” seamlessly passes into the process of “evaluation.” The two processes are continuous. What makes the qualitative immediacy of valuing non-cognitive is the fact that it can only be “pointed at” or “denoted,” as Dewey would like to say. The thinking process, thought-forms, rational discourse, etc. “cannot give one the experience of these immediate qualities; it can only intimate connections which ‘may’ lead one to the experience” (Eames, 1961, p. 182).

In Dewey’s view, in the kind of world in which we live, experience is permeated with two generic characteristics. It is at once stable and precarious. The instrumental (cognitive) phase of experience comes into being when stable things become unsettled, that is, when the qualitative wholeness/equilibrium/harmony/unity of a situation becomes problematic. “Qualitative immediacy of the things or persons prized or enjoyed becomes
disrupted” (Eames, 1961, p. 183). A situation, which is directly and immediately qualitative, turns into a problematic situation which is pervaded with “confused, obscure, conflicting, relatively disordered qualities” (Eames, 1961, p. 183). Yet, “there is nothing intellectual or cognitive in the existence of such situations, although they are the necessary condition of cognitive operations or inquiry. In themselves they are precognitive” (Dewey quoted in Eames, 1961, p. 183). The upshot of this is that the intellectual phase of experience is connected to and dependent on the existence of a disruption/problem within the directly and qualitatively felt situation that we all find ourselves in. The non-cognitive immediate and the cognitive mediate values are not discrete and separate existences. Rather, they are the phases of a temporally unfolding qualitatively experienced continuous situation.

Mathur (1966) in his analysis of the concept of “consummatory experience” in Dewey’s aesthetics, which, he believes, cannot be “properly understood without a grasp of [Dewey’s] theory of immediate experience,” (p. 225) points up “the basic rhythm of experience” (p. 226) in a way reminiscent of Eames’ understanding of the order of development of experience.

This, then, is the basic rhythm of experience: (1) immediate qualitative experience of “doing and undergoing” in specific situations, giving rise to (2) reflective experience in which the organism not only “has” the experience but understands its meaning, or perceives the relation between its “doing” and “undergoing,” and, as a result, (3) the final phase of experience, which incorporates the significance and meaning of the reflective phase and is thereby rendered more rich and deepened in its immediacy. This is an experience, or a consummatory experience.
Dewey has thus given “thought” a footing in the situational experience whose pervasive “felt” quality determines its course, leading to a finally satisfying situation. (p. 226)

In defining education as “a development within, by, and for experience” (Experience and Education, LW13: 13), what Dewey has in mind is exactly this basic rhythm of experience, from which we can never extricate ourselves. Educative experiences are the kind of fruitful and creative experiences where we find ourselves already participating within an immediately given qualitative whole. We always start with/in a situation, “an active and dynamic field of integrated participation” (Mathur, 1966, p. 225). The non-cognitive phase of experience where the pervasive quality is felt but not explicitly thematized is then transformed into a reflective, that is, thematic (cognitive) phase of experience where connections among different constituents of the prior situation are brought to the fore and explicitly engaged in order to transform a problematic and indeterminate situation to a determinate one. The unfolding of experience from its immediate embeddedness in felt quality to its thematic articulation in reflection finally culminates in a more encompassing, that is, a more deeply and richly experienced (felt) phase of experience. This process of experience is on-going and does not culminate in an extra-experiential state of mind or being. The same rhythm recurs; but it is not a mere repetition of the same.

Mathur (1966) elucidates that, for Dewey, immediate experience is situational through and through and is characterized first and foremost by a unifying pervasive quality [italics added], which is immediately “‘felt’ as the context of our transaction with objects and events” (p. 225). Situational immediate experience therefore is “neither a
passive contemplation of transtemporal essences nor something ‘happening’ somewhere in the subject’s ‘mind’ exclusively” (Mathur, 1966, p. 225). It is a dynamic temporally unfolding pervasive quality that is felt, and not an object of knowledge that is known from a safe distance. “It is a whole of parts which move through conflict and resistance. As the pervasive quality moves through tension, the organism becomes conscious of the process, perceives the relation between discriminated qualities within the initial pervasive quality till the process reaches consummation” (Mathur, 1966, p. 228). This, in Dewey’s view, characterizes educative experience. “Any experience is mis-educative,” by contrast, “that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience” (Experience and Education, LW13: 11). This implies that when the process of integration/disruption/re-integration (Robb, 2005) is not fully engaged, experience tends to degenerate into a dull routine or an aimless drift. It is not consummated. The rhythmic spiraling of the process of integration/disruption/re-integration is distorted: “the growth of further experience” is arrested.

Fully engaging the process of educative experience is possible—that is, growth is possible—when it is realized that ours is neither a world of mere change nor a world of no change (Mathur, 1966, p. 227). In a world of mere change, there would be no consummatory experience, and hence, no growth, for the movement of experience consists only of disjointed atomized moments without any interconnections obtaining among them. The individual moments do not have a chance to compose themselves into a meaningful temporally unfolding unified and directed whole. Similarly, in a world of no change, there is no movement at all, or at best, the movement turns into a “dead, mechanical, and lifeless” (Mathur, 1966, p. 227) repetition. Our world, by contrast, is one
in which experience is at once characterized by “change and order, movement and stability, contingency and regularity” (Mathur, 1966, p. 227). In such a world only does it make sense to say that experience grows, or that it is consummated, or that it has an aesthetic phase. Experience grows, namely, educative experience takes place, when “[it] gains in quality, intensity, meaning, and value as it passes from disequilibrium to equilibrium. The final phase of equilibrium after conflict and resistance is an experience which has aesthetic quality” (Mathur, 1966, p. 227).

In the kind of world we live in, that is, a world which is at once stable and precarious, educative experience is possible because

an experience has a unity that gives it its name, that meal, that storm, that rupture of friendship. The existence of this unity is constituted by a single quality that pervades the entire experience in spite of the variations of its constituent parts.

This unity is neither emotional, practical, nor intellectual, for these terms name distinctions that reflection can make within it. (Art as Experience, LW10: 44)

An experience is a unified experience. It is unified by a single moving quality as the latter “involves the thorough incorporation of the process with the final end, of the means with the consequence. Only when the relation of means (process) to the final phase of consequence is perceived is the whole experience meaningful, significant, and valuable. It is an experience” (Mathur, 1966, p. 228). In other words, experience grows, or it is educative when it is an experience, that is, when means and ends, instrumentality and finality are thoroughly incorporated (Mathur, 1966, p. 229). What Dewey suggests is that our ordinary daily experience has a potentiality of a consummatory experience for the two are structured in essentially the same way. It will be argued in the main body of this
dissertation that what I call the quality of openness to the temporality of the present is a way to transform mechanical and meaningless drudgery of everyday ordinary experience—mis-educative experience—into a consummatory genuinely educative experience.

Participating within an immediately given qualitative whole is the starting point also of Shea’s (1980) analysis of Dewey’s project of linking both art and religion with ordinary experience. For Dewey, intelligent human living, that is, a life driven by the Human Eros, is continuous with the world of nature. The immediately given qualitative whole we participate in is not an abstract process taking place in a realm cut off from the organic and biological interactions of the concrete nature. Shea (1980) underscores the importance of the principle of continuity for Dewey’s understanding of the human world of meaning. “Dewey’s opposition to discontinuities or ‘dualisms’ in the philosophical interpretation of existence is proverbial. That there is no discontinuity between the biological and organic interactions of the world of nature and the human world of meaning is both a methodological postulate and the heart of a metaphysics. The human world is the world of nature with human beings in it, the world of nature mediated” (Shea, 1980, p. 33). This mediation takes place through human activity. The world of nature becomes human through action. We find ourselves participating within an immediately given qualitative whole in which we act upon, suffer, and interact with the world of nature. This participation Dewey calls “experience” and it includes what men do and suffer, what they strive for, love, believe and endure, and also how men act and are acted upon, the ways in which they do and suffer, desire and enjoy, see, believe, imagine—in
short, processes of experiencing. (Experience and Nature, LW1: 18)

Experience for Dewey is a mediated immediacy. The world of human meaning depends on human action which “arises from and returns to direct or immediate experience, enabling, refining, directing, securing, and extending that experience” (Shea, 1980, p. 34). However, Dewey does not restrict human action (or praxis) to cognition alone, the mode of participation whereby we detach ourselves temporarily from the situation at hand and reflect back on it to gain a better grasp of it. Human action is for the sake of the enjoyment of meaning and value, which are immediately felt or had, and cognition is part of this overall movement of meaning qualitatively experienced. “Cognition in the strict Deweyan sense is an important moment in action. It is action’s servant, while action is not, strictly speaking, cognition or theory. . . . Theory is indirect action, an instrument of direct action, for the sake of action as action is for the sake of immediate experience (Shea, 1980, p. 34).

Action, as Dewey argues in Art as Experience, is art (Shea, 1980)—that is, it is the way we participate in this world creating, communicating, carrying and extending the world of meaning, which is a qualitative world. “Quality and qualities are present in, basic to, and pervasive of every experience that can be called an experience. Without them there is no human experience” (Shea, 1980, p. 35), hence, no human world. Shea (1980) defines quality as “an existential [italics added] condition for any natural occurrence or event” (p. 37) and locates it in relation to a situation, which is “the context of any speaking which context is not itself spoken about, or the matrix within which distinctions are being made but which is not itself reflectively distinguished” (p. 36). He then goes on to describe quality as “the unifying [italics added] factor of the situation, no
more visible or attended to than is the situation itself except when one has moved on, and looks back, and reflects. Quality is what renders a situation or experience exactly the one it is and none other” (p. 36). Put differently, quality is initially and for the most part pre-reflective. It is directly suffered, undergone, felt, or enjoyed. It is not an object of knowledge to be apprehended. Dewey elaborates in the following way:

Empirically, the existence of objects of direct grasp, possession, use and enjoyment cannot be denied. Empirically, things are poignant, tragic, beautiful, humorous, settled, disturbed, comfortable, annoying, barren, harsh, consoling, splendid, fearful; are such immediately and in their own right and behalf. If we take advantage of the word esthetic in a wider sense than that of application to the beautiful and ugly, esthetic quality, immediate, final or self-enclosed, indubitably characterizes natural situations as they empirically occur. (*Experience and Nature*, LW1: 82)

This suggests that before any explicit thinking about the quality of a given situation takes place, it is already directly received. We find ourselves in a situation already pervaded by immediately felt quality, such as “poignant, tragic, beautiful, humorous, settled, disturbed, comfortable,” and so forth, and in this sense all human experience can be said to have an aesthetic dimension.

McClelland (2005) in conjunction with Alexander (1987) and Shusterman (1992) claims that it is as important to properly understand Dewey’s writings on art and aesthetics to have a deeper and more comprehensive synthesizing of his *reconstruction* of experience in light of the American *Bildung* tradition as it is essential to grasp Dewey’s theory of immediate experience—or what Dewey alternately calls “primary
experience”—to penetrate his aesthetics. It is not an overstatement then to claim that his writings on art and aesthetics, written later in his career, constitute a consummation of his entire philosophical project. It can be argued that his elucidation of the aesthetic dimension of experience and pointing up its connection with the “sociocultural and the sociotemporal” (McClelland, 2005, p. 45) has from the very beginning informed the major themes of his oeuvre, most notably his novel understanding of the concept of “experience.” It is unfortunate that in educational research this consummation has not been fully appreciated. It is therefore the task of this dissertation to bring out the implications of “the consummated Dewey” in relation to teaching and teacher education programs (see Part 2.3, the Research Questions, for more on this).

It is also to be noted that Dewey’s deliberate use of plain English can be extremely deceptive and misleading. Words such as “experience,” “situation,” “quality,” “immediate,” and the like that are fundamental to the understanding of his philosophical project should not be taken in their established meanings, both in popular and philosophical senses for Dewey’s conscious adoption of these terms has a different purpose (Alexander, 1987). Dewey has never been an armchair or an ivory tower thinker. He was a very well-known public figure, a prolific writer, a political activist, and above all an educator and a staunch advocate of democracy (Khoobyar, 1973). “Dewey wanted his thought to reach and affect a widespread audience rather than merely an academic few who were the ‘elect.’ Dewey wanted his philosophy to transform the culture itself, and so he attempted to co-opt its language” (Alexander, 1987, p. xiii). He wanted to communicate “the aesthetic possibilities of an ameliorative stance to the day-to-day problems we face” (McClelland, 2005, p. 45) by having us understand that “experience’s
embodied movement in time [italics added] constitutes us as the shapers of our world, and that our world is a canvas of unlimited possibility” (McClelland, 2005, p. 45).

Understanding the “aesthetic possibilities of experience’s embodied movement in time” in relation to teaching and teacher education then defines the central task of this dissertation. But why trouble ourselves by engaging with such an exasperating turn of phrase in the first place? In other words, how are we supposed to respond to the objection that tormenting over the “aesthetic possibilities of experience’s embodied movement in time” is “inherently impractical, and thereby antithetical to preparation for a practice” (Higgins, 1998), which is teacher education. After identifying philosophy “as a love of open questions” and education as “an ongoing conversation at the intersection of three interrelated, humanistic [italics added] questions (what is the human condition?; what constitutes human flourishing?; and, what facilitates human development?),” Higgins (1998) goes on to address the issue of the marginalization of the philosophy of education and other foundational disciplines in professional schools of education. He locates the tendency to see the contribution of foundational disciplines—liberal-humanistic inquiry—to teacher preparation as dubious at best in “the superstition [italics added] described by Dewey over eighty years ago” (Higgins, 1998, p. 3).

If we had less compromise and resulting confusion, if we analyzed more carefully the respective meanings of culture and utility, we might find it easier to construct a course of study which should be useful and liberal at the same time [italics added]. Only superstition makes us believe that the two are necessarily hostile so that a subject is illiberal because it is useful and cultural because it is useless. (Democracy and Education, MW9: 267)
Is it possible to construct a course of study for teachers-to-be which is at once useful, namely, full of practical pedagogical techniques, and liberal, viz., one that encourages prospective teachers to engage with questions of human meaning and becoming in an ongoing open-ended conversation? For Dewey, this is an absurd question, or it is absurd to ask such a question for, in his view, it is impossible to dichotomize culture and utility despite the fact that this is exactly what is being done in professional schools of education, where “a continuing liberal education of the person who teaches” is deemed to be “irrelevant to the preparation of a proficient educational practitioner” (Higgins, 1998, p. 3). Higgins (1998) describes this situation as a piece of ideology:

We live within a world of thought in which the liberal and the professional, the cultural and the practical, are constructed in certain ways and opposed to one another, but what makes this an ideological construction is that its constructedness, history, and contingency are all obscured. It is an effect of ideology that it seems “obviously” oxymoronic to speak of a liberal vocational education. (p. 4)

To counterbalance this defunct ideology, Higgins (1998) undertakes to reconstruct the Aristotelian *phronēsis*, practical wisdom, in the context of educational philosophy where the latter “aims to transform teachers into philosophical inquirers of their own practice” (p. 6). He argues that “practically wise teachers stand to be more critical of their unexamined assumptions, and to establish, in their practice, a positive reciprocity between their own self-development and their efforts to foster development in others” (pp. 6-7). It is my conviction that what Higgins is trying to achieve is possible to the extent that “aesthetic possibilities of experience’s embodied movement in time” is
engaged within a mode of comportment pervaded by the quality of openness to the temporality of the present.

In striving to understand Dewey’s vision of the good life—his sense of what sort of a life is worth living and educating for, what it would mean to live a good, full, meaningful life—Higgins (1998) realizes that, contrary to some who “draw the conclusion that Dewey is interested in change, but that he is not willing to commit to what people ought to change into” (p. 178), for Dewey, “the capacity for further growth” is an end in itself and that educational processes do aim at it. Dewey says in *Democracy and Education* (MW9: 59), “we have laid it down that the educative process is a continuous process of growth, having as its aim at every stage of growth an added capacity of growth.” This is how Dewey formulates the idea that “Bildung has no goals outside itself” (Gadamer, 2003, p. 11). Higgins (1998) advises those who get exasperated by this seemingly tautological explication of the aims of education to focus on what Dewey denounces in describing mis-educative experiences in *Experience and Education*—the states of human non-flourishing: “callousness, insensitivity, unresponsiveness, predictability. Here and elsewhere, Dewey describes a dystopia of narrow and mechanically efficient sleepwalkers who are not only stuck in a rut, but are unaware of it, since their calloused insensitivity makes them unable to respond to grooves other than the one they’re stuck in” (Higgins, 1998, p. 180).

The antidote for such numbness and paralysis, the “anaesthetic,” Higgins (1998) further argues, is to be found in Dewey’s aesthetics. “It is in Dewey’s aesthetics that we find that the enemy of the full life is banality and the taken for granted. It is the ‘crust of conventionalized and routine consciousness’ that prevent us from seeing that things could
be otherwise, that our own limitations are not permanent features of our selves” (Higgins, 1998, p. 180). Dewey’s idea of “capacity for further growth” has therefore a telos. Only “a being wholly united with his environment and therefore fully alive” (Art as Experience, LW10) is capable of overcoming mis-educative experiences. The dynamically unfolding state of being wholly united with one’s “sociocultural and the sociotemporal” (McClelland, 2005, p. 45) environment constitutes an aesthetic ideal—an ideal of consummatory fulfillment—and can only be achieved when one is fully alive, that is, when organism-environment/self-world transactions are pervaded by the quality of openness to the temporality of the present. In other words, being open to the present is the condition of being complete, which, incidentally, does not mean being closed. Consummation does not point to a finality. Only a situation pervaded by the quality of openness to the temporality of the present can be wholly unified and consummatorily fulfilled. A full and complete life—a consummated life—is not a finished and closed life. Rather, it is a life which is in tune with its own unfolding in time. Dewey’s aesthetics presents

*a theory of time and experience and an ethical ideal* [italics added]. For Dewey, human flourishing means living fully and the key to this fullness lies in what Greene calls “wide-awakeness.” The opposite of apathy, boredom, and routinized consciousness is a life spent in the present moment and in close contact with one's surroundings, awakened by the quickening of possibilities. To achieve such a state, one must constantly fight against the forces that would deaden our senses, distance us from sensitivities, and distort our emotional life into a few banal sentiments. For Dewey, to be fully alive is to be wide awake, perceptually and
morally, and to constantly form and express an evolving self through engagement with ever new projects. (Higgins, 1998, p. 181)

Understanding what makes experience educative and what prevents it from degenerating into mis-educative experience requires an intimate engagement with two aspects of experience as Dewey reconstructs it: its *temporality*, and *possibility* as the primary “category for describing the matrix of human experience” (Robb, 2005, p. 3) for “a human being is always more and other than its current actualization. Human being is not merely alive, but is always and ineluctably oriented toward the possibilities of its life” (Robb, 2005, p. 14). In other words, human being is not a fixed entity comprised of already crytallized habits. Rather, it is openness to possibilities.

Maxine Greene (1994), after retracing “some of the roads and byroads of epistemology’s history in the Western world” (p. 427)—from Plato through Descartes, Locke, Kant, Hegel, and Kierkegaard to Marx—in her review of “recent” approaches to knowledge and, by extension, to research in education, situates Dewey’s project of a reconstruction of philosophy as anticipating the “contemporary approaches to knowing”—by which she refers to standpoint feminisms (Harding and Spivak), phenomenology (Schutz, Merleau-Ponty), hermeneutics (Gadamer, Rorty), critical theory (Habermas, Freire), deconstructionism (Derrida, Foucault), and postmodernism (Lyotard)—as they are “to be found in [his] transactionalism, his refusal of dualisms, and his orientation to lived experience and the actualities of life” (pp. 433-434). Dewey’s immersion in the Hegelian dialectic and later on his contact with Darwin suggested to him “a vision of complex, dynamic transactions between an active organism and the environment” (Greene, 1994, p. 433). Dewey’s sensitivity to the concrete, active,
dynamically unfolding transactional nature of experience as it is lived, the total “lived context” (“The New Psychology,” EW 1: 59-60), led him to situate the knowing activity within the richness, wholeness, and primacy of experience. His rejection of the “frequent tendency in thinkers to abstract a phase, idea or element from its total ‘lived context’ where it operated as a functional part, and posit these constituents as prior in some epistemological or metaphysical sense” (Alexander, 1987, p. 23) was meant to articulate a vision of a reconstruction of philosophy as “a guide to enlightened praxis [italics added], perhaps specifically educational praxis appropriate for a democracy in the making” (Greene, 1994, p. 433).

As Greene (1994) points out, Dewey understood mind, or the knowing subject, to be continuous with the natural world and the life of the body (p. 434). He was in touch with the notion of contingency as well as the significance of contextualization when he said that “theories which assume that the knowing subject, that mind or consciousness, have an inherent capacity to disclose reality, a capacity operating apart from any overt interactions of the organism with surrounding conditions [italics added] are invitations to general philosophical doubt” (Dewey quoted in Greene, 1994, p. 434). For Dewey, mind is a mode of action situated within a lived context and cannot be understood in isolation from persons and things because it is

primarily a verb [italics added]. It denotes all the ways in which we deal consciously and expressly with the situations in which we find ourselves.

Unfortunately, an influential manner of thinking has changed modes of action into an underlying substance that performs the activities in question. It has created mind as an independent entity which attends, purposes, cares, notices, and
remembers. This change of ways of responding to the environment from which actions proceed is unfortunate, because it removes mind from necessary connection with the objects and events, past, present, and future, of the environment with which responsive activities are inherently connected. (Art as Experience, LW10: 268-269)

According to Greene (1994), seeing mind as “wholly active, wholly involved, wholly embedded” (p. 436) connected and continuous with its surroundings points to a different mode of knowing which has the potential of “arousing persons to what Alfred Schutz called ‘wide-awakeness,’ defined as ‘a plane of consciousness of highest tension originating in an attitude of full attention to life and its requirements’ (Greene, 1977, p. 284). Concerned with the present condition of our advanced industrial society marked by “a sense of the anaesthetic character of so many institutions in our culture, including schools” (Greene, 1977, p. 284), Greene strives to focus on “ways of moving young people to self-reflectiveness and critical awareness” (Greene, 1977, p. 283), that is, to Bildung, and reconstruct curriculum as “a means of providing opportunities for the seizing of a range of meanings by persons open to the world [italics added]” (Greene, 1977, p. 284). The urgency of Greene’s appeal to “an attitude of full attention to life and its requirements,” namely, “wide-awakeness,” largely derives from her observations regarding the eroding confidence in the efficacy of public schools. In her opinion, public schools have lost their ability to act as sites of education and instead have turned into places where what Paulo Freire (1972) called a “culture of silence” is transmitted.

It appears evident that feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness are increasing among the excluded and the poor; it seems equally evident that ennui, the
“boredom and vacuity” that have haunted so much of modern experience (Steiner 1971), afflicts more and more of the privileged young. I believe that these are the moods evoked by the messages of present-day society, moods which can only lead to further apathy, inaction, and despair. Largely because of the influence of technocratic or “efficiency” approaches on the schools, messages of this sort (often embedded, of course, in the “positive images” so insistently purveyed by the media) are not being articulated, confronted, or subjected to critique. (Greene, 1977, p. 285)

In order to resist the miseducative “culture of silence,” or what Arendt (1972) called the institutionalization of “benign neglect,” Greene (1977) draws attention to the uniqueness of aesthetic experience as it is articulated by later Dewey as “a challenge to many kinds of linear, positive thinking, as well as to the taken-for-grantedness of much of what is taught” (p. 285). Greene (1977) points out that “[many theorists of curriculum] have turned to the artistic-aesthetic when they have wished to enrich their conceptions of cognition by pointing to what Dewey described as felt qualitiveness” (p. 286). Greene (1977) is convinced that miseducation in the form of “culture of silence” and “benign neglect” leads to the problem of fixity: what Higgins (1998) refers to as “the states of human non-flourishing: callousness, insensitivity, unresponsiveness, predictability.”

Greene (1977) is acutely aware of the need to bring out the meaning of temporality and possibility as the two essential aspects of experience as Dewey understands it to offset the dangers of fixity. Dewey’s understanding of experience as an open-ended growth which involves the reconstruction of the past in the light of the present and the reconstruction of the present in the light of the future possibilities is
crucial to enable “people to break through the horizons of the ordinary, of the taken-for-granted, to visions of the possible, of ‘what is not’” (Greene, 1977, p. 287). The shift of attention away from the mundane in which we are initially and for the most part immersed to the possible requires “an attitude of full attention to life and its requirements.” This “wide-awake” attentiveness is situated within the ongoing embodied movement of experience in time. It is not spectatorial. Rather, it is participatory and relational.

Together with Maxine Greene’s notion of “wide-awakeness”—which she has borrowed from the social phenomenologist Alfred Schutz—Nel Noddings’ description of a caring relation comes closest to that which I endeavor to articulate in terms of the quality of openness to the temporality of the present, whereby the ongoing embodied movement of experience in time is fully attended to. Noddings (1992) describes a caring relation in terms of a “connection or encounter between two human beings—a carer and a recipient of care, or cared-for” (p. 15) where the state of consciousness of the carer is characterized by “engrossment” and motivational displacement.” What she means by engrossment is “an open, nonselective receptivity to the cared-for” (Noddings, 1992, p. 15). Citing Simone Weil as the one who has drawn attention to the way “the soul empties itself of all its own contents in order to receive into itself the being it is looking at, just as he is, in all his truth” (Weil quoted in Noddings, 1992, p. 16), Noddings describes engrossment as “a full receptivity” (1992, p. 16). The notion of full receptivity, Noddings cautions, should not be thought of as a cognitive or behavioral strategy:

When we understand that everyone wants to be cared for and that there is no recipe for caring, we see how important engrossment (or attention) is. In order to
respond as a genuine carer, one does have to empty the soul of its contents. One cannot say, “Aha! This fellow needs care. Now, let’s see—here are the seven steps I must follow.” Caring is a way of being in relation, not a set of specific behaviors [italics added]. (Noddings, 1992, p. 17)

Alongside the pioneering work carried out by Greene and Noddings, the various contributions to educational theorizing of what is regarded as critical theory and/or poststructuralist approaches are considerable and worth mentioning. It should be borne in mind, however, that this dissertation research is largely informed by as well as an expression of Deweyan pragmatism, which, as I argue, sprung from the American Bildung tradition, which, in turn, reflects the German Bildung tradition. It is quite clear that I am partial for the sort of philosophical approach that is embodied in German Idealistic tradition—the so-called German Enlightenment, or Aufklärung. This, however, should not be taken to mean that I have no sympathy towards a certain French influence in late modern Continental philosophy. I consider the likes of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard, and others (French Marxist philosophers, structuralists, poststructuralists, French feminists, and so forth) to have a certain kinship with the style of philosophy I try to make use of and embody in this dissertation. This kinship is not an accidental relationship for contemporary French philosophy (post-war French philosophy) has been very much influenced by nineteenth- and twentieth-century German thought (Hegel, Nietzsche, Husserl, and Heidegger).

In educational theory, the influence of contemporary French philosophy has been ever more visible. As Gallagher (1992) attests, “there is a growing body of educational theory that can be characterized as ‘poststructuralist’” (p. 277). For instance, in the work
of educational theorist Martusewicz (2001), it is possible to see several so-called poststructuralist themes at work that are also in many ways common to Deweyan pragmatism such as a certain distrust towards the possibility of universal theories including technical-rational, namely, positivistic, approaches to education, possibility as a primary ontological category, the so-called affirmation of life, the role of difference—as this is understood within the framework established by Derridean differânce—the openness that is immanent to life, the situational/contextual character of experience, and most significantly, the role of language in understanding social and personal experience.

In her attempt at articulating “the teaching-learning relation, that is, what happens or what gets made between teachers and learners in all kinds of different contexts,” Martusewicz (2001) probes “the factors creating the generative force inherent in pedagogy [italics added] and specific ways that this force can be kept alive or shut down” (p. 2). A strong parallel to the idea of Deweyan consummatory experience can be discerned in her conceptualization of “a potent generative force that depends on difference as its fuel” (Martusewicz, 2001, p. 2). Martusewicz (2001) focuses on this force to understand how meaning is created in the interaction between teachers and learners. As will become clearer in chapter 4, the role of what I would like to refer to—after Gallagher (1992)—as non-coincidences in composing the field of possibilities in which consummatory experience lives is in many ways similar to this idea of a generative force based on, as Derrida puts it, the play of differânce.

There are conceptual similarities between the way Martusewicz (2001) hammers out the role of generative pedagogical force in education in creating a wide range of possibilities through “the infinite operation of difference” (p. 6) and the way I
conceptualize Deweyan consummatory experience in education. More importantly, however, there is also a common moral dimension to our respective projects. For Martusewicz, this dynamic generative force is not there merely to produce random multiplicity. Rather, from the very start, she is committed to “questions regarding the welfare of self and others but also a willingness to confront and shift one’s own habits, practices, and beliefs for that purpose” (Martusewicz, 2001, p. 2). The generative force in pedagogy serves the alleviation of needless suffering brought about by totalizing and exclusionary discursive practices that limit the consideration of alternative and better approaches to dealing with reality. Similarly, consummatory experience, for Dewey, is when the world is experienced in the most heightened sense and unified way possible. Such an experience brings us face to face with the awe and joy as well as the pain and suffering constitutive of the human condition. Teachers whose experience is consummatory are also the teachers who are in tune with the perplexities of the human predicament. Therefore, they are in a better position to address those factors that stand in the way of realizing more fulfilling and meaningful human experiences.

In terms of the way educational researchers informed by the contemporary French thought such as Martusewicz and those who have been influenced by Deweyan pragmatism such as myself approach their subject-matter, that is, in terms of methodological concerns, another similarity might be discerned. Although it is by no means the standard practice in educational research, beginning with questions that arise out of one’s own life—that is, the researcher’s own lifeworld—is not I believe a mere coincidence. Addressing the relationship—always beset by tensions—between the universal and the particular is at the forefront of the methodological concerns of those
who orient themselves within the pragmatist or poststructuralist frameworks.

Martusewicz (2001), for instance, clearly asserts at the very beginning of her book that this is a book in which I try to understand myself, my own experiences as they are connected with others, with the faith that these experiences are at once singular and yet not unique to me. I begin from questions that arise out of my life, moments that connect me and are imbedded in larger cultural processes. I use these questions not as a means of universalizing my experiences but rather as a means of moving towards an analysis of a larger, more global generative force or spirit that is created among humans and between them and the larger living world. I am certain that looking closely at this generative spirit could teach us much about education. (p. 2)

Although she does not use the German term “Geist” to refer to the global generative force or spirit, the kinship between the Hegelian concept of Geist and this generative creative force is hard to miss. The American Bildung tradition is intimately bound up with the understanding of and engagement with such a force. The uniqueness, and therefore, the originality of this dissertation research lies in the fact that individual lived experience of being and becoming a teacher as the subject-matter is privileged in understanding this generative creative force that unfolds in the pedagogical transaction between teachers and their students. In line with the American Bildung tradition, Deweyan pragmatic analysis focuses on the holistic/intuitive powers of reason—Vernunft as this capacity is referred to in the German Idealist tradition as opposed to Verstand, the discursive/analytic powers of the intellect (Beiser, 2003)—which grasps the whole situation as qualitatively unified and
proceeds from the experience of the whole to the experience of the parts and back to the whole again.

As Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) point out, Dewey’s conception of “experience is the fundamental ontological category from which all inquiry—narrative or otherwise—proceeds” (p. 38). Deweyan pragmatic conception of experience utilizes Vernunft and attempts to achieve a holistic understanding of the “continuous interaction of human thought with our personal, social, and material environment” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 39) not “to generate an exclusively faithful representation of a reality independent of the knower” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 39) but to generate a new relation between a human being and her environment—her life, community, world—one that “makes possible a new way of dealing with them, and thus eventually creates a new kind of experienced objects, not more real than those which preceded but more significant, and less overwhelming and oppressive” (Dewey, The Quest for Certainty, LW4: 175). In this pragmatic view of knowledge, our representations arise from experience and must return to that experience for their validation. (p. 39)

As remarked on earlier, Dewey’s expansive conception of experience attains its ultimate expression in his notion of consummatory experience, whereby a more robust sense of reality and our agency within that reality is achieved. This dissertation focuses on such a robust sense of teaching where we try to understand the fully lived experience of the individual teacher. Such a focus is necessarily different from, for instance, the Marxist-influenced approaches to social analysis that primarily focuses on “the macrosocial material conditions of life as the primary influence on human life and thinking”
As Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) point out, critical theorists observe that large-scale social arrangements conspire not only to physically disempower individuals and groups but also to epistemically disempower people. In other words, systems of oppression in modern capitalistic societies include the means by which the sources of that oppression are obscured. (p. 47)

For Dewey, the oppressive and masking effects of macrosocial conditions were never unimportant. Indeed, throughout his life and career, as a critical intellectual and political activist, he exemplified an undeterred commitment “to build communities in which the necessary opportunities and resources are available for every individual to realize fully his or her particular capacities and powers through participation in political, social, and cultural life” (Westbrook, 1991, p. xv). Focusing on the qualities of lived experience does not exclude the possibility of analyzing the subtly concealed oppressive effects of disenfranchising macrosocial conditions and the discourses associated with them. On the contrary, an understanding of the holistic nature of experience makes it possible to critique the problematic elements within that experience. The starting point is not the critique of the oppressive effects of macrosocial conditions and the discursive and non-discursive ideologies that perpetuate them. Rather, the starting point for inquiry is a fundamental trust in the validity of the lived experience of the individual and its potential of achieving a holistic unitary experience, that is, consummatory experience.

It is worth pointing out that for all its affinities with critical theory and/or poststructuralist (or, more broadly, postmodern) approaches, Deweyan pragmatism remains a unique philosophical school of thought. It is not within the scope of this
dissertation to attempt an exhaustive comparative analysis of these schools of thought. It should therefore suffice to acknowledge the affinities between them without engaging in an exhaustive comparative analysis whereby not only the similarities but also the glaring disparities are analyzed.

*Part 2.3 The Research Questions*

In *Experience and Education*, Dewey states that we always live at the time we live and not at some other time, and only by extracting at each present time the full meaning of each present experience are we prepared for doing the same thing in the future. . . . All this means that attentive care must be devoted to the conditions which give each present experience a worthwhile meaning. (LW13: 29-30)

I would like to bring out distinctly that “*extracting* at each present time the full meaning of each present experience” is not primarily a cognitive process. Dewey, especially in his later works, argues that it is a process of *Bildung*, that is, it is an aesthetic and artistic process—a creative undertaking whereby worthwhile meanings are called into existence. The creative teacher—a teacher of *Bildung*—opens up an environment where her students’ “best possibilities” (Dewey’s way of referring to the good) can be called into existence. Calling meanings into existence requires wisdom beyond knowledge—a wisdom that includes but transcends the explicitly cognitive phase of experience for the good we teachers passionately desire for our students cannot be seen as an accomplished fact. Rather, it is a possibility of human meaning and value. In other words, “extracting” is not exclusively a cognitive process that involves establishing relationships among actualized objects of knowledge. It is not about knowing per se.
Rather, it is about attending (attuning) to the *quality* of present experience, which is always pregnant with novel possibilities and cannot be predetermined. This attunement is largely non-cognitive. Quality by virtue of its pervasiveness precedes and encompasses and situates cognition. It gives direction and purpose to the cognitive value of experience. “Attentive care” is not a matter of knowing; rather, it is a matter of *feeling*. Rather than merely concentrating on the cognitive value of experience, we ought to concentrate on the unity and wholeness of experience, which is first and foremost disclosed in quality, feeling, and as it will be argued, experience as art, experience as openness to the temporality of the present. Experience is not a matter of knowing; it is a matter of meaning. Knowing is “instrumental” to meaning. Knowing is part of feeling, and not the other way around.

Dewey’s insight into the proper relationship between “knowing” and “feeling” has unfortunately not survived his death in 1952. The theme by which he is generally known, his “instrumentalism,” has come to be treated paradigmatically and got disconnected from the way he most profoundly elucidated his understanding of experience and meaning in his later works such as *Experience and Nature* and *Art as Experience*, where he consistently made an effort to situate his theory of inquiry (instrumentalism) within the much broader concern of “experience” in its most complete, most significant, and most fulfilling mode—that is, experience as art (Alexander, 1987). By locating the problem of knowledge and experimental inquiry within the thick context of human life driven by the Human Eros, Dewey was able to recast scientific knowledge as an open-ended, artistic and creative process of learning rather than an accumulation of a body of timeless “facts” (Alexander, 1987).
The topic of wisdom in today’s conversation on education has come to be largely forgotten and at best trivialized and therefore needs to be reintroduced for it is the Human Eros by and for which education exists. The main purpose of education does not simply consist in transmitting organized “bodies of information and of skills that have been worked out in the past” (*Experience and Education*, LW13: 5) to the new generation.

This conception of education leads essentially to a static understanding of that which is taught. In our modern world where “change is the rule, not the exception” (*Experience and Education*, LW13: 7), a sense of radical meaninglessness and spiritual desiccation is increasingly felt since we are unable to orient ourselves in the flux of events. A society where ultimate reality is conceived of as fixed and where a correlative effort is made to comprehend that fixed reality as an object of knowledge no longer corresponds to the reality of the historical period we find ourselves in. An education system where “[that which is taught] is taught as a finished product, with little regard either to the ways in which it was originally built up or to changes that will surely occur in the future” (*Experience and Education*, LW13: 6-7) is no longer capable of calling into existence worthwhile meanings through the cultivation and deployment of which the Human Eros in each individual’s case is opened up and fulfilled.

The relationship between the Human Eros and education was starkly obvious from the very beginning to Dewey. “I assume that amid all uncertainties there is one permanent frame of reference: namely, the organic connection between education and personal experience” (*Experience and Education*, LW13: 11). He tirelessly points to the “intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education” (*Experience and Education*, LW13: 7). He locates the problem of education
within human experience and not as an aspect of human knowledge. For Dewey, personal experience cannot be reduced to a form of cognition, or to the cognitive phase of experience. In fact, exactly the opposite is true. The pursuit of knowledge ought to be contextualized within the larger issues of human meaning and value. Alexander (1987) remarks that “knowledge is only possible because we can respond to the world as a dramatically enacted project in which meanings and values can be won, lost, and shared” (p. xvii).

By connecting education with experience Dewey attempts to overcome the primary fallacy of Western philosophy, which he terms “the intellectualist’s fallacy” that treats all types of experience as ultimately a form of cognition (Alexander, 1987, p. xiv). Experience, on Dewey’s account, on the other hand denotes a richly textured context of life within which individuals are actively engaged with the conditions they face. Some of these conditions favor the flourishing of educative experiences, hence growth, whereas others obstruct it. For Dewey, the distinction between educative and mis-educative experiences is based on the quality of the experience which is had. Educative experiences are those “that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences” (Experience and Education, LW13: 13). In other words, any experience that is educative creates conditions for growth. Education as growth is an ever-present process; it does not culminate in a terminal point. Educative experience creates conditions for further growth. Yet it does have a telos. The telos of educative experience, as Dewey particularly exposed in his mature phase, is the aesthetic (Alexander, 1987). Aesthetic in this context denotes “the fundamental ‘impulsion’ (as Dewey calls it) of human beings to engage the world with a heightened sense of meaning and the realization of value” (Alexander, 1987,
That is, educative experience constitutes a field where “the full meaning of each present experience” is extracted at each present time. This extraction process, as has been mentioned before, is not an exclusively cognitive process. Rather, it is pervaded by what I would like to call the quality of openness to the temporality of the present. The aesthetic dimension of experience, which, for Dewey, is the primary level of experience for it is experience in its unified wholeness, is disclosed when the quality of openness is at work. Educative experience, then, is experience when the aesthetic dimension is fully engaged based on the quality of openness to the temporality of the present.

We are now in a position to formulate the main argument of this dissertation. Education, in Dewey’s view, is about wisdom as it is understood in the American Bildung tradition. Wisdom is the project of human meaning. As is customarily done, it cannot be reduced to the project of human knowledge. The project of human knowledge does only make sense when it is situated within the project of human meaning. The project of human meaning is grounded in human experience. Human experience can only be understood holistically. A holistic understanding of human experience is best revealed when the aesthetic dimension of human experience is engaged. The aesthetic dimension of human experience is pervaded by quality, which is a temporal process and cannot be reduced to a form of cognition. Attuning to quality in its temporality, and, in particular, to what I would like to term the quality of openness—attuning to the temporality of the present—is how we engage the aesthetic dimension of experience. Authentic teaching begins and ends within this mode of engagement.

In particular, the following research questions, in Chapter 4 and 5, respectively, will be addressed:
1. What does authentic teaching, that is, teaching pervaded by the quality of openness (attunement) to the temporality of the present look like?

2. What are the consequences of teaching pervaded by the quality of openness to the temporality of the present in relation to teacher education curriculum and programs?

Finally, carrying out the tasks of this dissertation is meant to underscore a more spiritual than cerebral implication that, ultimately we cannot know—that is, we cannot know the Ultimate, for human experience is finite and existence is temporal. However, we can be ultimately open. We can be ultimately open to the present. This, I take to be the meaning of Dewey’s “consummatory experience,” being open to the Human Eros. Education, and, in particular, teacher education is never merely about transmitting certain knowledge to students/teachers to be applied in real life. It is about creating conditions so that they can be ultimately open all throughout life.

Part 2.4 The Methodology

This study is a philosophical research. In its form and content it most definitely is not a positivistic endeavor. It does not employ empirical modes of inquiry such as experimental, quasi-experimental, correlational, or survey research (Lee & Yarger, 1996). Strictly speaking, it is a philosophical research which is informed by a certain mode of qualitative inquiry, commonly known as interpretivism (hermeneutics) (Schwandt, 2000). Interpretivism is based on the Verstehen tradition in the human sciences. According to Schwandt (2000),

the Geisteswissenschaftliche or Verstehen tradition in the human sciences arose in the reactions of neo-Kantian German historians and sociologists (i.e., Dilthey,
Rickert, Windleband, Simmel, Weber) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to the then-dominant [in education, still dominant] philosophy of positivism (and later, logical positivism) [behaviorism in education is an outgrowth of the latter]. At the heart of the dispute was the claim that the human sciences (Geisteswissenschaften) were fundamentally different in nature and purpose from the natural sciences (Naturwissenschaften). Defenders of interpretivism argued that the human sciences aim to understand human action. Defenders of positivism and proponents of the unity of the sciences held the view that the purpose of any science (if it is indeed to be called a science) is to offer causal explanations of social, behavioral, and physical phenomena.

(p. 191)

It is my conviction that educational sciences qualify (or ought to qualify) as human sciences understood within the framework of Geisteswissenschaften. This suggests that the sciences of pedagogy ought to approach their object of inquiry with the aim of understanding (Verstehen) rather than explanation. Understanding human action—in our case, the practice of teaching—is about understanding the meaning of that action. It is assumed in the Verstehen tradition in the human sciences that human action is inherently meaningful, that is, it is distinct from the “action” of inanimate physical objects and phenomena. Therefore, human action cannot be studied in the same way that rocks, planets, geological forces, climate patterns, and so forth are studied.

The essence of the interpretivist inquiry is based on what is called “the hermeneutic circle.” According to this method, “one must grasp the situation [the whole] in which human actions make (or acquire) meaning in order to say one has an
understanding of the particular action [the part]” (Schwandt, 2000, p. 193). The relation of part to whole and vice versa assumes an all-important role in hermeneutic/interpretivist inquiries for “the meaning of the part is only understood within the context of the whole; but the whole is never given unless through an understanding of the parts. Understanding therefore requires a circular [but not logically vicious] movement from parts to whole and from whole to parts” (Gallagher, 1992, p. 59). Blacker (1993) in his attempt to renew a dialogically-grounded humanism based on the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer explains “the hermeneutic circle” in the following way:

For Gadamer, all understanding—whether of a text or of another person—is interpretive. Briefly and roughly, what this means is that, whatever else it is and does, understanding moves in what Heidegger called a “hermeneutic circle.” This is not, however, the vicious circle reviled by formal logic, but is a precondition for any understanding whatsoever; the circle is productive of meaning. To generate meaning from a text, for example, one must always move around from whole to part and back again. The “whole” may be the language in which the text was written, the literary tradition to which it belongs, its historical period, the life circumstances of its author, and so on. This “whole,” then, provides the backdrop against which one gives significance to the “part,” e.g., the particular words comprising the text, the individual work in question or the specific period of the author’s life. A helpful analogy is with understanding an ambiguous word within a sentence. If the meaning of the word itself is not immediately obvious, one must find it in its larger context. The newly appreciated meaning of the part (the word) then alters to a degree the meaning of the whole (the sentence). One never escapes
“outside” this whole-part circuit—even the dictionary only relates words to other words.

In this study, the whole, the meaning of which we are trying to understand, is the everyday world of being a teacher and the potential of this world to be experienced in a consummatory way. Understanding how this everyday world—technically referred to as “the life-world,” or Lebenswelt in German—of teaching is constituted, a phenomenological analysis is employed. Phenomenological analysis is an interpretive tool and helps us focus on the wholistic everyday lived experience of being a teacher before such experience is theoretically thematized and generalized.

In this study, the aim is to grasp what consummatory teaching experience means. The aim is not to formulate an initial set of hypotheses regarding the causal relationships that obtain among certain variables that have been identified (isolated) and then subject it to rigorous testing, and finally either accept or refute it. The goal is not to establish causal relations among the elements that constitute consummatory teaching experience. We simply are trying to gain an understanding of the meaning of such experience. The starting point therefore is not a hypothesis to be tested but an interpretation of everyday teaching experience.

This research then is hermeneutical-phenomenological. It is hermeneutical for we already have a certain general and somewhat vague understanding of the experience in question. We are, however, interpreting (not testing) the meaning of this experience in order to grasp/understand its significance in a more refined and determinate manner. Furthermore, our interpretation of this experience takes place as we engage in that experience. In other words, unlike positivistically framed research methodologies, our
interpretation of this experience and the experience itself are not (and cannot be) separate. It is *phenomenological* for we are committed to an understanding of everyday lived experience. The research is anchored in *lived* experience. It starts with lived experience, it reflects on it, and then it goes back to it. In other words, it never leaves the domain of everyday lived experience. It aspires to enhance our understanding of the meaning of lived experience. What makes this research phenomenological is the way we gain access to this experience. We gain access to this experience through our subjective embodied engagement with this experience. The only access to our object of inquiry is through our own subjectivity.

By its very nature, the commitment to understanding the consummatory (aesthetic) dimension of experience and therefore engaging with/in the quality of openness to the temporality of the present requires the adoption of a *phenomenological* method of reflection for our subject-matter includes dimensions that are below or beyond explicit perceptual cognition. That is, explicit rational analysis in itself is not sufficient (though necessary) in accessing and illuminating a holistic understanding of human experience. An adequate disclosure of the aesthetic dimension of experience requires a more than passing familiarity with Dewey’s novel conception of “experience,” which he fully articulates in his mature phase, especially with the publication of *Experience and Nature* and *Art as Experience*.

Briefly stated, the phenomenological method of reflection is a *way* of disclosure of meaning within experience, which is temporal. It is not a form of knowing as it is understood in the epistemological tradition. It is a way to *access* and *illuminate* an aesthetic receptivity to the qualitative immediacy (with all its heterogeneity and
fullness—“the carnival of the world” (Harman, 2005)—and integrity of temporal experience. It does not seek to lay out a conceptual scheme to be either rejected or accepted. Rather, it is an engagement with a certain disposition to cultivate a certain openness and humility. It does not endeavor to prove anything; it only discloses. For Dewey, the search for distinct and explicit theoretical concepts and ideas, that is, the quest for knowledge, is always initiated within a given situation where certain experiential needs and problems are felt and had. The results attained through the process of engaging in an explicit theoretical reflection remain anchored within the obscure and vague situation which prompted that reflection in the first place. Theory, therefore, can never be separated from practice. It originates in practice and returns to practice. It does not constitute a situation-free space of pure timeless contemplation.

As will be discussed in detail in the main body of this dissertation, the pre-reflective and situational nature of experience necessitates what Dewey calls an “empirical method” which can do justice to [the] inclusive integrity of “experience.” It alone takes this integrated unity as the starting point for philosophic thought. Other methods begin with the results of a reflection that has already torn in two the subject-matter experienced and the operations and states of experiencing. The problem is then to get together again what has been sundered—which is as if the king's men started with the fragments of the egg and tried to construct the whole egg out of them. . . . To non-empirical method . . . object and subject, mind and matter (or what ever words and ideas are used) are separate and independent. Therefore it has upon its hands the problem of how it is possible to know at all; how an outer world can
affect an inner mind; how the acts of mind can reach out and lay hold of objects defined in antithesis to them. (*Experience and Nature*, LW1: 19)

Unlike traditional empiricisms (positivism, logical-positivism, post-positivism), which function on the basis of dualistic presuppositions, Dewey’s “empirical method” (his hermeneutical-phenomenological method) is committed to elucidating the non-dual holistic context of “experience.” That is, we always start and end with the whole; and in engaging with/in this whole various factors that function in the continuous unfolding of the wholistic experience are distinguished to contribute further to the meaning of the total experience. Dewey’s empirical method, which I would like to argue is a form of phenomenology, does not approach toward things on the basis of sensory perception of objects and treats them with a detached attitude merely as objects of perception or cognition. Instead, it approaches “not to things per se but to their meanings—that is, to the specific significances that things take on within specific situations” (Robb, 2005, p. 64). As will be discussed later, things matter to us because they make sense to us within holistic contexts of significance. Epistemological orientation, what Dewey ironically calls “non-empirical method,” tends to ignore the holistic context of meaning in which things are embedded and from the standpoint of a dispassionate observer who is supposed to be outside of a given situation reduces the significance of things to their cognitive value disconnected from the situation in which the cognitive value has any meaning.

The phenomenological method is not concerned about things in isolation from each other. It is a participatory approach to things in terms of their meanings. It is not about things; it is about their meanings. It is participatory in the sense that it is *us* for whom things have meaning. We are not spectators of but participants to this life because
things matter to us. Things are experienced because there is an experiencing subject. There is an experiencing subject because there are things to be experienced. The thing experienced and the experiencing itself are not separate and independent as the non-empirical dualistic epistemologies would assume. They are the poles or rather phases of a temporally unfolding holistic field of experience which implicates the thing experienced and the experiencing subject as its constitutive factors.

As was noted before, experience cannot be reduced to its cognitive value alone. It is much wider than knowledge. “The inclusive integrity of experience” incorporates the objects of direct thematic awareness as well as the tacit pre-thematic dimension of experience, which is had and not known. This felt quality of experience points to the domain of possibility, which includes but transcends the realm of actualized reality. The distinct, overt, and evident objects of actualized reality are “charged with possible consequences that are hidden” (Experience and Nature, LW1: 27). Phenomenological disclosure therefore is not only concerned about the existent meanings in a given context but more importantly it is concerned with the emergent meanings of things, that is, their possibilities. In other words, phenomenological reflection is about being open to possibility. It is not merely an effort to catalogue what already exists. Rather, it is a sensitivity to and an attitude of aesthetic reception of what is possible. Our task in this study—the commitment to understanding the aesthetic dimension of experience and therefore engaging with/in quality of openness—does not call “for the ‘application’ of a formal methodology but for the inculcation of an intuitive receptivity to the qualitative character of experiential situations” (Robb, 2005, p. 69), which unfold temporally.
Attending to “the qualitative character of experiential situations” first and foremost reveals that the range of possibility is not predetermined. The reality of things cannot be understood as fixed, unchanging and timeless, and therefore, things cannot be understood as static objects of knowledge. The upshot of this is that understanding human experience in terms of possibility requires a phenomenological method of reflection, which discloses the temporal constitution of experience.

The hermeneutical-phenomenological method of reflection—because it aims to understand the everyday lived experience as it temporally unfolds—is not so much a scientific procedure as it is a poetic engagement. Let me try to illustrate what I mean by an analogy: a positivistic methodology is going to insistently ask for a summary of a poem in order to present the result of the poem while at the same time destroying the result because the poem itself is the result (van Manen, 1990, p. 13). There is no way to summarize a poem. A poem is to be recited and listened to. It is not to be known as one knows the climate trends in western Iowa; it is to be given in. It is a singular, unique, and comprehensive (holistic) experience that gathers together all the elements (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual) involved in it. In its evocative power, the poem calls us from the mechanized, routinized, anesthetized entanglements of the taken-for-granted meanings to the fresh experience of the possibilities of the aesthetic. You cannot summarize a poem; you either are summoned by it, or it misses you. When you hear the poem, you give in to the evocative power of the experience the poem is bringing about. You release the tight grip of the controlling attitude that enforces you to analyze and classify it. You are overtaken by it. The empowering experience envelopes you; you participate in the movement.
In a similar fashion, this dissertation is *composed* to evoke a consummatory experience in the reader. It is not merely a treatise *about* consummatory experience. It exemplifies it. In its hermeneutical moments, it engages with textual interpretations of the Deweyan corpus, particularly, his later works. In its phenomenological moments, an attempt is made to understand the lived meaning of the author’s own subjective experience in teaching. Along the way, these two are integrated. The dissertation does at no point follow a linear progression. Rather, faithful to its hermeneutic orientation, it is involved within a hermeneutic circle. It constantly moves from parts to whole and from whole to parts.

The main body of this dissertation is composed of two major parts. Chapter 3 is devoted to the elucidation of “experience,” the ultimate focus of Dewey’s thinking, which he most fully elaborates in his mature works such as *Experience and Nature* and *Art as Experience*. This section accordingly endeavors to bring out the character of qualitative wholeness and immediacy of everyday experience in its temporal unfolding. What Dewey calls “consummatory experience” as a heightened state of wholeness continuous with everyday experience is discussed within the context of the temporal unfolding of everyday experience. This section concludes with a discussion of “having an experience” pervaded by the quality of openness to the temporality of the present—the most heightened state of wholeness. Finally, Chapters 4 and 5 take up the task of bringing out the meaning of the foregoing discussion in relation to the research questions posed before.
CHAPTER 3
DEWEY’S CONCEPTION OF “EXPERIENCE”

The principal aim of Chapter 3 is to better appreciate the true depth and integrity of Dewey’s philosophical project as the foremost embodiment of the American Bildung tradition. In order to achieve this, a fuller understanding of the concept of “experience” as he reconstructs it needs to be developed. To this end, the following analysis of the \textit{temporal} structures or dimensions of experience will be engaged. In Part 3.3, the conception of “consummatory experience” will be taken up in greater detail on the basis of the foundational analysis provided in Part 3.2. Before proceeding further with the formal analysis, however, as a means of grounding and guiding the subsequent discussion, I shall set out with a \textit{thick} description of a situation (Part 3.1) whereby a preliminary indication of an educational experience (a classroom experience from a teacher’s perspective) is laid out. This rather informal stream of consciousness description pertains to an undergraduate level educational foundations course I teach at Iowa State University. It should be borne in mind that the actual description of the situation is intertwined with parenthetical comments on “situation” as an ontological concept in Dewey. I am fully aware of the fact that interweaving these two levels—the actual description and the theoretical account of the concept of “situation,” which will be more systematically treated later—might create confusion in the reader. My intention is to take advantage of this confusion, assuming there will be some, to bring out the complexity and dynamism of Dewey’s understanding of “experience” and in relation to it “situation.”
Part 3.1 The Situation

I truly enjoy teaching “Social Foundations of American Public Education.” I feel passionate about it. There is a certain sense of feeling at home in what I am doing when I am in class with my fellow students. I have this feeling that there is indeed a possibility to actually create an environment where we can make a difference in each other’s lives for the better. I am not naive about my own powers though, or those of my students; I am aware of the limits of my personal commitment and what I can hope to achieve within the limits of the institutional structure of the university I work at. Nevertheless, while I am teaching I feel fully alive. I feel present to myself and to my environment. It is a revitalizing feeling. As Dewey says, “the demand of the soul for joy, or freshness of experience” (“Art in Education—and Education in Art,” LW2: 111-115) is somehow met when I find myself engaged with the ways of this course.

The course has a flexible structure. It allows room for being spontaneous. Not everything is set in stone. Things are subject to change, though not all the time. There is an element of stability as well as precariousness. I try to strike a balance between the definite elements that provide a core structure and direction to the course and some level of indefiniteness that provides room for experimentation, novelty and spontaneity. The content revolves around certain major themes, some fundamental big ideas such as “the human condition,” “modernity,” “being fully human,” “the relation of plurality and unity” and that “things are really interconnected.” There is a certain element of movement to the whole course. And it is not linear, step-by-step, from simple to complex. The movement is more dynamic. It is a flow but there is no flow chart that can exhaustively represent it for it is not entirely uniform and predictable. Rather it is
constituted by various elements in tension with each other. Moreover, there is not an easy resolution of the tensions that are experienced for the students themselves become the elements of the situation. They become part of the flow. Things are not merely external to them. They are not merely learning about some subject matter (a bunch of factual information about the U.S. educational history) from a distance. They are learning about themselves. There are no “learning objectives” that are pre-specified like one puts together a grocery shopping list. The objective is to be engaged and it is not something that can be achieved at the end.

Moreover, it is not merely a mental engagement. The focus is not on intellectual analysis of certain given concepts (given by me that is, or given by the curriculum I am supposed to transmit). Rather, the focus is on engagement with meaning and values, and I do not give these to my students for I do not possess them like I possess coins in my pocket; rather, they are in the situation. Meaning and value reside in the situation if we are really seeking a “location” for them (Gallagher, 1992, p. 35). They belong to the situation. They are not in my mind to be transferred to the minds of my students for we are not self-enclosed subjects, aware of only our own mental states (Inwood, 1997, p. 31) essentially disconnected from the others and the situation at hand. The ideal is not complete detachment from what is at hand, which is not possible anyway. Meaning and values are not objectified to be studied as if they were entries in an encyclopedia; rather, they are embodied. That is, the focus is on how we live the meaning and values we cherish, how they orient us, how they shape and mold us, how they determine us and how they free us. It is about how we seek and maintain a state of well-being, how we establish a coherent account of things and when such an account is inevitably disrupted, how we
respond to this disruption and try to form a new and a better, more encompassing account. In other words, it is about *transformation of meaning*, which always takes place within a situation. There is no situation-free transformation, or to put it somewhat differently, we do not transform to a situation-free experience of things. We always remain in the situation. Yet our understanding of the situation is enriched through transformations of meaning. Incidentally, this I believe is what Dewey means by growth.

Transformation of meaning is not exclusively a mental process. It is *situational*. It involves the whole human being as an integrated body-mind. It is not simply an academic affair. More importantly, it is a social, moral, emotional, cultural, and spiritual affair. As was mentioned before, although the aim cannot be complete detachment from the situation at hand so as to achieve a purely cognitive relation to the subject matter, the capacity to take a step back and momentarily suspend any judgment on the topic at hand by temporarily detaching ourselves from the taken-for-granted understandings of the world and our place in it is essential. As long as it is appropriately and intelligently contextualized, that is, with the larger multi-dimensional picture in mind (the situational character of experience), taking a step back (temporary detachment) from our customary ways of understanding the world is indispensable for true intelligent thinking. True thinking as opposed to mere cognitive activity is an act that gives us the opportunity to shift our attention from what is considered to be the way things naturally are to the perspective of the other—what is not natural, what is not conventional, what is not taken-for-granted, that is, the alternative, the bizarre and different, in short, the possible.

I would like to remark that the very encounter between my students and I itself constitutes an occasion for thinking. Imagine an instructor from Turkey (the country!)
who is not a native speaker of English teaching the social and philosophical foundations of the American public education in Ames, Iowa—hardly the first place that comes to mind when we think of the possibilities of diverse encounters despite what has been happening in rural towns such as Postville, Iowa, where a group of Hasidic Jews of the Lubavitch movement from New York, immigrant laborers from Mexico, and the rural Protestant Iowans predominantly German and Norwegian descent find themselves in a maelstrom of bizarre encounters (Bloom, 2000)!

At this point, let me dwell a little bit on how I conduct the course given that the encounter between a Turk and the U.S. Midwesterners has already taken place. In the beginning of the course, I point out that, CI 204, Social Foundations of American Public Education, is essentially a humanities course, that is, a course where we focus first and foremost on the human aspect of the process of teaching and learning. Since as humans we are studying ourselves, I go on to say, this course is a little different in content and style from the so-called physical/hard/natural sciences, where the object of study essentially belongs to nature, that is, it is either physical-chemical or biological in nature and cannot therefore directly communicate with us using human language. Human beings are not only physical and biological organisms, they are also, and, perhaps more importantly, social beings capable of forming unique and evolving cultural communities and so, I point out, in understanding the human aspect of the process of teaching and learning, our attention will be drawn primarily to the social and cultural dimensions. By this move I intend to acknowledge and highlight (at least to myself) the distinction between the social and human sciences (Geisteswissenschaften) on the one hand, and the natural sciences (Naturwissenschaften) on the other. It is more often than not the case that
my students do not have the slightest idea why they should be interested in the significance of such a distinction. Yet I have confidence that as the semester progresses this is bound to change. At this point, the majority of them could not care less about “the idealistic echo implied in the idea of Geist (‘spirit’) and of a science of Geist” (Gadamer, 2003, p. 3). They do not realize that it is exceedingly important to acknowledge that the human sciences have their own logic starkly distinct from that of the natural sciences. They do not suspect that their instructor is a staunch admirer of John Dewey and takes very seriously his philosophical project as the greatest embodiment of the American Bildung tradition, for which the distinction is crucial.

The course is basically about the history of American public schooling. To that extent it has a well-defined focus and can be treated fairly formally using a well-established textbook. However, my intention is not to stuff my students with information regarding a series of historical events presented chronologically. Rather, I aim initially to provide a context, a non-offensive base that everybody irrespective of where they are from could relate to. My aim is to emphasize first what is common to all human beings before tackling the troubling issue of what separates us, that is, the inherent plurality of perspectives: irreducible differences and diversity. By that I intend to convey the message that this course is not just a typical 3-credit college course that needs to be taken to fulfill some requirement for their terminal teaching degree but is about all of us and the social and historical meaning of the period that we all inhabit now, that is, modernity. We are all modern human beings. I therefore start out with a rich description of the so-called “human condition” (in modernity) that I believe reflects a common experience everybody can sympathize with. At this point, they are mesmerized but they cannot exactly tell why.
Before we look at the description of the concept itself, however, let’s take a pause here and examine briefly how I intend to make the concept function in the classroom situation. The concept “human condition” is not merely a bit of information on which the students will be tested later. Rather, it is reflective of the very situation we all find ourselves in. Our situation is permeated by the human condition. In this sense, the concept “human condition” is continuous with that which it refers to. The need to name, delimit, and articulate such a concept arises from the situation itself and as a concept it brings out some aspect of the situation into prominence and then returns to the situation enriching our understanding of it. The concept shifts our attention to something that we always already tacitly experience but have not perhaps explicitly noticed before. It does not however exhaustively represent the situation for it cannot exhaust the situation. The concept is not meant to replace the situation. At no time does it have an independent existence as an idea hovering above antecedent to the situation or disconnected from it. It remains within the situation. It makes sense, is meaningful, to the extent that it emerges from and refers back to the situation, and by situation I basically refer to the multi-dimensional matrix of relations between teacher and students and not just the physical layout of the classroom, which, in our case, has a rather traditional formal structure with the teacher facing the classroom poised to present a particular subject matter to a group of students. The goal is not to learn the concept of “human condition.” The goal is to learn about the human condition itself, that is, our very condition that we find ourselves in at that particular moment by engaging with/in the situation. This engagement is essentially an interchange between the teacher and the students and does not have a simple location.
Teaching and learning take place in the situation and not within the teacher or the students in an isolated atomistic fashion.

Now, let’s return to the description of the concept of human condition itself. What is the human condition that I claim we all share regardless of who we are and where we are from? From a philosophical perspective, what I mean by this phrase is that we are already in the world! To my students, and probably to most readers as well, this is a “duh!” moment. It usually sounds quite obvious and insignificant, even trite. However, I know that this is a reference I am making to the German philosopher Heidegger’s neologism “being-in-the-world” and concomitant with it the way he explicates the structure of care as the human condition. I also know that what Heidegger calls care is anything but obvious! Most likely, this is a connection that only I am aware of. My students are most probably have not even heard of the name “Heidegger,” let alone being familiar with his philosophy, and therefore would not be able to make a similar connection themselves. To that extent there is a certain mismatch, a non-coincidence, a tension, if you will, between my understanding and theirs. At this point, an understanding of Heidegger’s philosophy is something that only I bring into the situation.

I do not mention Heidegger to them however. It is not necessary to discuss the idea of being already in the world in reference to Heidegger’s work (although it is possible). For they already are in the world and as soon as they hear this phrase what usually happens is that their attention shifts to this obvious fact, so obvious that it has totally eluded them all this time. They now become aware of its obviousness, which they used to take for granted without noticing it. The information, if you will, that we are already in the world is not something we are constantly aware of in our dealings with
things. We needn’t be. That knowledge, however, is somehow present in the situation. (If you think about it, we really are already in the world, that is, way before we cogitate about our existence, we simply exist). It is assumed, and not in the sense of a deliberate thinking process whereby we ponder intently about the big questions. It is simply experienced. It is there. It is had. We are already in the world! It is somewhat in the background and whatever we are engaged with is made possible by the workings of this information in the background. That you are already in the world makes it possible for you to read that you are already in the world! Totally bizarre, huh? Well, that sums up the overall reaction of most of my students.

It is essential to notice that the knowledge that we are already in the world is not cognitive in nature. It is not explicit information that we painstakingly process. It is more like a quality that has us, an overall quality within which we are enwrapped. It discloses itself as a pervasive mood. (Think of the mood you are in right this very moment as you are reading these lines. Your mood is not just your emotions. Rather, it is constituted by all the things you have brought with yourself into the reading of this, in short, your very subjectivity.) For instance, we can be indifferent, bored, apathetic, depressed, downtrodden, anxious, nervous, irritated, joyful, full of anticipations, excited, enchanted, carefree, energetic, easygoing, encouraged, hopeful, angry, bitter, upset, enamored, detached, cool, and so forth. We are already in the world and we know, or rather, experience that through the mood we find ourselves in. We come to class with certain expectations, fears, hopes, plans, strategies, attitudes, habits. Maybe, as a freshman, I might be a little anxious. I do not know what to expect. I am also curious about this new class; I am eager to meet the new instructor. His name is strangely familiar! Ben-Hur! I
remember the movie. I might even be excited about the prospect of learning new things. Or maybe, I am just bored and have no expectations whatsoever from this class. After all, I am forced to take this class by my advisor this semester—the sooner you take care of it the better she says—and it is just one of those college courses I need to take to fulfill some requirement to get my degree, which probably is not directly relevant to what makes my life fulfilling and meaningful so I just have to deal with it. Either way the mood we are in, the quality that pervades the mood—the adjective, if you will—defines the way we are in the world and what we do bring into the situation. And it is not something we think about; we simply experience it, or rather, we are enveloped in this experience.

This experience, however, is not insignificant. It is not merely there. On the contrary, it is an organized, active, structured lived experience and has a crucial function. It connects us to the world that surrounds us. It unifies us with our environment. We participate in the world as part of a “field interaction” (Alexander, 1987, p. 107). This interaction is initially and for the most part pre-reflective, pre-analytic but no less informative. It informs us deeply regarding the world we live in. It forms our immediate understanding of the world that surrounds us, and not just the physical world, but also and more importantly the social world. It gives us the world and us to the world. It is not “information” as the latter is understood in the sciences of cognition. It is pre-cognitive.

Moreover, it is a dynamic activity constitutive of the field of our possibilities. It predisposes us in certain ways and not others in the sense of how we are going to orient ourselves, how we are going to relate to our physical and social environment, how we are going to understand ourselves in relation to our physical and social environment. What
we are going to receive from our social and physical environment, how we are going to respond to the things around us, what we are going to do and how, what we are going to undergo and how, what we are going to perceive, what we are going to pay attention to are all fore-determined by virtue of inhabiting (experiencing) a qualitatively pervaded situation, by being in a mood that is. And let’s remember that it is inevitable to be in a mood. Moodlessness is out of the question.

So when I say, it is my central role as a teacher to be open to the field of my students’ (and my own) possibilities, that is, having an understanding of the situation, I essentially talk about that ability to attune to the qualitative nature of the situation we all reciprocally constitute, that is, the ability to sense the mood; to feel the interplay of the qualities that go into the make-up of the situation. It is not a very helpful strategy to memorize the entire “Encyclopaedia Britannica” in order to have an understanding of a given situation. Having an understanding is not so much to do with information and our cognitive ability to process and retain it. It is more to do with a sense of being in touch with things, a sense of being at home with things no matter how bizarre they might initially appear, a sense of how to relate to things, a sense of the possibilities of things, a sense of being in touch with the qualities inherent in a situation, a sense of how the continuities as well as disruptions unfold and are interconnected.

This whole thing about being already in the world puzzles my students a tiny bit, in some cases, quite a bit, and it is exactly what I intend to do for by focusing on a taken-for-granted aspect of our situation, a fundamental aspect in this case, an opportunity to have a fresh look at the situation is brought into being. This is an educative moment for all of us. What I hope to accomplish by this move is to bring into relief the possibility of
opening up an entirely new dimension to our existing situation as we inhabit (understand) it. To use a more colloquial phrase, it is a wake-up call. To put it more paradoxically, we go beyond a given situation yet we remain within it. Or we can say that a new dimension is added to our present understanding of the situation. This is revealing to the extent that there is continuity between the prior state of understanding where we take things for granted and the realization of this new dimension, this novel way of understanding things. It is educative to the extent that the prior and the novel are seen to be two different phases of the same movement, or two different moods, two different senses.

When it is understood that a transformation has taken place, that what we knew before and what we now know are intimately connected with each other, are reciprocally bound to each other, are mutually conditioned, and that there is a certain order and logic to this unfolding movement, that it is not entirely haphazard, then this transformation is meaningful. Moreover, it is refreshing, intriguing, enlightening, rejuvenating, revitalizing, animating, or puzzling, confusing, annoying, disconcerting, disquieting, baffling, unsettling. In either case, it is anything but deadening, numbing, enervating. That is, it is anything but anaesthetic! It is aesthetic. I take this to be the meaning of Dewey’s conception of “consummatory experience” being aesthetic, but more on this later.

From a different angle, it can be pointed out that when our perspective is altered vis-à-vis a prior perspective, when a transformation of meaning takes place that is, the very perspectival nature of the original perspective is brought to the fore. The original perspective, it is realized, was just another perspective. It was a way of being in the world. It was an opening to the world. It was not the ultimate perspective from which we
possess an ultimate understanding of the world. We do not need an ultimate perspective. We just need to be open, and it turns out, by an incredibly great stroke of luck, we already have (are) what we need for we are always already open to the world. The question is not whether to be open or not. The question is what we are going to do about it.

A situation is always inhabited not only with a pervasive mood but also with a certain perspective that this mood brings into being. What we have taken for granted to be the natural way of understanding things turns out to be open to modification and enrichment since the initial perspective is not lost or discarded but it is now transformed, and transformed in such a way that its value is included within the new perspective. More on this later as well. Let’s go back to the human condition and the observation that we are already in the world.

What I am basically striving to convey by saying that we are already in the world is that whether you like it or not we are all live experiencing beings already existing in a given concrete situation: we all already have a certain understanding of the world, a certain take on things, a conception of who we are, what our likes and dislikes are, what our values are, what our identity is, our roles in life, an understanding of what other people expect of us, our responsibilities, our allegiances, etc. We orient ourselves in this world vis-à-vis other human beings on the basis of certain habits, dispositions, prejudices, understandings, and values. In short, we not only co-exist in a physical space but also inhabit a moral space in which we make strong evaluations, discriminations of what is right and what is wrong, what is better and what is worse, what is permissible and what is reprehensible, what is worth living for and what is not. All of us make sense of things on
the basis of a crucial set of qualitative distinctions which, when put together, form our pictures of the good life (Taylor, 1989). And unless we are asked or challenged by others, we do not really feel the need to articulate or formulate them. They simply are there somewhat in the background and we live by them but we do not constantly think about them for we find ourselves in a state of some sort of well-being: a state of equilibrium (or harmony/balance/unity) with our environment. And there is really no need to question things.

Offering such a description of the human condition is not meant to provide information on the “human condition” as a concept per se to be memorized now and recited later. Rather, it is meant to exemplify it. Only by inhabiting within the human condition can I talk about the “human condition.” Only by already being in a situation can I talk about it. Only by already having an understanding of the world can this understanding be transformed into something new and hopefully more enriching. In order to make this point even clearer to my students, I immediately challenge their tacit understanding of their situation by bringing into relief the taken-for-granted meanings and values that orient us in our everyday existence. The very litany on the “human condition” itself, it turns out, is a challenge to their conventional understanding of themselves and their world and what they think should be taught in this course and how. The fact that the litany sounds strange but at the same time is strangely familiar brings them closer to the experience of the concept and what it is trying to indicate. At this point they are engaging with the concept not as an information segment that they need to code and store but as something that touches them and forces them to think about themselves.
I point out that the peculiar thing about the human condition is that although we enjoy the state of well-being and prefer to remain within it as long as possible, it for some reason or other gets disrupted (just like, by introducing this dubious concept “human condition” in a manner that is by no means by the book, their taken for granted mundane understanding of their situation is disrupted). That is, things undergo change. And when change happens, that is, when we encounter a problem that we do not know how to deal with, we are compelled to respond to it. For instance, when my wife, the mother of my kids and the person I shared sixteen years of my life with, one morning breaks the news that she is a lesbian and that she is going to leave me for Tracy (!), the equilibrium I have been enjoying with all the values and understandings that go into its constitution gets inevitably disrupted. The situation in its taken for granted meanings and values no longer makes sense. A new understanding, a new perspective, a novel take on things is called for. Now, how are we supposed to respond to such a situation in which our whole world turns upside down and the old way of doing things, our old habits, no longer are helpful in understanding the new situation. Our cherished values and things we have taken for granted for so long are being challenged. How are we to respond? Well, we respond in ways to restore the equilibrium, to bring back the state of well-being into our lives again so that the world makes sense again and we feel we are part of it in an integral way.

This requires, more often than not, especially when the crisis of meaning is that extreme, some sort of transformation in the way we understand the world. We revise our old ways and we are compelled to change our perspective, our interpretation of the facts. We reevaluate our values. We start questioning things. In short, we start thinking, which is by no means an algorithmic process. Thinking, as Dewey understands it, is a whole
body-mind-environment process. It is not merely going through a checklist. It is not merely following a pre-determined protocol or procedure. “Do this first and do this next if and when your wife turns out to be gay and walks away with Tracy!” Thinking in the Deweyan sense is not easy and requires a lot of effort on our part, and not just mental effort but a coordinated effort of our entire being. But at the end, if we can make it, we will establish a new equilibrium, a better one, a more encompassing, a more caring, a more understanding, a more flexible, a more open-minded equilibrium. In other words, we will grow. We will grow out of the limitations of our previous understanding of the situation into a new understanding where, after being plunged into despair with no satisfaction in the world, but only puzzlement and frustration, a fresh standpoint is adopted that restores the sense of being “at home in the world” (Stern, 2002, p. 28).

I share several examples from my own life with my students to illustrate the complexities of the human condition and bring home the message that the world we find ourselves in is characterized by both stability, familiarity, peace and quiet as well as indefiniteness, ambiguity, confusion, anxiety, unknown and uncertain conditions. I can see in their eyes that they are able to relate to what I am talking about. On the one hand, the things we discuss are extremely abstract (the human condition, the search for unity in diversity, fragmentation, plurality, and so forth). On the other, they are very real and concrete. Especially the idea of “modernity.” It is usually the case that the majority of my students have not even heard of this word before, and that is really strange to me, and yet they are all modern individuals living in modern times! Obviously, they are familiar with the word “modern.” However, they are not familiar with its cognate “modernity.” They know the word “modern” as it is used in everyday conversational English. They have a
certain understanding of it. Whatever it is, however, it is not anywhere close to what “modernity” is supposed to disclose. My students are closed to understanding the world through the opening made possible by the concept “modernity.” I am eager to change that.

What is modernity then? There is no easy and simple answer to this question. However, one thing is clear that it does not merely refer to whatever the latest technology is. “Modern” means a lot more. Basically, it is a major socio-cultural transformation, a fulcrum point, in human history as a response to a major disruption in the way things were done and it is still not over and completed. Moreover, we are in it, we are part of it. It defines our world, the very situation, the field of interactions we are part of now. We are modern human beings, all of us, regardless of where we come from. The reason I even bring up the issue of modernity is that over the years I have come to realize that my education students have been minimally exposed to what Mills (2000) calls “the sociological imagination.” As someone who majored in sociology, I feel fascinated when I see, for instance, the connections between what the German sociologist Max Weber calls the “rationalization of society” and what Ritzer (2004) calls the “McDonaldization of society.” In other words, seeing the relationship between the macro processes of history and the society at large and the micro processes of my everyday life has always been revitalizing for me in the sense that this kind of an understanding gives me the feeling that I belong to the world and the world belongs to me. I feel at home in it despite its madness and complexities, or rather because of them. The world is not restricted to my provincial environment. It is this immense and immensely complex network of relationships. And I am part of it. I am witnessing it. I am participating in its madness and
glory. And I am doing something about it. This I believe is the message of “education as Bildung” at its best. Education as Bildung is about making connections, far-reaching connections. It is about understanding the world in ever deeper and wider contexts and feeling at home in this crazy world and having an ownership of it despite the pain and suffering.

So my aim in discussing “modernity” as a concept is to bring to my students’ attention the discrepancy between the way they define the troubles they endure in their everyday lives and the way the intricate connections between “the patterns of their own lives and the course of world history” (Mills, 2000, p. 4) are intertwined.

In this respect, the course tries to exemplify and cultivate what the renowned American sociologist C. Wright Mills (2000) calls “the sociological imagination,” that is, the capacity to shift from one perspective to another—from the political to the psychological; from examination of a single family to comparative assessment of the national budgets of the world; from the theological school to the military establishment; from considerations of an oil industry to studies of contemporary poetry. [Sociological imagination] is the capacity to range from the most impersonal and remote transformations to the most intimate features of the human self—and to see the relations between the two. (p. 7)

In other words, the course is not about mastering some information external to students’ everyday existential concerns. It is about creating an environment where they can explore the intimate connections between what is going on in the world (at an abstract, universal, general level) and what is happening to them (at a concrete, personal, particular level), that is, the connections between their everyday lives, their biography, and the larger
historical context. The larger historical context, modernity, is admittedly quite abstract to engage with. However, the object is not to learn about “modernity” as a piece of information. The object is to develop an understanding of themselves in relation to the world they inhabit so that they feel connected with it. It is about engaging their capacity to make sense of things in ways that matter to them. It is about awakening the need to locate themselves in ever-expanding contexts of meaning.

Initially, many of my students have a hard time seeing the relevance of the idea of modernity to education. They are not in the habit of seeing things in interrelationships. They think CI 204 is a strictly education course and definitely not a course on philosophy, history, sociology, psychology, anthropology, literature, arts, political science, or economics. I realize that my students have already fallen victim to the vicious departmentalization process in the modern American university system. They are not interested in other courses; this is an education course and it should be about education! Other courses are about other things, which are not relevant to this course. And there is no need to go inter-disciplinary right now. Let’s stick to our own discipline. After all, the degree I am struggling to attain is going to be in education. I am certainly not interested in other disciplines for I am not getting a degree in other disciplines. I am not going to be a historian, a sociologist, a novelist, or a politician. I am going to be a teacher who knows how to teach and who is familiar with, actually, an expert on the latest teaching techniques. What a blow to education as Bildung!

To remedy this awful (at least it is awful to me) situation, where disciplines are closed in upon themselves, insulated from each other and not interested in communication and therefore creating individuals who do not and cannot communicate
with each other, I spend some time elucidating in broad strokes what modernity is all about and how and why it should be relevant to education.

From a historical perspective, modernity denotes a time period spanning roughly four centuries from the 17th century to the present-day and is also known as the Western Enlightenment, or the Age of Reason. It is characterized by the following basic idea as I have formulated it: all human beings regardless of their race, sex, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, national identity, religious affiliation, social class, occupation, and so forth are endowed with reason (or mind)—by which, incidentally, we do not simply mean “the brain”—and by reason, what I have in mind is simply the capacity to “take a step back.” That is, when we encounter a problem that involves some sort of a clash between our interests and those of others, before we resort to violence and start killing each other, that is, before we act on our impulses, immediate desires, and received but stagnant wisdom (customs and habits) of one’s culture, we suspend judgment for a second or two, calm down, and give ourselves a chance to shift our attention momentarily and try to see the given situation from the other’s perspective. That is, we suspend the taken for granted judgment regarding the ultimacy and immutability of our native perspective. In other words, reason denotes not only a perspective-taking but also a perspective-shifting and perspective-enhancing ability, that is, we are not limited to a single perspective alone no matter how true, beautiful, good, and cherished it is. We have the capacity, actually the prerogative and the obligation, to see things from other (multiple) perspectives.

This sounds trite and perhaps is not worth mentioning. Yet it is extremely important to understand what the implications are. Humanity is going through a major social/cultural (or we can combine the two domains and say, socio-cultural)
transformation in its history. For the first time in human history, on a large scale, sufficient number of people has decided to act on this basic principle and constitute a new form of human association, that is, the democratic modern society. The fundamental characteristic of such a society is how seriously it takes one of the incontrovertible facts of the human condition: diversity, that is, the plurality of differences. Different races, different sexes, different sexual orientations, different Gods and Goddesses or lack thereof, different ethnicities, different cultural groups, different practices, different versions of the good life, different values, and so forth. And not just different, but contentious. We are not merely different but we also make value judgments regarding these differences. We claim that our version of the good life, our values, our sex, our race, our nation, our country, our religion, our region is better than the others.

The peculiar thing about modern societies is that when it comes to dealing with contentious differences, we do not immediately resort to violence, that is, we do not try to eliminate the others right away just because they are different and we don’t like it. Rather, we first think (take a step back) and expect the others to do the same thing.

It is assumed in modern societies that every human being is an individual with a body and a mind of its own and s/he is entitled to live in a state of well-being, that is, a state where his/her body and mind are integrated so that s/he feels like a whole person and does not feel fragmented and conflicted. And once everybody feels like they are whole persons, the need to eliminate violently what we perceive to be other than us is no longer there. For ultimately the state of wholeness entails the Hegelian understanding of Geist, “relation of identity-in-difference to the world” (Stern, 2002, p. 34). This might sound utopic or just a dream or too much German Idealism for one’s taste but this is
exactly the motivating force behind the American and French Revolutions with their slogans of “liberté, égalité, fraternité,” (liberty/freedom, equality, and fraternity—sister/brotherhood). Incidentally, I have to admit that this is quite a naive and limited reading of these two revolutions. After all, the disillusionment experienced by many enthusiastic Enlightenment thinkers by the Reign of Terror that immediately followed the French Revolution prevents us from painting an overly rosy picture. Nevertheless, as an initial treatment of the topic, I do not find it totally objectionable to cast the gist of modernity in a favorable light.

In essence, what “liberté, égalité, fraternité” meant was that yes there are differences—and mostly these differences are associated with the body (race, ethnicity, sex, and so forth are body-bound attributes that are externally and immediately visible)—however, there is also something called “mind” and we all have it; it is universally available for each one of us. We all have a mind of our own. No matter how different we are from each other when it comes to our bodies, we are all the same when it comes to “mind” because mind is not a thing, not a material object. Rather, it is a capacity to see things in myriad and complex ways; it is a capacity to understand ourselves and other people from within; it is a capacity to make things meaningful for us; it is a capacity to see and make connections between the seemingly disparate elements of life. Mind is the capacity to acknowledge all differences and yet to embrace them, that is, it is a unifying force in human life.

So basically the upshot of this is that mind is in charge of the unity aspect of what I call the “unity-within-diversity and vice versa.” And our bodies is the source of the diversity aspect of “unity-within-diversity and vice versa.” The modern project, or the
modern ideal, is to help form integrated individuals, who are at peace with themselves, with their bodies and their minds. This is the ideal of Bildung. Public education as an institution, at least at its best, was set up with this idea (and ideal) in mind. It was meant to facilitate the process of creating individuals for a democratic liberal and liberating society where each will be treated equally and provided equal opportunity to fulfill themselves so that they can become who they are on their own terms.

However, things have not really worked out as planned! Instead of a whole person, an integrated individual, we ended up creating fragmented individuals in environments that are by no means free and equal. And what about fraternity of all humankind? Was it a pipedream, too unrealistic, naive, what went wrong really? It is decisive to raise the question of what went really wrong for “in the American Bildung tradition, philosophical thinking is persistent critical examination of one’s ideals, as well as the ideals of one’s society, toward the goal of exposing ways in which actual practices fall short of those ideals” (Good, 2006, p. xx). Identifying the ideals of modernity and the reasons why we have fallen short of them is not a peripheral issue for me as a teacher. On the contrary, it is the heart of the matter. It is constitutive of the classroom situation. We are far from realizing the ideal of the community of integrated individuals learning and growing together who have overcome the crippling alienations that keep them from society, nature, and their highest ideals. What is worse we are facing a massive breakdown of community. A classroom situation imbued with the Bildung tradition takes the task of identifying the ideals of modernity and creating conditions conducive to the actualization of these ideals very seriously.
There is a sense of urgency here. Well, at least for me. Sometimes, however, I have this distinctly uncanny feeling that there is a real possibility that my teaching misses the mark. It is quite distressing to think that most of my students have no real interest in the topic at hand, and even if they do, what they get out of it does not necessarily coincide with what I intend to get across. This reminds me the way Gallagher (1992) characterizes educational experience as being always hermeneutical—or we can paraphrase it as non-coinciding—that is, “the interchange of learning in the classroom situation is an interchange of interpretations [italics added]” (Gallagher, 1992, p. 35). This is another way of saying that transformation of meaning in educational experience is situational. In his hermeneutical analysis of educational experience, Gallagher (1992) opposes his concept of interpretation to “the narrowly defined, epistemological notion of cognition” (p. 32). He goes on to say that “interpretation is not to be construed as fundamentally an intellectual activity which happens only in the mind, or only when our cognitive faculties are exercised. Rather, interpretation is a universal feature of all human activity” (pp. 39-40). What is it that he is trying to get at? Let’s look at the classroom situation I have been describing more closely in order to bring out the meaning of educational experience as being hermeneutical-situational.

Well, to begin with, from my own perspective as the teacher, there is something I wish to communicate to my students. More importantly, what I wish to communicate is imbued with a sense of urgency for me. It is not mere information I am supposed to get across, which any personal computer with some decent software can more efficiently do now. I feel what I am trying to convey has some deep meaning and significance—it
matters—and not just for me but for all of us that are present in the classroom situation. I am not interested in a soliloquy.

Furthermore, I *embody* that significance; I bring it into being; I make it present; I offer it, and not just with words, but with gestures, with my body language, with the tone of my voice, with the words I choose, with the tempo I create, with the way I speak, with the ways of silence and breaks, with the way I carry myself, with the way I command the physical space, with the jokes I make, with the way I look my fellow students in the eyes, with my demeanor. So I am not just there standing up trying to fill the hour. I am there, present.

What does it mean to be present? At any given moment, my orientation towards the class and the subject matter at hand is tacitly molded and guided by my understanding of who I am and everything that goes into its constitution—and a lot goes into it: what my role as a teacher is or ought to be, how I am feeling, what the subject matter means to me, what I expect to achieve, what my overall aim is, the frame of mind I am in, who my students are, the impressions they make on me, what I expect them to accomplish, my past experiences with similar situations, the books I have read, the people I have conversed with, the thoughts I have been entertaining, the pain I have been suffering, the troubles I have been struggling with.

At any given point, my understanding of who I am is so saturated and permeated with, on the one hand, what has happened in the past, near and remote, and, on the other, with the projections and anticipations of what might happen in the future, near and remote, that my understanding of who I am is necessarily incomplete and composite. It is not settled and static. It is not uniform and unadulterated. It is a dynamic unfolding active
process only a tiny segment of which I am consciously aware and in control at any given point. Who I am at any given time is constituted by myriad things and voices constantly in dialogue with each other that are themselves compositely constituted. Who I am is a rich tapestry of sounds and sights interweaving the within and the without. Some days, it might be experienced as harmonious; other days, it appears cacophonous. There are relatively stable elements; there are also those that are evanescent and mutable.

Take my understanding of the subject matter at hand, say, modernity. I have a certain understanding of the topic. I have a certain take on it, that is, I have interpreted it in a certain way. It is my understanding of the subject matter. It matters to me in a certain way, which means “modernity” as a concept is not separate from who I am. To the extent that it matters to me, that it means something to me, it enters into me, it becomes an element within the process of my constitution. Moreover, it is pretty well established for I feel secure and confident in my understanding. Now, is this interpretation of mine—my intimate relationship with the concept of modernity—the ultimate truth on the topic? In other words, is it the only way, or the best way, to relate to it? Do I have a complete understanding and knowledge of it? That is, has my relationship to it exhausted all the other possibilities of understanding it? Of course not, and not because I am somewhat intellectually deficient and that if I work harder maybe I can attain it, or somebody much smarter than I will be able to attain it. Not at all. The idea is that nobody does and can have an absolutely complete understanding of it for “modernity” is not a timeless concept hovering above in an eternal abode waiting for us to grasp it in its entirety. Rather, it belongs to time. It is hermeneutical-situational. As long as it matters, as long as it means something, it matters to someone, it means something to someone. And any someone is
compositely structured. It is temporally manifold. This suggests that my understanding of “modernity” is not fixed. It is not complete and finalized. I am in dialogue with it and to that extent it is bound to be transformed. It is always open to new understandings. Not only do I always have to interpret it in some way I can also interpret it in different ways. It can matter to me in different ways.

Furthermore, not only do I have a certain understanding of the material, in this case, the idea of modernity, which is, by necessity, imperfect and incomplete, I also have a certain understanding of how I should be presenting the material to my students. My knowledge of the subject (the way I interpret the topic, the way I relate to it) does not necessarily coincide with the way I present the topic. Gallagher (1992) is very cogent on this:

in communicating to the student, the teacher may not present precisely or explicitly her own understanding of the subject matter, but may create a way for the student to come into that understanding for himself. The teacher’s understanding and her pedagogical presentation may, and usually do, differ. . . .

For example, if the teacher is an accomplished scholar and has spent a great deal of time studying the French Revolution, this understanding of that complex historical period may be characterized by a high degree of sophistication. The teacher’s presentation to a group of students who have never studied history before may have to be so simplified that it would actually amount to a distortion [italics added] of her own understanding. . . . There is certainly in this case a lack of coincidence [italics added] between the teacher’s understanding and her pedagogical presentation. (p. 36)
That there is a lack of coincidence between my understanding of the idea of “modernity” and my pedagogical presentation of it to class is a complicating factor goes without saying. What is more interesting, however, is that this is not something to complain about. A lack of coincidence, that is, a lack of perfect flawless communication between my understanding of “modernity” and the way I present it to my students, brings about an opening, or a crack, if you will, for me to learn something new through my own teaching. My pedagogical presentation might actually lead to new insights about my understanding, which, in turn, is transformed for the better. The upshot is that the interchange between my understanding and my pedagogical presentation is not seamless and flawless. On the contrary, it is full of awkward transitions, interruptions, or indications of disparity.

And this is only a slice of what is happening to me. What about the student, who, in turn, makes an attempt to grasp what I am trying to communicate? Isn’t s/he going through a similar process of interpretation? Or does s/he totally get what I am talking about, even when my own understanding of the topic is constantly in movement and open to question? There are thirty some students in my class. Thirty some unique individuals. And let’s face it, I am not trying to teach something as innocuous as that an equilateral triangle is a triangle with all three sides of equal length $a$ (even here, it is possible to argue, things might get quite complicated and get out of hand). I am trying to embody the significance of the concept of “modernity” for Heaven’s sake! By now it should be quite clear that embodying the significance of the concept of “modernity” is a little more than showing a powerpoint slide with a definition of modernity on it.

Hence no wonder that there is going to be a lack of coincidence between thirty some students trying to comprehend what on earth I mean by “modernity” and my
pedagogical presentation of the concept. Yet my students are persevering for they somehow feel that understanding this concept is important and not just for the purpose of getting it right on a test (at this point they already know that they do not need to brush up on their test-taking skills as they will be composing essays as part of their course evaluation rather than taking multiple-choice tests) but for their own self-development. In spite of the fact that they have not perhaps explicitly articulated what self-development means to them, they nevertheless find themselves in such a process for they inhabit the situation. Most of them seem to be quite intrigued but I am not sure why. Are they being drawn toward my own understanding through the presentation? Are they being inspired in a different, unintended direction by the presentation? Are they being misled by the presentation? Or are they totally lost? “In any case,” says Gallagher (1992),

the student is always involved in interpreting the pedagogical presentation. The teacher’s presentation becomes, for the student, the material or subject matter that he must come to understand. On the student side, this interpretation of the material involves a learning process. Again, this interpretation—let us call it the student’s “comprehension”—may be precisely what the teacher wanted, or it may be a complete misunderstanding, or something in between. (pp. 37-38)

In other words, I have no absolute control over how my students comprehend the material, that is, how they experience the meaning. This is important. The non-coincidence between their comprehension and my pedagogical presentation “allows there to be an interchange [a transaction Dewey would say] which is irreducible to a simple transmission of information between teacher and student. The interchange is an
interchange of interpretations rather than an exchange of information” (Gallagher, 1992, p. 38).

From my perspective, looking at the learning process (of my students and mine alike) as always being hermeneutical, that is, the situational character of experience always requiring that there is a lack of coincidence between the interchange of interpretations, is refreshing. For many people who feel uneasy with the situational character of experience, it is quite unsettling if not threatening. Hermeneutical non-coincidence (namely, situational ambiguity, uncertainty, invisibility, vagueness) is intolerable and should be minimized if not totally eliminated. For me, it is beautiful for, as we will explore soon, it is “consummatory.” When my energy is not devoted to and my attention is not solely focused on trying to control how my students experience meaning so that their experience will seamlessly coincide with mine, what comes to the fore is the acknowledgement and appreciation of the humanness of our situation and how we all partake in it. What is consummatory is not the sense of completeness of the match between my understanding and theirs. The sense of gratification and fulfillment does not come from knowing that I have taught the subject matter perfectly; I have transmitted the information seamlessly, and therefore, my students now know exactly what I know. We have seen that this is not possible anyway, even if it were desirable. Consummation is not about completeness, finality, closure, or uniformity of understanding and experience. Rather, it is the feeling of at-home-ness with the world in all its stability and precariousness, and being open to it with an understanding that human experience is situational.
Part 3.2 The Temporal Structure of “Experience”

Modem preoccupation with science and with industry based on science has been disastrous; our education has followed the model which they have set. It has been concerned with intellectual analysis and formularized information. . . . [This] outcome is disastrous because it leads men to take abstractions as if they were realities. . . . It is disastrous because it has fixed attention upon competition for control and possession of a fixed environment rather than upon what art can do to create an environment. . . . It is disastrous because civilization built upon [its] principles cannot supply the demand of the soul for joy, or freshness of experience [italics added]; only attention through art to the vivid but transient values of things can effect such refreshment. (“Art in Education—and Education in Art,” LW2: 111-115)

According to Dewey, the modern practice of seeing science as the paradigm of human experience and situating the aesthetic within the cognitive dimension of experience and thereby disregarding the inherent value of qualitative immediacy—which is the crucible of meaning and value in human life that “brings about the liberation and expansion of the potentially endless array of meanings the world offers” (Granger, 1998, p. 10)—has been disastrous for three interrelated reasons. First, we are misled to take the results of the reflective (cognitive) phase of experience to be the constituents of an antecedently existing reality, and subsequently, we tend to see this reality as a timeless unchanging fixed environment that we believe we can exhaustively control, which, consequently, leads to a deadening of our experience of this reality as openness and possibility of growth are foreclosed. By inviting us to “attend to the vivid but transient
values of things.” Dewey asks us to see ourselves as an activity, as an ongoing event that emerges and expands with/in the world characterized as much by precariousness as stability.

A classroom life where “the demand of the soul for joy” is vividly attended to can be created by shifting our exclusive attention from the cognitive phase of experience, which tends to get isolated from the ongoing temporal unfolding of a lived situation, to the whole experience itself which is disclosed through its felt quality in a specific situational context and ceasing to reduce this qualitative whole to its cognitive part. In this part of the dissertation, therefore, the question of immediate experience as “a temporally moving, dynamic whole within which distinctions are made during cognitive activity” (Granger, 1998, p. 31) will be engaged.

Although Dewey claims that “immediacy of existence is ineffable” (*Experience and Nature*, LW1: 74), this does not rule out the possibility of “plumbing the depth and richness of immediate experience” (Granger, 1998, p. 32). Therefore, the tendency to ignore the necessity to engage with immediate experience in instituting a classroom life is not warranted. For unless an understanding of the constitutive role of immediate experience—as it is disclosed by attending to the quality of openness to the temporality of the present—is reintroduced to the teaching-learning practice in our classroom life, our experiences as a teacher and a learner are bound to remain miseducative, that is, fragmentary, disconnected, inchoate, deadening, mindless, blunted and dull. Such an understanding cannot be demonstrated, however, in the form of logical reasoning starting from premises assumed to possess logical completeness. Rather, what cannot be adequately defined and described by the refined tools of logic may be shown, or pointed
to, in such a way that the process of showing discloses a specific situational context. It is, Dewey contends, possible to grasp things in their immediately experienced meanings only because the things and us are always already connected within situational wholes. Immediate experience is always holistic (non-dual) before it is bifurcated into the subject who experiences and the object experienced. Furthermore, the wholistic integrity of immediate experience is revealed through qualities, which constitute the “brute and unconditioned ‘isness’” (Experience and Nature, LW1: 75) of events. Qualities are of events. They neither reside in material objects alone nor entirely in our minds. They are located within situations that cannot be reduced to personal experience. Rather, personal experience is located within situations.

The key to understanding John Dewey’s notion of consummatory experience is having a firm grasp of his notion of experience and his fundamental ontological concept: the situation, which can be very briefly defined as “the context in which the living organism experiences, and some of these experiences, says Dewey, are of such a nature that the events which precede them are drawn into a single moment of felt unity: this is the consummated moment” (Kallo, 2004, p. i).

The primary dimension of being human, for Dewey, is its sociality, that is, the fact that we live in a world, human-and-nonhuman. Human beings are not isolates. Being human first and foremost is living together with other humans in a world. The social aspect of being human is not an accidental attribute of otherwise isolated individuals. Being in association with others in a social and nonhuman world is a defining moment of being human. Individuals are continuous with the social and physical world they find themselves in. Yet we are plagued by discontinuities, a startling number of disconnects
that get in the way of experiencing the primary dimension of being human—what Dewey simply calls *experience*.

It is argued that Dewey’s entire philosophy revolves around his unwavering commitment to the fundamental idea of “experience” (Alexander, 1987). It is essential to understand what Dewey means by this term to treat the quality of openness to the temporality of the present as fully as possible. The special meaning of this term for Dewey immediately comes to the fore in the following passage from *Experience and Nature*:

> “Experience” denotes the planted field, the sowed seeds, the reaped harvests, the changes of night and day, spring and autumn, wet and dry, heat and cold, that are observed, feared, longed for; it also denotes the one who plants and reaps, who works and rejoices, hopes, fears, plans, invokes magic or chemistry to aid him, who is downcast or triumphant. It is “double-barrelled” [*sic*] in that it recognizes in its primary integrity no division between act and material, subject and object, but contains them both in *an unanalyzed totality* [italics added]. (*Experience and Nature*, LW1: 18)

The very heart and center of Dewey’s thought is captured in this dense passage. Contrary to the received meaning of this term in the Western philosophical tradition, particularly, in British empiricism, Dewey does not refer to a subjective side of human existence that exclusively occurs within the boundaries of a person’s mind. For him experience is not private; it is a *temporal process* that brings the person and her world together in an immediate way. Seen in this light, we do not *have* experience of things and events in the “objective” world. Rather, the world and us are contained “in an unanalyzed
totality” prior to the separation of various subjective and objective factors. Human beings are always situated in a natural as well as a social environment. We find ourselves being actively engaged in and with this twofold environment. The meaning of “an unanalyzed totality” resides in the sense of finding ourselves already engaged in and responding to our environment before we reflect on it. For Dewey experience is not first and foremost (or ultimately) a form of cognition. It is not initially and for the most part a problem of knowledge. Our primary relation to our socio-physical environment is not determined in terms of knowledge. Rather it is a matter of planting the fields, sowing the seeds, reaping the harvest, following the changes of day and night with fear, longing, apprehensions, frustrations, hopes, plans, failures and gratitude. That is, we relate and adjust to the world on the basis of the richness, complexity and ambiguities of the larger issue of human meaning and value. Human beings engage with the world primarily because they are compelled to live a meaningful and fulfilling life. The function of cognition and knowledge is to be situated within the broader project of human life. The “unanalyzed totality” is not an object of knowledge; rather, it is something experienced. It is lived.

The specific notion of experience as “an unanalyzed totality,” where “in its primary integrity no division between act and material” is recognized—that it is “double-barreled”—is not a discrete item of knowledge. It is not an object of mere perceptual cognition. It is not a random or a mysterious/mystical event either. It denotes an everyday event constantly unfolding in myriad and unpredictable ways. We are constantly engaged with the world responding to its demands. Unlike “single-barreled” concepts like thing and thought which refer exclusively to objective and subjective entities, “experience”
takes in both the subjective and objective components of human existence. According to Dewey, experience

includes what men do and suffer, what they strive for, love, believe and endure, and also how men act and are acted upon, the ways in which they do and suffer, desire and enjoy, see, believe, imagine—in short, processes of experiencing.

(*Experience and Nature*, LW1: 18)

Experiencing and the experienced, the subjectivity and the objects of the world, constitute the how and what of the unanalyzed totality. It is impossible to think of experiencing subject apart from the experienced object. The two are always united in the totality of the unanalyzed experience notwithstanding the attempts of the epistemological problematic of the traditional Western philosophy to regard it as an object of knowledge. For Dewey, experience is a pre-reflective phenomenon. It is “not something known but simply had; not cognitively apprehended, but immediately felt” (Robb, 2006, p. 40). One undergoes experience. It is something directly suffered, felt, or enjoyed. The immediacy of the “unanalyzed totality” is pervasive. Before any explicit thinking about it takes place, it already happens. When we have an experience, the world is directly received. This reception has a qualitative immediacy.

Immediacy of existence is ineffable. But there is nothing mystical about such ineffability; it expresses the fact that of direct existence it is futile to say anything to one’s self and impossible to say any-thing to another. Discourse can but intimate connections which if followed out may lead one to have an existence. Things in their immediacy are unknown and unknowable, not because they are remote or behind some impenetrable veil of sensation of ideas, but because
knowledge has no concern with them. For knowledge is a memorandum of conditions of their appearance, concerned, that is, with sequences, coexistences, relations. Immediate things may be *pointed to* by words, but not described or defined. Description when it occurs is but a part of a circuitous method of pointing or denoting; index to a starting point and road which if taken may lead to a direct and ineffable presence. (“The Meaning of Value,” LW1: 74-75)

That “immediacy of existence” is prior to reflection, that it is outside of and prior to language, means that direct experience, when it is *had*, is something non-cognitive (pre-thematic). “Things in their immediacy are unknown and unknowable” but they are “poignant, tragic, beautiful, humorous, settled, disturbed, comfortable, annoying, barren, harsh, consoling, splendid, fearful” (“Value, Objective Reference and Criticism,” LW1: 82) in the sense that things have an immediate and final quality to them, which is meaningfully experienced before we reflect on the significance of it. This sensitivity and receptivity to the qualitative immediacy of experience has an aesthetic quality for Dewey. The aesthetic dimension of experience, the character of being *had* and not *known*, is immediately given and is not the result of an intellectual endeavor. It constitutes “an extensive qualitative *situation*” (*Logic*, LW12: 509). We experience a thing as poignant because we find ourselves in a situation with its qualitative specificity. The situation is specifically poignant and we find ourselves experiencing it in such a way that we are overtaken by it. Furthermore, we are not in control of every single factor comprising the situation. We do not know everything about the situation. We do not entirely know why we feel the way we feel. The situation as the aspect of the world to which we are
immediately given is far from being totally transparent to us. The situational character of experience is permeated by both

  brilliancy and obscurity, conspicuousness or apparency, and concealment or reserve, with a constant movement of redistribution. Movement about an axis persists, but what is in focus constantly changes. “Consciousness,” in other words, is only a very small and shifting portion of experience. The scope and content of the focused apparency have immediate dynamic connections with portions of experience not at the time obvious. (Essays in Experimental Logic, MW10: 323)

That which is not obvious is as much part of the situation as the conspicuous focus we have of the situation. The lack of complete transparency and concurrent with it the unknowability of the things in their immediacy (the meanings they evoke in us), is an integral part of any experience. Precisely because of this, furthermore, experience is never reducible to stasis, an exhaustive grasp of the situation. It is impossible to have complete knowledge of the situation. We are necessarily in the situation for it is not an objective event out there to be contemplated by an external unintrusive gaze but rather the richly textured context where the subject is engaged with its world. Therefore, there is no way to step out of it to apprehend it in its totality. The situation is constantly on the move and our awareness of it at a given moment is permeated by the obscure elements that are charged with novel potentialities.

  It is important for philosophic theory to be aware that the distinct and evident are prized and why they are. But it is equally important to note that the dark and twilight abound. For in any object of primary experience there are always potentialities which are not explicit; any object that is overt is charged with
possible consequences that are hidden; the most overt act has factors which are not explicit. (*Experience and Nature*, LW1: 27-28)

The reason Dewey accentuates, following James, the significance of the “double-barreled” conception of experience by highlighting the dynamic (read temporal) connections between the explicit thematic awareness on the one hand and its shading off into the tacit, pre-thematic and non-cognitive factors of a given situation is to question the standard dualism of subject and object, experiencing and the experienced. For Dewey, the subject and object are encompassed in a holistic (as opposed to dualistic) “unanalyzed totality” which is immediately felt through the particular meaning it elicits in us in a given context, and which is pregnant with further expansion of meaning without culminating in an absolute (in the sense of final, unchanging, timeless and eternally secured) sense of the situation. His conception of human beings as primarily participants in the world rather than knowers of the stable and permanent forms of the world points to the inadequacies of the Cartesian notion of the human subject as an isolated, uncontextualized consciousness. Consciousness is contextualized within the broader scope of a given situation, and therefore is always limited to the explicitly distinct and evident. However, as situated within experience, consciousness is constantly shifting from the positively defined actualities to open and yet obscure possibilities.

Alexander (1987) argues that “the underpinning for Dewey's philosophy of experience is a tenacious insistence on its radical *temporality* [italics added] as well as its situationality” (p. 61). Understanding how explicit consciousness is contextualized within the dynamically unfolding situational character of experience, it is essential to focus on the radical temporality of experience, the way past, present, and future interpenetrate. It would be difficult to overestimate the central role of time in Dewey’s philosophy of
experience. For Dewey, situations are immediate in their direct occurrence, and mediated and mediating in the temporal continuum constituting life experience.

Experience as it is lived is originally whole. It does not occur in discrete bits. It is lived as an integrated whole. It is unified. The person and the world are not ontologically separate entities. They are mutually interacting factors of a situation that is originally lived as “an unanalyzed totality.” The subjective and objective factors—the self and the world, the organism and the environment—are retrospectively differentiated and distinguished upon reflection. In its immediacy experience is integrated, that is, the self finds itself in a state of integration with its environment. Unified experience does not mean that the self and the world are obliterated and replaced by something else, which is neither self nor world. Rather it means various factors constituting the experience are always coordinated with respect to each other. An “organized coordination” between the actions of organism and environment upon each other is maintained. When this coordination is disrupted, namely, when the organism is acted upon by the factors in the environment, the organism responds in such a way as to restore the integrated state returning once again to a state of “organized coordination.” During this ongoing process of integration/disruption/re-integration (Robb, 2005), the organism and the environment are in a state of interaction with respect to each other.

According to Dewey, there are no discrete events, things, items scattered around waiting to be integrated by some mysterious force or agent. A situation is a moving dynamic whole by virtue of mutual interactions of the factors involved. The conscious distinction into organism and environment are strictly correlative and contemporaneous. As soon as there is an organism we already have the environment. The two are the phases
of “one and the same forming co-ordination” (“The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology,” EW5: 109). Dewey calls this “forming co-ordination” the transactional character of experience. This means that the organism and the environment are not names of independent, antecedent entities. Rather they depend on each other for their very identity. The transaction is not between an entity called “the organism” existing independently on its own on the one hand, and another only larger entity called “the environment” on the other. The organism-environment is a transactional complex and each component or phase of the on-going transaction serves as the ground against which alone the other phase(s) emerges. In other words, each phase enters into the constitution of the other.

“Organism” and “environment” are correlative terms. They do not designate antecedent existents. Experience is not of an organism in an environment. That is, it is not the subjective experience of a person in an objectively given world. Rather, it is the qualitatively immediate and temporally unfolding dynamic organism-environment coordination as a whole. The concept of “transaction” “brings into focus a dynamic of mutual determination among things” (Robb, 2005, p. 177).

Dewey defines “organism” and “environment” as the factors of a unified temporal function, which he defines as “a moving equilibrium of integration.” Function is serial or temporal. This temporal phase introduces the ground of distinction between organism and environment; that is between those sets of factors that represent the maintenance of function (organism) and those which intervene first as disturbing and then as restoring equilibrium, (environment). (“Types of Philosophic Thought,” MW13: 378-80)

Temporality is the ground of distinctions between the organism and environment. The two function mutually and emerge as distinct only retrospectively. The “dynamic of
mutual determination” means that it is impossible for an organism to move or act in the world without being acted upon by the world. The organism-environment is one process. They are like the two ends of a lever. The lever is continuous. When one end of a lever is lowered, the other end is raised. Dewey continues:

First, [e]xperience as such, is neither subjective nor objective but, being a function that is a temporal process, includes all that is differentiated and labeled subjective and objective.

Second, [e]xperience is a moving process, in which are contained a rhythm of doing and modification, or inner disturbance effected by doing; acting and undergoing in consequence of the doing; with the need of adapting or using the undergoing—or “suffering”—so as to restore functional unity. . . . The character or quality of an experience depends upon the kind of connections, found in any case, between doing, undergoing, subsequent doing.

Third, [t]he distinction of subject and object is not simultaneous but has reference to phases or stages in a series. The self, subject, individual, like organism, refers to just those factors in a moving and re-organizing function which at any point in the process immediately and directly determine the going on of the process. The object, world, other or external, designates those factors which as influenced by these immediate factors tend to prevent their onward movement and which must be converted into meanings of its ongoing—an on-going no longer direct but a consequence. (“Types of Philosphic Thought,” MW13: 379-380)

The upshot of this passage is a radical challenge to the subject/object dualism of the philosophical tradition, where “consciousness” and “world” pre-exist each other and
only subsequently enter into causal relations. Dewey rejects this notion by accentuating the ineluctable interpenetration of the organism and its environment. Experience admits differentiation but as it is experienced it is a total moving function imbued with a certain quality. Organism and environment are the terms of a rhythmic doing-and-undergoing. As I touch the keys of my computer, I am also touched. Organism and environment change and are changed by each other. They do not pre-exist each other. They mutually emerge simultaneously in the course of an on-going process modifying, accommodating, and adjusting to each other.

Transaction, where the organism and its environment mutually interpenetrate, has both spatial and temporal dimensions. The status of spatiality is to be understood on the basis of a deeper temporal disclosure. For Dewey, “environment” extends from the proximately physical to the whole network of social and cultural institutional structures of our modern industrialized civilization that maintain themselves over time and are also subject to change in time.

The epidermis is only in the most superficial way an indication of where an organism ends and its environment begins. There are things inside the body that are foreign to it, and there are things outside of it that belong to it de jure, if not de facto; that must, that is, be taken possession of if life is to continue. On the lower scale, air and food materials are such things; on the higher, tools, whether the pen of the writer or the anvil of the blacksmith, utensils and furnishings, property, friends and institutions—all the supports and sustenances without which a civilized life cannot be. (Art as Experience, LW10: 64-65)

It is clear from the passage above that “environment” cannot simply be identified with physical spatial surroundings. It is much more than that. It includes all the active
connections at various levels that make a meaningful human life possible. “Environment” exists in relation to an organism to the extent that “it enters directly and indirectly into life-functions” that constitute the organism-environment transactions. Therefore, human life in its broadest sense provides the ground for the spatial dimension of self-world transactions. In human life, the self and the world are brought together in a qualitatively immediate and temporally unfolding dynamic situation.

The statement that individuals live in a world means, in the concrete, that they live in a series of situations. And when it is said that they live in these situations, the meaning of the word “in” is different from its meaning when it is said that pennies are “in” a pocket or paint is “in” a can. It means . . . that interaction is going on between an individual and objects and other persons. The conceptions of situation and of interaction are inseparable from each other. An experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment, whether the latter consists of persons with whom he is talking about some topic or event, the subject talked about being also a part of the situation; or the toys with which he is playing; the book he is reading (in which his environing conditions at the time may be England or ancient Greece or an imaginary region); or the materials of an experiment he is performing. The environment, in other words, is whatever conditions interact with personal needs, desires, purposes, and capacities to create the experience which is had. Even when a person builds a castle in the air he is interacting with the objects which he constructs in fancy. (Experience and Education, LW13: 25)
Life takes place “in a series of situations.” It does not take place in nature or in the world as if the latter were ontologically separate realms existing as a container of human experience. Human beings exist, that is, they have a meaningful-purposeful life, to the extent that they find themselves emerging in a situation, which is not a mere physical containment but an ongoing temporal process of “mutual interception, inflection, penetration” (Robb, 2005, p. 187) among the factors of the self-world transaction, in which meaning resides. The past, present, and future interpenetrate each other constituting the dynamically unfolding transaction. Individuals and the world they inhabit are mutually open to each other in a given situation. They mutually constitute each other within the situation.

The spatial dimension of this constitution is a function of the situation, and not the other way around. Individuals are not self-enclosed self-identical entities that endure through a series of self-enclosed events. A situation is not a series of atomic events that are somehow linked and held together by something external to it. For Dewey, situations are primary realities, basic units of philosophical analysis. They are “the wholes in terms of which the context qualitatively defines and reveals itself (Alexander, 1987, p. 104). Moreover, they are deeply determined as temporal phenomena, that is, they are not self-contained things or occurrences subsisting in an externally superimposed framework of space-time, which is assumed to be neutral with respect to any one situation. Rather, space and time obtain their meaning within the heterogenous (dynamically unfolding transactional) complexity of a given situation.

The elements of a situation are open to and interact with other elements in the situation. Dewey variously calls these elements “events,” “interactions,” and
“transactions.” Each situation is a whole integrated occurrence composed of events that have beginnings and endings. At the same time, it is a concurrence (“Context and Thought,” LW6: 9). Events work together to form a whole that is oriented towards an end. A singular element in a situation cannot be atomistically isolated—save for a particular purpose—from its neighbors in the recent past and near future. That would mean that the wider temporal context in which this singular element takes place is ignored. Each element acquires its meaning in relation to the broader context in which it interacts with other elements to form a qualitatively felt integral unity. As Dewey explains, each event “has movement from and towards within it; it is marked by waxings and wanings” (Experience and Nature, LW1: 385).

Since every event is also an interaction of different things, it is inherently characterized by something from which and to which [italics added]. The slide that starts with the slipping of the foot is not the same as that of a propelled sled; and it makes considerable difference to the slide as an event whether it terminates on rocks, water, or a pile of grass. The “from which” and “to which” qualify the event and make it, concretely, the distinctive event which it is. (“Context and Thought,” LW6: 10)

The events comprising the situation are not static components that are brought together externally. Rather, they are caught up in the dynamic of constant waxing and waning. They are alive; they are in motion. And they interpenetrate to form the qualitatively distinct situation where each element acquires its unique meaning. Each event inhabits the present in such a way that it is open to its deep and recent past and its immediate and remote future. In other words, it is not “an indivisible atom of time, a brute Now occupying a point on a continuum consisting of identical units stretching
backward into the past and forward into the future” (Robb, 2005, p. 191). Transactions take place in the present. However, as a present, it is temporally complex for “the present is constituted as a present precisely through its insertion into an on-going, unfolding situation, a ‘concurrence’ of vectors that constitute the present out of the inertial tendencies of the deep and recent past, and of their portentous relevance to the needs and aims, both immediate and remote, of the organisms or persons inhabiting that present” (Robb, 2005, pp. 191-92). What is temporally present—the union of what is experienced and how it is experienced—is a function of the way that experience “fits into a broader context of tendencies inherited from the past and reaching into the future” (Robb, 2005, p. 194).

The transactional analysis of self-world relationship reveals the non-atomistic conception of the present. Events comprising a situation are continuous with each other in so far as the “from which” and “to which” of any given event in the life of an organism-environment transaction establish the meaning of that event by connecting it with all the rest. The complex immediately-experienced whole within which we feel, think, and act is made possible by the continuities established between the “from which” and “to which.” The transactional situation is established as the “from which” and “to which” converge in the present, bringing the past and the future together. Being an integrated whole, the transactional situation cannot be understood as if it were composed out of independent elements. The three dimensions of time are held together internally. The temporal continuity brings a series of different situations together in such a way that the meaning of any event in the life of an individual is discovered in the ways it fits into the dynamic field of life-transactions.
For Dewey, the “from which” is basically the way past—through habits—is continuous with and constitutive of the meaning of the present transaction. The idea of habit is crucial for Dewey. Together with intelligence, which will be discussed next, it characterizes the way that individuals fit into their socio-physical environments. In Dewey’s view, habits are dispositions to action. This seemingly simplistic definition requires considerable unpacking lest it is trivialized. Dispositions are largely not objects of explicit thematic reflection. They function in pre-thematic ways. That is, they guide action based on patterns of behavior that have an automatic character. Moreover, these patterns of behavior are incorporated into the physical, bodily processes of the organism-environment transaction. That is, they are embodied action and pre-cognitively function to maintain the equilibrium of the transactional situation by integrating the needs of the organism with the materials of the environment. The emphasis on the transactional situation is meant to dispel the commonsense notion that an individual is an independent being to which habits subsequently accrue. On Dewey’s account, this is a complete misunderstanding for individuals do not have habits; they are their habits. The priority of the social suggests that “widespread uniformities of habit exist because individuals face the same situation and react in like fashion” (Human Nature and Conduct, MW14: 43) and not because “institutions, social custom, collective habit, have been formed by the consolidation of individual habits” (Human Nature and Conduct, MW14: 43). Individuals are thrown into specific socio-historical conditions that are already set by prior customs and each individual forms their personal habits in interaction with these prior conditions. The activities of the group are already there, and some assimilation of his own acts to their pattern is a prerequisite of a share therein, and hence of having any part in what is going on. (Human Nature and Conduct, MW14: 43)
To have any part in the on-going transaction, namely, to enter into effective connection with its environment—to live—the individual human self must have already acquired the collective custom and habits of his/her social group, that is, the self has already been funded with a certain past. S/he is a self to the extent that s/he is constituted by this past, by the habits into which it has been inculcated. The upshot of the priority of the social is that the individual is not an independent entity that has rather idiosyncratic habits. The individual is initially and for the most part entirely constituted by the collective habits of the social group it has been thrown into. There is no self prior to its being inserted into sociality. Self emerges out of sociality, which is a transactional situation with its “from which” and “to which.” The “from which” aspect that constitutes the meaning of the temporal present (the transaction) exerts its influence in an intimate but to a large extent pre-reflective subconscious way. “From which” is the force of past that opens us to the present transaction and demands of us for action.

. . . all habits are affections, that all have projectile power, and that a predisposition formed by a number of specific acts is an immensely more intimate and fundamental part of ourselves than are vague, general, conscious choices. All habits are demands for certain kinds of activity; and they constitute the self. In any intelligible sense of the word will, they are will. They form our effective desires and they furnish us with our working capacities. They rule our thoughts, determining which shall appear and be strong and which shall pass from light into obscurity. (Human Nature and Conduct, MW14: 21-22)

The past opens us to the present through the habitual constitution of the self. Our embodied habits serve as enabling conditions for the development of the present transaction. Through habits the embodied self inhabits the world. The mind, body and the
world act in concert thanks to the role of habit in the constitution of human experience. Habits do not exist in insulated compartments. They are not merely “a juxtaposition of disconnected reactions to separated situations” (Human Nature and Conduct, MW14: 29-30). Habits “interpenetrate” (Human Nature and Conduct, MW14: 29-30) so as to form a unity where “situations are continuous” (Human Nature and Conduct, MW14: 29-30). Continuities that obtain from one situation to another make the “interpenetration of habits” possible. The past interfuses with the present. The interpenetration of self and world in the transactional situation is based on and contemporaneous with the interpenetration of habits.

The basic characteristic 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. The principle of habit so understood obviously goes deeper than the ordinary conception of a habit as a more or less fixed way of doing things, although it includes the latter as one of its special cases. It covers the formation of attitudes, attitudes that are emotional and intellectual; it covers our basic sensitivities and ways of meeting and responding to all the conditions which we meet in living. From this point of view, the principle of continuity of experience [italics added] 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. (Experience and Education, LW13: 18-19)

That which experience takes up from those which have gone before primarily refers to habits as the bearers of the past on the present, that is, the present meaning of the
past. Habits are the forms of pastness that the transactional situation incorporates as an essential part to its structure (Robb, 2005). The life history of human beings is presently manifested in their “habitudes and habituations” (“Body and Mind,” LW3: 32), which are not to be solely identified with the rigid execution of a certain set of skills that was acquired some time ago. For Dewey, habits are not to be understood in only negative terms as recalcitrant dispositions that limit and restrict our ability to adapt to the world in flux. Habits are not merely inhibitory forces. On the contrary, they enable action in the present by opening the world to us and us to the world. The quality of our relation to present circumstances depends on the adaptability of our habits to “new emergencies.”

Habit is an ability, an art, formed through past experience. But whether an ability is limited to repetition of past acts adapted to past conditions or is available for new emergencies depends wholly upon what kind of habit exists. (Human Nature and Conduct, MW14: 48)

Habit originally is an enabling force. It degenerates into ways of action that harden into mechanical, routinized, mindless dispositions to the extent that “intelligence is disconnected from them” (Democracy and Education, MW9: 53). The single most important quality that habits originally possess is their receptivity to novelty: an openness to the world in its on-going dynamic unfolding. To the extent that habit is infused with “intelligence,” it “brings relations or references to the past and the future together, allowing them to coalesce in the current context of action. Although habits always reflect the past, when they are characterized by intelligence, “they also effect an opening [italics added], in the one possessed of the habit, toward the future” (Robb, 2005, p. 217). Habits expand and enrich experience, the meaning of the transactional present, to the extent that they are intelligently employed, that is, not only they establish continuities between the
past and the present, they also “effect an opening toward the future.” Intelligence, for Dewey, is the ability to see an event not as an isolated thing but in its connection with the past, present, and future events. Habits establish continuities that bind past and present; intelligence does exactly the same thing binding present and future. The unity and coherence within the transaction comes into being as the “from which” and “to which” are brought to bear on each other.

As the primary temporal reference of habit is to the past, the primary temporal reference of intelligence is to the future. As present conditions are referred to future results and future consequences to present conditions, the meaning of the present and the meaning of the future are connected (Democracy and Education, MW9: 110). Future has meaning to the extent that it is “the future of this present, and thus as related to, continuous with, the current transactional situation” (Robb, 2005, p. 222). Intelligence, as the futural component of experience, is the way in which a future possibility is foreseen and the resources and difficulties of the present situation are taken into account to act with an aim towards that possibility within the transactional field. Intelligence renders the future an outgrowth and consequence of present circumstances. It establishes continuities between the present state of affairs and future consequences of our acts.

The preoccupation of experience with things which are coming (are now coming, not just to come) is obvious to any one whose interest in experience is empirical [in the sense Dewey rehabilitates this term; he is not referring to its use in British empiricism]. Since we live forward; since we live in a world where changes are going on whose issue means our weal or woe; since every act of ours modifies these changes and hence is fraught with promise, or charged with hostile
energies—what should experience be but a future implicated in a present! ("The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy," MW10: 9)

For Dewey, experience is fundamentally oriented toward the future significance of the changes in the environment for these have a direct influence on the success and failure of the living creature. The self acts intelligently within the transactional situation to the extent that it is aware of the mutual determination and co-implication of events and its own contribution to the emerging situation. This awareness cannot be achieved outside of the transaction and is not that of a disinterested observer.

As activity becomes more complex, coordinating a greater number of factors in space and time, intelligence plays a more and more marked role, for it has a larger span of the future to forecast and plan for. The effect upon the theory of knowing is to displace the notion that it is the activity of a mere onlooker or spectator of the world, the notion which goes with the idea of knowing as something complete in itself. For the . . . living creature is a part of the world, sharing its vicissitudes and fortunes, and making itself secure in its precarious dependence only as it intellectually identifies itself with the things about it, and, forecasting the future consequences of what is going on, shapes its own activities accordingly. If the living, experiencing being is an intimate participant in the activities of the world to which it belongs, then knowledge is a mode of participation, valuable in the degree in which it is effective. It cannot be the idle view of an unconcerned spectator. (Democracy and Education, MW9: 347)

The experiencing being belongs to the world and intimately partakes in its activities. It actively participates in the constitution of the transactional situation. It acts
but is also acted upon. It shapes but is also shaped. It does and suffers, acts and undergoes. It is both active and receptive. Intelligence is the recognition of the dynamic reciprocity of acting and undergoing, doing and suffering. It is “a mode of participation,” a way of being in the world. It is the way an engaged participant lives the richly textured life by making ever-deeper and –wider connections between the events unfolding within a situation. Making ever-deeper and –wider connections requires an openness and receptivity to novel emergencies. Only a self who is most fully alive to its own habituated positions and possibilities is capable of anticipating a future with indeterminate significance of things. Only a self infused with “intelligent habit” is capable of receiving the future in its novel possibilities. Habit severed from the purposive directedness of intelligence pointing to the future is entrapped in a dimensionless Now and degenerates into mindless repetitive rigidity.

*Part 3.3 The Consummatory Experience*

The aesthetic for Dewey “marks the fulfillment of the impulsion of the self toward embodied meaning and value” (Alexander, 1987, p. 258) which is realized within a pervasive qualitative whole. He contends that through the aesthetic we are, as it were, introduced into a world beyond this world which is nevertheless the deeper reality of the world in which we live in our ordinary experiences. We are carried out beyond ourselves to find ourselves . . . the work of art operates to deepen and to raise to great clarity that sense of *an enveloping undefined whole* [italics added] that accompanies every normal experience. This whole is then felt as an expansion of ourselves. (*Art as Experience*, LW10: 199)

The world we are introduced into through the aesthetic is exactly the same world of
ordinary experience except here our activities “are directed toward achieving and sustaining experiences which make life an integrated, significant, and organized whole” (Alexander, 1987, p. 184). The deeper reality of our ordinary everyday world is not a different world. The deeper reality of our ordinary everyday world is not a metaphysical world. The deeper reality of our ordinary everyday world is this world. It is the same world experienced in a unified fulfilling way. Fragmentary and therefore anaesthetic everyday world is transformed into an aesthetic integrated this world by an understanding of the way pervasive qualitative whole functions. For Dewey, ordinary experience is evaluated to be fractured, fragmented, unfulfilling, and meaningless when it is not lived with an openness to and awareness of a sense of “an enveloping undefined whole.” For him, the aesthetic is an intense realization of the presence of this enveloping undefined whole in all experience (Art as Experience, LW10: 199). Dewey contends that this realization is not something mysterious or strange although it might initially feel that way since our ordinary experience is oftentimes dispersed and distracted, devoid of a sense of unity and wholeness. It is Dewey’s claim that the presence of this enveloping undefined whole is the very possibility for everyday experience to take on the quality of integrated fulfillment.

Through the presence of this quality of integrated fulfillment, mundane experience composes itself into what Dewey calls “an experience” (Art as Experience, LW10: 42).

[W]e have an experience when the material experienced runs its course to fulfillment. Then and then only is it integrated within and demarcated in the general stream of experience from other experiences. A piece of work is finished
in a way that is satisfactory; a problem receives its solution; a game is played through; a situation, whether that of eating a meal, playing a game of chess, carrying on a conversation, writing a book, or taking part in a political campaign, is so rounded out that its close is a *consummation and not a cessation* [italics added]. Such an experience is a whole and carries with it its own individualizing quality and self-sufficiency. It is *an* experience. (*Art as Experience*, LW10: 42)

Dewey is very much disturbed by the fact that most experience today is not “*an* experience.” That is, our lives mostly consist of an unconsummated series of occasions where “*an* experience” is never realized. Consummation, for Dewey, “is not merely a terminus or an ending, but a moment which brings a process to fulfillment: it is the outcome of a guided process of action which organizes and unifies the experience. . . . Such experiences are the realization of a *temporal* [italics added] process and are unified by a distinctive quality” (Alexander, 1987, p. 200). What makes “*an* experience” a qualitatively unified temporal process having its own beginning and end is the structure of the kind of world we live in. The world we live in does not consist of a “uniform uninterrupted march or flow” (*Art as Experience*, LW10: 42). Rather, “it is a thing of histories, each with its own plot, its own inception and movement toward its close, each having its own particular rhythmic movement; each with its own unrepeated quality pervading it throughout” (*Art as Experience*, LW10: 42-43).

“*An* experience” cannot be characterized as an uninterrupted undifferentiated uniform flow. Nevertheless, it is a flow organized in such a way that an intense sense of an integrating quality reveals a dimension of the meaning of human life. The flow is composed of distinct phases which are, nevertheless, organized into a continuity that
“coherently relates and connects the phases so that the outcome will be the end of a process and not an isolated, meaningless event” (Alexander, 1987, p. 201).

Because of continuous merging, there are no holes, mechanical junctions, and dead centers when we have an experience. There are pauses, places of rest, but they punctuate and define the quality of movement. They sum up what has been undergone and prevent its dissipation and idle evaporation. . . . In a work of art, different acts, episodes, occurrences melt and fuse into unity, and yet do not disappear and lose their own character as they do so—just as in a genial conversation there is a continuous interchange and blending, and yet each speaker not only retains his own character but manifests it more clearly than is his wont. An experience has a unity that gives it its name, that meal, that storm, that rupture of friendship. The existence of this unity is constituted by a single quality that pervades the entire experience in spite of the variation of its constituent parts. This unity is neither emotional, practical, nor intellectual, for these terms name distinctions that reflection can make within it. (Art as Experience, LW10: 43-44)

The enveloping undefined whole—which cannot be reduced to the sum of its parts—endures in its successive phases, which are constituted as a temporal development of an underlying quality which is the source of embodied meaning and value. When such a quality is not engaged, “the experience had is inchoate. Things are experienced but not in such a way that they are composed into an experience. There is distraction and dispersion; what we observe and what we think, what we desire and what we get, are at odds with each other” (Art as Experience, LW10: 42). Unconsummated experience, either in the form of an aimless drift or mechanical efficiency, comes to an end but not to
a close or consummation in consciousness. What makes an experience consummatory is
the possession of an “internal integration and fulfillment reached through ordered and
organized movement” (Art as Experience, LW10: 45). Not only is there a sense of
direction, there is also a sense of how the individually demarcated phases and activities
are interconnected. An experience is not an oceanic state of bliss. On the contrary, there
are tensions and obstacles, but these are overcome in such a way that they feed the
overall growing meaning of experience as it unfolds “toward an end that is felt as
accomplishment of a process” (Art as Experience, LW10: 45).

The end, however, is not necessarily a happy ending. As Dewey mentions in the
passage quoted above, “that rupture of friendship” is as much an experience as, say, a
first-rate translation of Dewey’s Art as Experience into Turkish [which I intend to do in
the near future]. The rupture of a friendship can be a consummatory experience, and
hence, is pervaded by an aesthetic quality, despite its undesirable conclusion to the extent
that it exemplifies wholehearted action with a sense of what it has been about. Such a
sense is achieved because the successive parts constituting the experience are not
connected with one another only mechanically from outside; rather, they are composed
into a unity that has a developing movement toward its own consummation. The
consummatory unity Dewey has in mind is not a timeless unity. Rather,

it is an affair of temporal development. Not only is there progression, but there is
progressive integration which gathers the temporal phases together as belonging,
relating to each other, sustaining and interacting with each other in a tensive,
dramatic unity [italics added] so that there is a cumulative sense of an overall
event being accomplished or brought to completion. Each phase or moment must
be grasped as a phase or part of a larger whole; the sense of the whole must be present in the part. While in most experiences the unifying qualitative sense of the whole, which ultimately constitutes the horizon of meaning, is left tacit, in an experience this is consciously apprehended and realized so that the sense of the experience is the presence of its meaning, felt as a guiding, controlling qualitative unity pervading all the various parts in their variety. (Alexander, 1987, pp. 201-202)

The reason the unifying qualitative sense of the whole is mostly not consciously experienced is that “rigid abstinence, coerced submission, tightness on one side and dissipation, incoherence and aimless indulgence on the other, are deviations in opposite directions from the unity of an experience” (Art as Experience, LW10: 47). This suggests that the potential for any mundane experience to be an experience is always present to the extent that the anesthetic is dispelled. The anesthetic is dispelled when experience is perceived to have a pattern and structure; that is, when the relationship between doing and undergoing is perceived. According to Dewey, transactions between the individual and the world s/he dwells in constitute a process whereby a mutual adaptation of the self and the aspects of the world the self is interacting with gradually emerges. As the self interacts with some aspect of the world in which it lives, it at once does something and in consequence undergoes something, suffers something.
CHAPTER 4

THE DIALECTICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN “CONSUMMATORY EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING” AND “EDUCATIVE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE”

In this section, which constitutes the very heart of the dissertation, a persistent attempt will be made to explicate the connection between, on the one hand, the philosophical (and somewhat heavy) exposition of Dewey’s concept of experience and its temporal and hence consummatory nature with, on the other, education as it is experienced by a teacher in a classroom situation. Accordingly, it shall be argued that only when the experience of teaching is consummatory, that is, when it is already imbued with a unified heightened sense of meaning, can classroom experience become truly educative, that is, meaningful. Put negatively, unless the experience of teaching is consummatory, classroom experience degenerates into miseducative (anesthetic, routinized, dull, mechanical, lifeless, numbed, mindless) experience, that is, experience that no longer grows. The relationship between the consummatory experience of teaching and the educative classroom experience is dialectical, which is to suggest that a straightforward causal relationship between the two never obtains. Dewey’s notion of experience definitively rules out the possibility of an overly simplistic idea of a causal relationship between the experience of teaching and learning. In Dewey’s philosophy of experience, teaching and learning are reciprocally constitutive of each other. The transaction between teaching and learning is “a single structure, not two separate, discrete structures which somehow causally ‘act’ upon one another” (Kestenbaum, 1977, p. 1).

Consummatory experience of teaching, in other words, does not cause educative classroom experience to take place. That is, teaching does not cause learning for meaning
is not a spatial object to be transferred from one place to another. It is not like first the teacher has a consummatory experience within herself whereby a heightened sense of meaning is obtained and secured and then s/he transmits the essence of this experience, this meaning, to her students as part of her job (and gets paid for it based on how many objects and at what rate she transfers for the idea is, since these objects are spatial and spatial only, we can absolutely quantify them as well as their transfer rate and therefore can calculate how much we need to pay the teacher). This conception of meaning as a spatial object rather than a temporal unfolding event prevents us from understanding humans as sense-giving beings “on a level of experience which precedes, or is prior to, the conscious positing of distinct objects of cognitive awareness” (Kestenbaum, 1977, p. 25).

As has been discussed in Chapter 3, according to Dewey, experience does not have a simple location. It is not primarily a spatial affair. It is temporal. In the context of teaching and learning this means that meaning is not a circumscribed object of cognition to be moved around. Rather it is situational. Meaning is a temporally complex field experience. It does not first take place in the mind of the teacher and then is transferred to the minds of the students. This sense of teaching and learning is hopelessly simplistic and exceedingly misleading. Education is situational for meaning is situational. Teaching and learning as a dialectical process of meaning happens in a situation. One does not cause the other. It is not a causal relationship. Rather it is a happening, a lived experience that unfolds in time. Situation is Dewey’s way of describing the process of the emergence and transformation of meaning in time. It is about how meaning is experienced in time. It is not about knowledge and information per se as time-free objects of disinterested static
cognition destined for categorization, classification, storage and manipulation; it is about lived meaning that unfolds in time.

In this juncture, it is helpful to interpret the terms “consummatory experience of teaching” and “educative classroom experience” as constituting the opposing poles of a single dynamically unfolding unified field process of meaning. Consummatory and educative experiences, in short, are about meaning, that is, meaningful experience, which, incidentally, cannot be spatialized and taken out of a temporal context, that is, meaningful experience is not something (like a loaf of bread) that can be set on a kitchen table and sliced up when needed. The bread does not just sit there forever; it eventually goes bad for at no point in time is it alone sitting there by itself. It is never a spatial object in isolation. It is always part of an organic transactional dynamic whole that is constantly undergoing change. According to Dewey, experience is meaningful only when the rhythm of experience is allowed to run its course unimpeded. When we are oblivious to the rhythmic (temporal) nature of experience—the integration-disruption-reintegration cycle—our experience becomes stunted, and it soon dies; growth stops. A pervasive meaninglessness takes over.

As has been argued in the previous sections, consummatory experience, the unimpeded continuous flow of the rhythm of experience, is an antidote to such meaninglessness and therefore makes truly educative experience possible. In other words, only meaningful experience (consummatory experience) can become a site for growth, that is, a site for a more meaningful experience to unfold for oneself as well as leading to a meaningful experience (educative experience) in others. In a more formulaic manner, it can be stated that when experience is meaningful, it then becomes educative. The
dialectical relationship between the consummatory experience of teaching and the educative classroom experience leads to *growth* (as enhanced heightened experience of meaning) in the teacher(s) as well as the students for it is a single reciprocal process. Since the focus of this dissertation is the consummatory experience of teaching, that is, what makes the experience of teaching meaningful from the teacher’s perspective, this dialectical relationship of meaning will now be explored in relation to the process of *being* and *becoming* a teacher. That is, by inquiring more closely into what it means to be a teacher and how one becomes a teacher, we will gain an invaluable insight into the dialectical relationship between the consummatory experience of teaching and the educative classroom experience from the teaching side of things.

Looking from the teaching side of things, however, does not indicate that we are looking at the so-called “subjective” world of the teacher—whatever is transpiring in her private mind (her intimate emotions, intuitions, thoughts, and so forth) in isolation from the rest of the world—at the expense of the “objective” conditions of teaching. The whole tenor of the Deweyan critique of the positivistic models of inquiry is to reject the separation and disjoining of the “subjective” world of the teacher and the “objective” classroom environment. By providing a radically new understanding of the concept of experience—inspired and influenced by the wholistic *Bildung* tradition—Dewey has pointed to the dimension of lived meaning that is experienced in a unified way prior to any bifurcation into subjective and objective elements.

*Part 4.1 Being and Becoming a Teacher*

What does it *mean* to be a teacher and how does one become a teacher? In other words, how does one *experience* being a teacher and how does this experience grow?
In a very general sense, being a teacher is about *being in a classroom* just like being a doctor is about being in a hospital, or being a lawyer is about being in a courthouse, or being a pilot is about being in a cockpit of an airplane. In an everyday understanding, it does not make sense to imagine a doctor without a hospital, or a lawyer without a courthouse, or a pilot without a plane. They usually go together. At least, we expect them to go together. Similarly, a public school teacher without a classroom does not make sense. Being a teacher, in other words, is essentially about being in a classroom, that is, experiencing the classroom situation in a consummatory way, in a meaningful unified way. The unitary experience of being a teacher in a classroom merits further elaboration.

When you are a teacher, you simply get up early in the morning and go to school, for instance. Why do you get up so early in the morning and go to school? Well, because you are a teacher and that’s what teachers do. They are expected to get up early in the morning and go to school. Yes, but why? Well, simply put, because it is their *world*; it is the world of a teacher and you are in this world, and this world is experienced in a meaningful way. Getting up early in the morning and going to school is the sensible thing to do. It is what makes sense. Just like the life of a farmer who gets up even earlier and immediately starts doing the chores makes sense in the world of a farmer, the life of a teacher makes sense in the world of a teacher. Where does this meaning come from? You do not every time you get up early in the morning deliberately assign meaning to this world in an external way as if the world and you were two separate distinct things. You are compelled to get up early in the morning and go to school not because you think about it, deliberate, and finally decide to go to school. Rather, you just do it without
reflecting on it for you find yourself in a situation that already makes sense. You are part of a larger unified whole that makes sense.

You have a classroom you are in charge of. You have a subject matter you are responsible for. You have students you care about. You have colleagues you need to consult with. The world of a teacher you meaningfully inhabit is neither just a world of your imagination, something you have created in your mind, nor something that is totally external and independent of you. It is neither an internal private world nor a strange external world. Rather, you are already outside of yourself absorbed in and committed to myriad activities that as a whole make sense. You are a teacher.

When you are a teacher, you are already absorbed in the world of a teacher. Being a teacher means being already absorbed in the life of a teacher. You are unreflectively absorbed in the everyday life of a teacher. Unless you are going through a crisis of meaning, you do not generally ask why you get up so early in the morning and go to school. It does not even occur to you to ask such a “silly” question. The reason is that there is no need to ask such a question for the world of being a teacher already makes sense to you. It is a unified field experience and you are already given to it. You are already committed to it.

For Dewey, the world of a teacher consists of living in a series of interlocking situations. These situations are qualitative wholes. That is, they are qualitatively experienced. There is a certain quality to getting up early in the morning. If you are not a morning person, the experience of getting up early in the morning is not undergone in enjoyment. Rather, it is quite torturous. You complain and moan about it. In contrast, if you are a morning person, the experience is refreshing. Not only that, you might also feel
more productive in the morning and therefore get most of the preparations for your classes done in the early morning hours before you even get to school. As you get up early in the morning and get ready for school, you anticipate what you will be doing in your classes, what kind of materials you will need, how you are going to review the things you did the previous day, how you are going to expand on the lessons covered previously, how you are going to deal with Ryan, who happens to have concentration problems, how you will relate today’s topic to what you have so far discussed, and so forth.

As a teacher, you anticipate all these and many more situations each of which is imbued with a certain overall quality and linked with one another in a temporal unfolding. Through such anticipation, you psychologically prepare yourself for the day ahead, trying to foresee some of the possible problems and also think of possible ways to resolve them even before they arise. In other words, you find yourself already engaged with the meaning of the events of the recent and remote past as well as the imminent and far-off future—the “from which” and “to which” of the transactional situation. There is a certain direction and orientation in time. You are extended backwards and forwards in time; and you do this without even thinking about it.

Once you get to school, you realize that you know your way around. You know how to orient yourself in the school environment. Once again, there is a certain pervasive quality to your experience of the place. You know the place, and not just the physical layout but how every single room feels like. Perhaps this morning there is an overall welcoming atmosphere. There is a palpable excitement in the air and you are in a good mood as well. Last night the school’s basketball team had a victory in the semi-finals.
Your throat is still sore from all that dedicated cheering. Also you are excited about the activities you have planned for your freshman English class. You are going to have them debate the pros and cons of human cloning. You feel good to be here. There is a certain upbeat quality to it. The familiarity with your environment makes you feel at home. After getting your coffee in the teachers’ lounge, you are headed to your classroom greeting people on your way with a generous smile. The quality that runs through every single encounter, every single interaction with the physical and social environment, with the objects and the people, is experienced with certain significance. The qualitative experience of the place gives meaning to each interaction and binds them together (“Qualitative Thought,” LW5: 245). Everything makes sense. You are absorbed in the world of being a teacher.

Your morning group is composed of students of a staggering range of abilities, socioeconomic levels, and ethnic backgrounds. You teach freshman English and sophomore social studies. Gary, one of the students in your freshman English class, comes from a single-parent home. He, his mother, and four siblings live in a three-room apartment. The family is on welfare. It is difficult to get him to respond to anything. You really do not know how to handle the situation. Your interaction with him is pervaded by uncertainty and uneasiness. Jessica is a bright student who is responsive in class. She is the daughter of a professor of chemistry at the state university. She is intellectually advanced for her age. She is very creative with her writing and receptive to your unconventional ways of getting them to think outside the box. She likes you and you can see that in her eyes. A certain sense of ease and spontaneity runs through your interaction with her.
The pre-reflective absorption in the world of being a teacher, the temporally unfolding series of qualitatively experienced situational wholes, entails that you as a teacher already have a certain understanding of who you are as a teacher, who your students are, where they come from, what their needs are, what each individual’s strengths and weaknesses are, and what you think you should do to reach out to them, how to present the subject matter, how to modify it based on their interests and backgrounds, and so forth. Whether you entered this profession out of dedication for this is the profession—or rather, vocation—in which you find your greatest fulfillment, or out of desperation for your anxious parents were concerned that you get a teaching certificate as an insurance policy against future unemployment (Shuman, 1989, p. 9), you find yourself in a situation, that is, you always already experience the world of being a teacher in a meaningful way colored with a certain quality. Being a teacher is therefore being in the world of a teacher. This world is situational, experienced qualitatively, and it unfolds in time. In short, it is dramatic in the sense that every situation has a peculiar gravity to it. Furthermore, you are given to it; it is not something you entirely control.

Consummatory teaching experience then is about experiencing the world of being a teacher in a heightened sense of situated meaning. As has been shown before, for Dewey, experience is a meaningful qualitatively experienced situational whole. Consummatory experience is a heightened sense of the meaning of this whole, which can be qualitatively positive or negative. Your sense of being a teacher can be experienced in a very fulfilling gratifying manner, or it can be experienced as a heavy strangulating suffocating unbearable experience. In either case, it is consummatory. Consummation, despite its connotations, should not be equated with completion, an end state, a happy
ending, so to speak. Rather, it simply indicates a state of heightened meaning that opens up the possibility of further growth. When we experience such a state, when our experience is consummatory, we gain a keen and discerning understanding of the meaning of the situation we find ourselves in and based on this understanding we act in such a way that, having learnt something vital about ourselves and our relationship with the world we inhabit, we restore the integrated state of being with the world. Such an integration, however, is not a timeless perfection whereby a state of bliss overcomes us and all conflicts and tensions melt away. On the contrary, when our experience is consummatory, a dynamic state ridden with tensions unfolding in a dramatic way is realized.

In other words, we acknowledge the gravity of the situation—its limitations and possibilities—and respond to it in the most appropriate way at a given particular moment. Acknowledging the gravity of the situation, that is, seizing the meaning of the dramatic unfolding of events in time, is not solely a pristine cognitive process for we are not detached observers outside of time, outside the flow of events. Rather we are in time; we are flowing in time. We do not see everything at once in a timeless fashion. Some of the elements comprising the events are obscure. The meaning of the events is not clearly disclosed once and for all. We do not have a perfect understanding of the situation at any given time. The picture is always whole but incomplete. Like a pebble thrown into a still pond creating ever-growing waves, each ripple is a whole but at the same time is constantly expanding and growing thicker. It is the movement, and the ability to move and be moved within it, that is consummatory. Consummation does not mean a perfect eternal timeless understanding of the meaning of the situation. Consummation is not a
timeless complete apprehension of meaning. Rather it is a heightened sense of the lived meaning, of the movement of life. The movement of life—the cognitive moment, if you will—cannot be captured in isolation; it cannot exist apart from our ability to move (the experience of doing, that is, action) and our ability to be moved (the experience of being affected, that is, emotion).

**Part 4.1.1 Chronological and phenomenological time.**

In the practice of teaching, in *teaching qua praxis* (Roth, 2002), this heightened sense of situated meaning comes from an understanding of the temporal character of teaching. Roth (2002) gives a concise account of this process in the following manner:

Teaching, as all practical activity, unfolds in time, irreversibly, without deliberating each single act, in a continuous series of acts (in the sense of deeds) that constitutes the life of a teacher. As teachers, we engage in the heat of the moment and thereby commit ourselves to consequences, which, depending on the extent of our experience, we can anticipate only to some (varying) degree. (p. 3)

Roth (2002) argues that understanding the work and experience of teaching—the world of being a teacher—requires that we distinguish “praxis as a lived experience from praxis as re-presented (made present again) in theory” (p. 6). He associates the re-presentation of lived experiences in theory with the so-called “chronological time,” which “has become the paradigm of science and modern life more generally” (p. 6). He points out that despite its paradigmatic pervasiveness, the way humans experience time cannot be reduced to only one modality, that is, chronological time. He claims that we can have a greater appreciation of teaching as lived experience—the world of being and becoming a teacher—if we focus on the modality of time referred to as “phenomenological time.”
As a long-time teacher himself, Roth (2002) does not hide his frustration with theories of teaching that did not describe his experience of teaching. He is convinced that theories of teaching that see teaching as a rational activity and therefore that focus on “reflective practice or the tripart classification of teacher knowledge into pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge, are inappropriate” (p. 21) and do not capture the crucial elements in understanding teaching.

Reflecting on my own experience, I noted that in becoming a teacher, there was a development in my capacity to do the right thing at the right moment. I am interested in the immediacy of teaching, which is always experienced in this classroom at this time and with these students. (p. 21)

The immediacy of teaching and that ability to do the right thing at the right moment cannot be captured and understood by models of positivistic educational science that operate within the modality of chronological time. Chronological time “is an outcome of reflection and, as such, thought from the present” (Roth, 2002, p. 7). That is, it arises “with the human capacity for reflection and the ability to simultaneously (re-)present objects and events that normally do not simultaneously occur to us” (Roth, 2002, p. 7).

Using a model of time presented by Müller (1973), Roth (2002) derives a set of conceptual relations where “past, present, and future each have to be considered from the inside of time [italics added], that is, in terms of past, present, and future” (p. 6). Looking at time from the inside of time gives us a structure X[Y], which should be read in the form of “Y as appearing in X” (Roth, 2002, p. 6). Applied to chronological time, this gives rise to “Pr[Pa] (‘the past as it appears in the present’), Pr[Pr] (‘the present as it
appears in the present’), and Pr[Fu] (‘the future as it appears in the present’)” (Roth, 2002, p. 7).

As an ensemble, this structure of time simultaneously re-presents events that really occur at different moments of time. In this way, it allows for the construction of logical connections between aspects of the past, present, and future that are simultaneously given in the present. In this sense, this mode makes possible the nature of theory as we know it, which fundamentally requires the simultaneous presence of objects and events that in practice never occur simultaneously. (Roth, 2002, p. 8)

Because empirical science is concerned with and exclusively committed to the chronological mode of time, “it captures from the totality of human experience only those aspects that can be made to appear in the present simultaneously, those aspects that can be re-presented” (Roth, 2002, p. 8). Because of its nature, chronological time cannot relate to the experience of the moment, nor does it seek to. The ability to re-present the past, present, and the future at once in front of our eyes is quite a remarkable achievement the fruit of which is, more than anything else, a sense of certainty, and thereby, a sense of security, for you see everything in front of you now. By revealing a complete picture of the world and our place in it, as the past, present, and the future are all interlocked seamlessly and simultaneously presented, we derive an immense satisfaction from our ability to see, understand, and therefore control our world, which is now given to us in a timeless fashion without the vagaries of time threatening to destroy the very structure that sustains us through unexpected and inexplicable change. This is indeed the goal of
positivistically oriented scientific cognition: a cognition of the complete, unchanging, timeless picture of the world.

Despite its eternal allure, throughout the history of Western thought, philosophers, most notably Henri Bergson, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and of course, John Dewey, have pointed out the impossibility of reducing “the carnival of life” (Harman, 2005) to a static cognition. In contrast to chronological time, phenomenological time is related to the experience of the moment—in Deweyan terms, the experience of the situation—in which “the carnival of life” with all its vicissitudes unfolds in a continuous irreversible dramatic flow. What is brought into relief in the experience of phenomenological time is the “duration” of the moment, and not an infinite series of “now” points without beginning and end. Rather than a complete cognitive picture given in the present without a beginning and an end, that is, without a sense of going anywhere, without a sense of an unfolding drama, “the sensation of duration of the moment arises from a sense of the immediate future and immediate past in the present” (Roth, 2002, p. 8). Using Müller’s conventions, that dramatic duration, that sense of the impending future and the “‘thickness’ that stands in contrast to the present as an infinitesimal line separating future and past” (Roth, 2002, p. 8) can be depicted as “Fu[Pr] (‘the present as it will appear in the (immediate) future’)” and “Pa[Pr] (‘the present as it appears in the (recent) past’)” (p. 8).

The dramatic flow that is experienced in phenomenological time is a composite structure constituted by cognition—the knowledge content which can be abstracted from this flow through the work of the chronological mode of time—emotion—the qualitatively unified sense of the flow that we undergo—and action—the living
experience of being and becoming a teacher. These three elements are brought together in *teaching qua praxis*. Praxis, as traditionally used by Aristotle, is meaningful and concernful activity based upon mutual human recognition and unrestrained communication. Such an activity, always purposeful, can only take place in the company of a shared human community in which our life as truly human individuals unfolds in and as a life of social practice and social activity (Wilber, 1996, pp. 167-168). The chronological-theoretical time, which is embedded within the qualitative wholeness of emotional comportment and actualized in action, is part of praxis, that is, it is part of a concernful and meaningful lived experience of human individuals within the context of a shared human community, which is disclosed through phenomenological mode of time.

The chronological mode of time therefore captures only the cognitive component of experience. That is, it provides a picture of the world that is static and unmoving, which is useful as far as it goes. However, it does not provide the arena itself where human interaction and exchange of shared understandings take place. In short, cognition is part of a larger whole. Theory does not come first, that is, it is not prior to and independent of practice; and practice is not an application of theory. As it turns out, practice (lived experience, *praxis*) comes first, and theory acquires its meaning to the extent that it is embedded within practice, that is, theory is meaningful to the extent that it arises from out of practice and returns to it in a rhythmic movement. This, in a nutshell, is the essence of education as *Bildung*.

Let me now turn to the classroom situation depicted earlier in Part 3.1 to illustrate the differences between the two modes of time and how they relate to each other. Teaching the social foundations of American public education is a consummatory
experience for me. What makes my experience as a teacher in this class consummatory is its temporality, that is, the dialectical relationship between the two modes of time, the give-and-take between the chronological and phenomenological time, the constant back and forth between what is entirely present to me in my mind—the cognitive moment—and how this presence, this cognitive-theoretical content, plays out in actual classroom situation with my students.

Let’s look at the cognitive moment first in more detail. Incidentally, the ensuing analysis assumes that the teachers in question (Prof. David Owen and myself) have a considerable command of the subject matter they teach and have mastered to a respectable degree the content knowledge relevant to their discipline. In other words, they are not beginning teachers. Therefore, it can be safely assumed that the cognitive moments that will be analyzed below are those experienced by proficient teachers. Why this is important will become clearer as we proceed.

**Part 4.1.2 Two cognitive moments.**

Before walking into the classroom (or even writing up the course syllabus) I already have a theoretical understanding in my mind, a complete picture of what I want to convey to my students. A basic motif around which I will weave the entire course is completely present, that is, visible in its entirety—all the parts and the way they are all connected simultaneously given—to my inner eye. There is a certain theme to the course as a whole, and I know what it is for I can see it. It is clear to me what I want to cover in this course. I know what to teach. I can see the whole course in front of my eyes. This is my course. It is mine for I have mastered it to a considerable degree.
As is obvious to any teacher who has achieved such a clear picture of what they teach, to be able to see the whole picture in front of you is extremely gratifying for it gives one a great sense of control and command. All the parts that go into the make up of the whole picture are seamlessly given. You know what parts there are and how they hang together and in what sequence they follow each other. You are in command of the material you are to teach for it is the product of your years of engagement with it. You have put time into it. You are not just being told to teach off of a textbook assigned by an external body of decision-makers, say, a Curriculum Advisory Committee in your department. You have invested time and energy in your subject area and as a result have come to have a broad understanding of your field. You not only know about Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs from psychology textbooks, for instance; you have actually read and studied everything written by him. You have, in short, metabolized the nooks and crannies of your field; you know who is who and what is what. You are not a stranger. You have gained intimate knowledge of your field. Therefore, you have made it your own. And now it is right there in front of your eyes: self-directed learning.

This is your theme for this class.

You are going to teach the social foundations of American public education with this theme in mind. As you understand it, what might be called “self-directed learning” is the social foundation of American public education. It underlies the ideal set forth by the system of education in America. This theme brings everything together. All the seemingly disparate elements that otherwise seem disconnected when they are juxtaposed make sense when they are given within a context infused with the idea of self-directed learning. This is abundantly evident in your choice of required books for this class:
*Tuesdays with Morrie, Walden Two, Plato’s *Meno*, *The Dewey School*, and *Freedom to Learn*. On the surface, without the guiding light of the all-encompassing context—the big picture (condensed into the concept “self-directed learning”)—given by the cognitive moment, it is exceedingly hard to justify the choice and order of these books. They do not really make a whole lot of sense. However, when each is seen as an embodiment of the ideal of self-directed learning, the choice and the order start making sense.

As I mentioned before, this course (CI 204) is not for the specialist—after all, it is only a 200-level survey course—who would be motivated to master all the conceivable details of her subject-area. Rather, in this course, we are trying to come to grips with an “epochal history,” the history of our times, that is, the modern times, *modernity*. We are primarily concerned with the principal ideas that still very much shape our present understandings of reality, existence, life, world, and, of course, education. In other words, we are interested in the *history of ideas*, which are in no way bygone and unavailable to us, but very much operative in the way we live our ordinary lives.

This epochal history does span at least five centuries, going way back to the Renaissance (15th century) and Reformation (16th century). The major turning points touched upon are the so-called Scientific Revolution (of the 17th century), the political revolutions in both the New and the Old Worlds (American and French Revolutions of roughly the late 18th and early 19th centuries, respectively) and finally the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century. What we call *modernity* is basically the unfolding of these epoch-making developments in world history, which is far from complete and sealed. We are still part of it and participating in it.
Although we do not have any scarcity of definitions of modernity, probably, one that strikes us most would go something like the following: modernity is the period in history when an unprecedented plurality of ultimate truths has been able to emerge and made available in a global world context to all of humanity, each on its own terms claiming to be the Ultimate Truth. And yet, they nevertheless co-exist, notwithstanding the conflicts involved. The plurality of ultimate truths necessarily translates into a plurality of different and competing understandings of what Good Life is, and hence, into what education is or ought to be. Learning to live with the ambiguities involved in this situation of irreducible plurality is probably the single most challenging difficulty one can face as a growing individual trying to give meaning to her/his life experience knowing implicitly or explicitly that certain fundamental tensions among the plurality of good lives are here to stay, and they will not go away simply by ignoring them. In that sense, each one of us has the burden of a project—self-directed learning—in which we have to constantly create and re-create ourselves in the midst of this plurality, in this sea of contentious differences.

Self-directed learning as the overarching theme that gives coherence to the course as a whole is made intelligible then against a certain background understanding of modernity. The cognitive moment is crystallized before my eyes as it emerges from a dynamic and still unfolding and unfinished temporality of modernity. Therefore, even the complete cognitive moment itself—the theoretical construct, if you will—that is present before my eyes is linked to a larger context which is not entirely and immediately present (neither to me nor to my students). From my perspective as a teacher, this non-coincidence between the cognitive moment and its background is a fertile ground
pregnant with new possibilities of understanding and therefore always open to further inquiry and exploration. Self-directed learning as a theme (the big picture) and modernity (the bigger picture) as its background are fruitfully engaged in an ongoing conversation in my mind. What makes teaching this course consummatory is in part due to this non-coincidence. It is not due to the cognitive moment per se. There is no “the biggest picture” exemplified by the cognitive moment and its complete presence that makes the experience of teaching consummatory. Rather, the thrill lies in the active and unfolding exchange between a big picture and a bigger picture. This interaction never culminates in The Biggest Picture! And this in itself is immensely pleasurable (read consummatory).

The choice of required books is informed by the theme of self-directed learning as the quintessence of educational foundations in modernity. Mitch Albom’s (1997) Tuesdays with Morrie provides a penetrating insight into the relationship between a teacher who truly cares and a student who is deeply cared for. In Tuesdays With Morrie, we see how Mitch (the student) struggles as an isolated, atomized, fragmented, disconnected, and helpless modern individual trying to get his life back that has been lost to the pervasive alienation of the mass culture and give meaning and purpose to it, and the role Morrie plays as a teacher, a friend, a guide, helping Mitch to come to terms with his own individuality and his own unique life and to think for himself to create his own version of the good life. Morrie’s lessons are not simply meant for one to have enough information to pass an exam. Rather, they have a lot to do with the fundamental questions of life and death, questions that an autonomous individual ought to be able to ask for and within himself/herself without any expectation of and undue reliance on quick and easy answers readily supplied by various external authorities.
Morrie focuses on the quality of human relations in the modern world. He exemplifies the person whose passion for the human spirit is still alive and contagious despite the massive breakdown of community and concomitant with it the felt alienation people experience in the social landscape of contemporary American culture. He helps Mitch realize that in a culture—referring to America—that has “become a Persian bazaar of self-help” (Albom, 1997, p. 65) being fully human, an autonomous self-directed fulfilled individual, can only be achieved by relating to others in the deepest possible ways. Only by establishing “a cocoon of human activities—conversation, interaction, affection” (Albom, 1997, p. 43) is it possible to get meaning into one’s life. Only by relating to others is it possible to relate to one’s self. Morrie links the idea of self-directed learning to establishing connections with others around us to fully realize our own human potential.

It can be argued that B. F. Skinner’s Walden Two (1976) is also concerned about how to fully realize our human potential. In his case, however, instead of creating an alternative social space defined by human connectedness within the mainstream society that has largely lost the sense of human contact, Skinner offers to build an entirely self-contained and self-sufficient community bordering the mainstream society. His is a thought experiment reacting to the rampant contradictions within the capitalist mode of production, where competitiveness and inequality already embedded in the class and market structures of our societies are in conflict with the ideals of a modern secular Republic, which was essentially based on the principles of freedom, equality, and fraternity of all. His cooperative system, which he offers as an alternative good life, helps
us see our version of the good life as being simply one of the possibilities, and not the natural outcome of an inevitable reality.

The cooperative system in Walden Two (a fictional modern utopic community) is based on a technology of behavior where situations would be created to control the behavior of people so that, unbeknownst to them, the likelihood of their displaying the desirable behavior—desirable from the community’s perspective—would be dramatically increased through meticulously designed and cleverly devised reinforcement schedules. The Good Life hence established would be free of the contradictions that are necessarily part of a competitive system and would be “naturally satisfying” (Skinner, 1976, p. 195) to all its inhabitants.

Initially, this whole project might sound like quite an obnoxious and even an outrageous scheme of a totalitarian regime of social control to mold people into certain functions and in the process ridding them of their unique individualities, much like Orwell’s 1984. No matter what the merits or demerits of Skinner’s peculiar social organization are—Skinner himself is a particularly reviled figure in the 20th century psychology—the book accomplishes to give a pretty plausible account of a self-directed learning environment where the young in the community “are seldom, if ever, taught anything” (Skinner, 1976, p. 110). Very intriguing.

Plato’s Meno, one of the most widely read of the Platonic dialogues, is, of course, central to any discussion in the foundations of education, modern or otherwise. Seen in the light of Gallagher’s (1992) brilliant interpretation, where he explores the connection between Plato’s concept of education—Plato’s theory of paideia—as it is developed in the Meno, with his own educational theory based on what he calls “moderate
“hermeneutics” (Gallagher, 1992), the importance of self-directed learning is brought into relief. Without going into the esoteric interpretations of the theory of recollection, Gallagher (1992) persuasively argues that the heart of genuine education, virtue—that is, moral knowledge, *viz., phronēsis*—is a type of knowledge that cannot be taught but that can be learned. Such a possibility, especially when it is contrasted with *theoria* (theoretical knowledge) and *technē* (technical knowledge), is usually glossed over. According to Plato, however, the basis of genuine education is *phronēsis* for, although in itself it cannot be taught, it is possible to learn virtue.

Socrates suggests that one must look to oneself in order to become virtuous. In effect, the type of knowledge which one can learn but not be taught is self-knowledge. There is no teacher who can tell me who I am in a way that is superior to my own possibility of finding out for myself. (Gallagher, 1992, p. 198)

Despite the fact that the ancient Greek rationalism is more than two millennia prior to the full-fledged emergence of modern European rationalism with the Western Enlightenment, its foundational significance for the Western way of understanding the core of genuine education cannot be underestimated. Self-directed learning has been patterned after *phronēsis* (self-knowledge).

*The Dewey School*, the detailed account written by Katherine Camp Mayhew and Anna Camp Edwards of the Laboratory School of the University of Chicago that John Dewey founded at the turn of the 20th century, provides an excellent opportunity to actually demonstrate the real-life possibility of creating a public school system which is “an organic whole from the kindergarten to the university” (Mayhew and Edwards, 1936, p. 3).
In general, the problem and purpose of this new type of schooling was, first of all, to aid the child to develop his own individuality by expression of his ideas in deed as well as in word [italics added], and thus become a freely maturing person [italics added]. Always, however, it was an important duty of those guiding this process to help the child gradually to shape his expressions to social ends [italics added], and thus make them, through his growing control, more and more effective in the corporate life of the group. (Mayhew & Edwards, 1936, p. 22)

Self-directed learning is emphasized through and through in the Dewey School and forms the backbone of the idea of education as growth, which cannot be imposed from the outside but which has to develop from within. Growth, the characteristic of all life, however, does not take place in isolation. Growth always takes place in an environment. The growth and development of the individual is an ongoing process and “is the result of the constant adjustment of the individual to his physical and social environment” (Mayhew & Edwards, 1936, p. 7). Directing one’s learning is always coordinated vis-à-vis the physical and social environment of one’s habitation.

Finally, Freedom to Learn (1994), written by the modern-day father of humanistic education Carl Rogers and revised by Jerome Freiberg, brings us full circle from the modern predicament of alienation experienced by Mitch in Tuesdays with Morrie to the penetrating assessment by Rogers of the dismal conditions of the U.S. public school system and a fresh reassertion of trust in human beings in response to it.

Increasingly, our schools are becoming isolated islands surrounded by indifference. Our classrooms have become rooms physically linked by hallways. Our future generations of children represent a dwindling population of healthy
individuals. . . . We have in our schools *a curriculum of the absurd* [italics added]. Students can attend twelve years of school without ever seeing the integration of English, mathematics, social studies, literature, art, and history. Knowledge is taught in premeasured forty-two or fifty-minute cubes that are void of interrelationships.

Despite all our technological advances, we seem to be crashing into an abyss of violence, crime, infant mortality, intolerance, isolation, apathy, and dissolving families. We must realize that a positive future is more than better technology; it is *better relationships* [italics added], which take time and a fertile climate of trust, caring, and positive self-regard. (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994, pp. 24-25)

Self-directed learning, a term coined by Rogers himself, is not another trick in the bag. What is needed is not a big “bag of tricks.” What is needed is a rejuvenation of the ideal of modern Enlightenment that envisions an entirely radical view of human connectedness in an irreducibly plural world. This vision is based on the authentic individuality of the whole person. Only with such a vision in mind does self-directed learning make sense and can constitute a compass for a compelling renewal of public education as the foundation of democracy.

Essentially, the entire tenor of the American *Bildung* tradition is about the authentic individuality of the whole *person-in-society*; but what kind of a society? For Dewey, it is, without question, democracy, which is the arena of truly human relationship. As in the Greek *polis*—defined by Wilber (1996) as a *shared human community*, and a community based on unrestrained *communication*” (p. 167)—
democracy is about *praxis*—“purposive, enlightened, moral behavior pursued in the company of polis . . . based upon mutual human recognition and unrestrained communication” (Wilber, 1996, p. 167). Self-directed learning, therefore, is only possible in and meaningful for polis-praxis, in and for a democracy, that is, where the individual is and becomes truly him/herself only through mutual exchange of self-recognition. That is, only through a mind meeting another mind is self-direction, and therefore, growth possible. This is the goal of the American *Bildung* tradition.

Now, I have tried to paint a vivid picture of the cognitive moment I have in mind that is always present to me as I go about teaching the social foundations of American public education in my class. It goes without saying that, with exactly the same set of books, it is possible to conceive alternative cognitive moments, theoretical constructs, if you will, that are given by the chronological mode of time. One such alternative is provided by Owen (2004), who defines education, in an unmistakably Deweyan way, as any activity that enriches experience. Taking “experience” as the central concept, Owen (2004) proceeds to offer four distinct ways of appropriating “experience.” Influenced by Richard McKeon (1995), the renowned American philosopher, Owen (2004) articulates four modes of thought—holistic, problematic, atomistic, and perspectival—through which experience and therefore education can be understood. He then correlates the required books for the course on the social foundations of American public education with these four modes of thought. Rogers and Freiberg’s *Freedom to Learn* exemplifies the perspectival mode of thought. Skinner’s *Walden Two* is an embodiment of the atomistic mode of thought. *The Dewey School* edifies the problematic mode of thought;
and finally, Plato’s *Meno*, together with *The Republic*, epitomizes the holistic mode of thought.

Instead of stating that all these books in one way or another exemplify the overall theme of self-directed learning, as it is in my case, Owen declares that they actually represent four different ways to approach the concept of experience and therefore the concept of education. In other words, what Owen tries to do is to demonstrate to his students that it is possible to understand “experience/education” in irreducibly different ways. That is, there is a plurality of ways to see what education is all about. For him, it is important that his students become aware of this plurality and learn to handle and cultivate it in today’s world, which has, incidentally, become increasingly hostile to the idea of plurality.

For Owen, the basic motif around which he weaves the entire course that is completely present to him before his eyes is the irreducible plurality of modes of understanding experience. Experience can never have a single expression. Experience and ways of understanding experience are plural. Period. This plurality can never be collapsed into a monolithic self-identical singularity. His four modes of thought are to plurality as my self-directed learning is to modernity. His big picture of four modes of thought are embedded in a still bigger picture of the idea of plurality just like my big picture of self-directed learning is part of a larger picture of the idea of modernity.

It is my intention to argue that, for Owen, teaching a course on social foundations of American public education through the constancy of the cognitive presence of the idea of plurality and concomitant with it the four modes of thought is on its way to be transformed into a consummatory experience. The reason I indicate that it is *on its way*
toward consummation and not there yet is that devoid of the role played by the phenomenological experience of time, devoid of praxis, the cognitive presence of the McKeonian idea of plurality in his mind—no matter how complete it is—is not yet consummatory, that is, it is not yet aesthetic in Dewey’s sense for “the impulsion of all experience toward significant integration” (Alexander, 1987, p. 250) has not yet been realized. Such integration is not a matter of cognition alone and can only be realized as it is enacted in praxis. It cannot be realized solely in the interior world of one’s private thoughts and emotions. Aesthetic experience for Dewey is not a private subjectively enjoyed experience.

What makes the McKeonian idea of plurality in Owen’s case and the idea of modernity in my case consummatory in the context of teaching CI 204 is the excitement felt on our part and the anticipation consciously present as to focus and direct activity toward the realization of the possibility of sharing the idea, that powerful big picture, with our students. I do not contemplate the idea of modernity from a distance. I embody it. It animates me. I care about it. It informs everything I do as a teacher by forming a meaning-determining horizon for me. It is not something external to me. It is not merely an idea. It excites me. It encompasses me. It grabs me. I am given to it. It makes the experience of teaching that class meaningful. It makes that class unmistakably my class. Nobody else can teach it the way I teach it.

The idea of plurality as an idea, as a form, can be purely enjoyed as a complete cognitive moment in one’s inner private world. Such an enjoyment has no doubt an aesthetic quality to it if one has achieved the kind of intimacy and a certain mastery of the cognitive picture in question. This, however, does not make it consummatory (aesthetic)
as Dewey understands it. That cognitive moment, as a pure timeless form, has to be brought back from its lofty impregnable heights into the world of action infused with a “pervasive quality, which provides the meaning-determining horizon of all experience” (Alexander, 1987, p. 250), so that it can become consciously realized and explicitly felt in the presence of others with others. The cognitive moment has to be integrated with the excitement felt and the anticipation of its concrete realization in the here and now.

As can be seen from these two actual examples—self-directed learning in relation to modernity in my case and four modes of thought in relation to plurality in Owen’s case—the cognitive moment given by the chronological mode of time, where all the parts forming the big picture as well as the big picture itself are present at once, is far from being singular. There is not one cognitive moment that has to be the case for all at all times. There is not a timeless cognitive presence. Cognitive presence is part of a larger process of a dramatic temporal flow of experience. Owen has his own cognitive moment encompassed within the drama of his own life and his own classroom and his own teaching and I have my own. The two cannot be reduced to either, except by force or denial. Think about it: we offer exactly the same course at the same time in the same institution using exactly the same readings, but in dramatically different ways, which, by the way, illustrates at once his and my own positions—plurality and self-directed learning. We are unique independent autonomous self-directing individual teachers. He does not make me use his big picture; I do not make him adopt mine. He respects my big picture; I respect his for he respects my individuality and I his. His consummatory experience in relation to his big picture and the way he teaches it is not that of mine and vice versa. However, we are two consummated minds meeting one another and reveling
in this encounter not because we melt into each other in an ecstatic embrace but because we mutually self-recognize. This encounter in itself is consummatory for it is replete with non-coincidences. Our cognitive moments do not coincide. In the encounter and the ensuing dialogue, we do not lose our unique individuality. Rather, we converse; we dialogue in as unrestrained fashion as possible.

*Part 4.1.3 Phenomenological mode of time and non-coincidence.*

Now, it is time to discuss the phenomenological mode of time and how the cognitive moment becomes (is always) part of a larger process of a dramatic temporal flow of experience in the classroom, or, for that matter, anywhere else. The drama of the temporal flow of experience issues forth as a result of non-coincidences that constitute the mechanism of consummatory experience. Non-coincidences compose the field of possibilities in which consummatory experience lives.

We have already indicated two instances of such non-coincidence. The first non-coincidence touched upon was between the complete cognitive moment and the background from which it emerges. The idea of self-directed learning and its relationship with the idea of modernity constitute a non-coincidence—even if it is assumed that this non-coincidence takes place solely within the cognitive processes of the mind of the teacher, it still is a non-coincidence—that is, the relationship between the two ideas is dynamic and open-ended; hence, is open to further inquiry which might reveal new insights into the understanding of that relationship. These two ideas find themselves in dialectical tension with each other, which can never be eliminated once and for all, nor need it be. For neither the concept of self-directed learning nor modernity are settled once and for all. They are historical concepts; they find themselves in time. They are open to
novel interpretations. Nobody has any final word on either of these concepts and their inexhaustibly rich relationship. The relationship between the two is a fertile productive ground for change and transformation of the meaning of this relationship. It cannot be controlled from outside. The relationship has a life of its own. This means that even the master teacher—to whom the cognitive content is bestowed in a crystal clear form—is not an unchallengeable ultimate authority on the topic. The teacher’s understanding is as vulnerable as anybody else’s.

This type of non-coincidence contributes to consummatory experience by enriching the field of possibilities of meaning. The teacher who is aware of the non-coincidence at issue and who feels comfortable with it and even embraces it exemplifies an open attitude with regard to the inquiry in question. Someone who is given to uncertainty, who admits to vulnerability—the possibility that her well-established idea regarding the issue might not be that well-established after all—is in a better position to keep the inquiry alive. Otherwise, from the start, the teaching experience is anesthesized and closed off to the possibility of transformation of meaning, namely, growth.

Similarly, the second non-coincidence discussed—the possibility of different cognitive moments emerging forth from the same material—is a source of enrichment of the field of possibilities of meaning. The two teachers in question have their own understanding of the subject matter (despite the exact same materials being used) and these do not coincide. They have interpreted the material in different ways based on their differing life experiences. This non-coincidence gives rise to the possibility of a dialogue between the two, which might benefit both by enhancing their own understanding, by revealing things that have gone unnoticed until then.
More importantly, however, is the non-coincidence between my own understanding of the subject matter as the teacher—the pristine cognitive moment that I have access to and tremendously enjoy—and how I communicate this understanding to my students. Gallagher (1992) refers to this non-coincidence as that between the teacher’s own understanding of the material and its “pedagogical presentation” (p. 36). The idea that a perfect transmission of the material—the cognitive content—from the teacher’s mind to the individual minds of the students is possible and desirable is not only untenable given Dewey’s understanding of consummatory experience, it is not desirable at all either. For such a transmission would entail the lack of possibility of consummation. Once again, consummation requires a dramatic tensive duration rather than an instant unproblematic carefree transmission.

It is one thing to read one’s favorite books in the comfort of one’s private environment and compose whatever cognitive pictures one fancies. It is an altogether different experience to actually walk into a classroom full of eyes staring at you. It is one thing to contemplate and theorize in seclusion having penetrating insights into Reality and making all sorts of connections among the different facets of that Reality. It is an utterly different thing to be in the presence of actual human beings in actual time. Standing in front of a group of students is thoroughly different from reading books and writing articles about what education is and how it should be practiced. What counts is not how perfect your cognitive picture is, that is, the depth and extent of your theoretical understanding. What counts rather is what you do with it in actual time with actual people in the here and now. No amount of theory, no matter how perfectly conceived it is, will have any bearing on how you conduct yourself and your thoughts in front of people in
flesh and blood. The way we relate to our thoughts is bound to be different from the way we relate to embodied human beings in real time. The way the chronological time and associated with it the power of re-presentation, deliberation, and objectification works is not appropriate to gain an understanding of *teaching qua praxis*, which takes place in the experience of phenomenological time, that is, time embodied. For the chronological time cannot capture the dramatic tensive duration, it merely obliterates it. It reduces it to a Now point and produces all manners of schemas.

Gaining an understanding of the way the mode of phenomenological time works, on the other hand, yields significant insights into what it means to be a teacher for “teaching, as any praxis, can be understood only from the perspective of the practitioner” (Roth, 2002, p. 11). The perspective of the practitioner reveals what no theoretical construct can ever unveil—*the experience of being affected*. When you walk into a classroom, no matter how well theoretically equipped you might be, the encounter with your students is something not entirely in your control. Uncertainty, ambiguity, uneasiness, invisibility, unpredictability, incompleteness are as much constituents of the encounter between you and your students as are the salient and controllable aspects of it.

In phenomenological time—the only mode of time whereby consummatory experience is made possible—there is no way to predict, manipulate and control every single thing that goes into the make-up of the encounter and its context. For not everything is available for your scrutiny at once. Not everything is given in advance for analysis. Not everything is laid out exhaustively in front of your eyes at once. Not everything is visible simultaneously for deliberation. There is always room for something to emerge that you have never experienced before (that you have never even conceived
was possible before). There is always room for novel possibilities to bear upon the
encounter. There is always room for surprises. Even if you have full access to the most
comprehensive inventory of every conceivable element that makes up the world of being
a teacher, there is always the possibility of entirely new elements emerging.

Phenomenological time therefore is the time of inexhaustible possibilities. No
amount of mental preparation, course work, theoretical study, book learning can prepare
one to inhabit in a consummatory way the phenomenological time.

Obviously, phenomenological time—the time where life presents itself in a
dramatic tensive duration—is more often than not inhabited in less than consummatory
ways. Ways in which we are anesthetized to the richness of the meaning of our
encounters. Ways in which the phenomenological time is routinely reduced to the static
pictures of the chronological time. Ways in which the tensive drama that unfolds over the
course of the thickening duration of our encounters is obliterated into a flat mechanical
mindless contact. Only by inhabiting within the phenomenological time in a
consummatory way, that is, only by teaching qua praxis, can one be prepared to be at
home with the openness of the phenomenological time, that is, only by being open to the
possibilities of our encounters can one become a teacher. Becoming a teacher has little to
do with knowing pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and pedagogical content
knowledge and on the basis of the attainment of this knowledge being certified as a
teacher. Becoming a teacher is about being at ease with the openness of the
phenomenological time. Becoming a teacher is about the consummatory experience that
arises from being alive in and responsive to the dynamic field of possibilities that the
non-coincidence between the chronological and phenomenological times generates.
The phenomenological time never coincides with the chronological time for possibilities always go beyond actualities. And this makes life possible, as well as interesting. We can teach all the theory in the world—the entire spectrum of actualities—to our students in teacher education programs and get them certified and be very proud of them for having assimilated the entire reservoir of accumulated knowledge based on research. Still they have not become teachers and will never become teachers for teaching \textit{qua praxis} has been left out all along. Only by being in a classroom can they become teachers, and they have never been in an actual classroom throughout their entire theoretical coursework. To \textit{become} a teacher, you have to \textit{be} a teacher. For only in being a teacher is it possible to experience the non-coincidence between the phenomenological and chronological time. You cannot teach what it means to be a teacher or how it feels to be a teacher. It has to be experienced; that is, the experience of being affected has to be undergone.

\textit{Part 4.2 Two Examples}

\textit{Part 4.2.1 Example 1: Fourth grade science teacher.}

Some illustration is needed to give definiteness to what has been said in regards to the difference between the seemingly perfect cognitive moment—the gorgeous and elegant theory (what is on paper)—and teaching \textit{qua praxis} (what is happening in flesh and blood over the course of the thickening duration of the tensive drama that dramatically unfolds). Imagine being a fourth grade science teacher. Now, we are trying to understand what makes your experience of teaching fourth grade science consummatory.
Let’s pretend that you are doing a unit on plants. In front of you lies a perfectly crafted textbook—the full cognitive moment—Glencoe Life Science-Teacher Wraparound Edition from Glencoe/McGraw-Hill publishing company. It is a well-known greatly admired textbook. It is a great teaching tool. It literally has everything one can imagine. Everything a science teacher can and will need to plan and cover all content that will make all students scientifically literate is there neatly laid out. Furthermore, every single thing in the textbook is correlated with the National Science Education Standards and every single Benchmark for Science Literacy is addressed. It is perfect: a total coincidence, a complete alignment between the cognitive moment of the textbook writers and the cognitive moment of the National Research Council, which publishes the National Science Education Standards. They even provide two approaches to covering all content in the Planning Guide: “a traditional, full-year course comprises 180 periods of approximately 45 minutes each,” and “a block scheduling approach involves covering the same information in fewer days but in longer class periods.” Notice how the chronological time is in play here as an expression of time that is used for measuring the amount of time to be spent on transmitting the curriculum.

To ensure the flawless transmission of the curriculum, all sorts of ingenious handy features are made available that will help you, the instructor, develop your lesson plans. (Incidentally, the point seems to be more like helping you not develop your own lesson plans for everything has already been thought out for you anyway; you just have to yield to the brilliance and majesty of the full cognitive moment made graciously available for you). In Table 1, which lists these invaluably splendid features, how the chronological mode of time operates can be brought to awareness.
Table 1

*How the chronological mode of time operates: A look at the features of Glencoe Life Science-Teacher Wraparound Edition and what each feature provides*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>It provides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher to Teacher</td>
<td>Teaching tip that relates to teaching unit content or activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Chapter Organizer              | • Objectives
                                | • Occurrence of activities and other features within each section
                                | • List of materials needed for each activity
                                | • List of materials from the *Teachers Classroom Resources* box
                                | • List of technology resources                                               |
| Science Content Background     | • Helps you prepare for the lesson by giving you more information about each section
                                | • Assists you with questions that students might ask                         |
| Identifying Misconceptions     | Strategies to
                                | • determine misconceptions students may hold
                                | • promote understanding of concept
                                | • assess understanding                                                       |
| Key to Teaching Strategies     | Coding to assist in planning for individual needs                            |
| Three-Step Teaching Cycle      | • Help for a first-year teacher                                             |
| Motivate-Teach-Assess          | • Help for experienced teacher in the first year in a new program           |
| Resource Manager               | C and D pages:
                                | • List of transparencies
                                | • List of chapter teacher resources                                          |
                                | Throughout chapter:
<pre><code>                            | • List of reproducible resources                                            |
                            | • List of technology resources                                              |
</code></pre>
<p>| Activity                       | Reinforces science concepts                                                 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>It provides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quick Demo</td>
<td>Idea to illustrate a concept; performed in a short amount of time, using available materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab Demonstration</td>
<td>Teacher-performed activity, more complex than Quick Demo, often involving students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension</td>
<td>An activity idea for:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• more advanced students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• students who finish their work early</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• students who want to learn more about the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher FYI</td>
<td>Additional information about a concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Learning</td>
<td>Idea for discussion or activity related to a graphic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun Fact</td>
<td>Interesting science content to share with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a Model</td>
<td>Idea for model that students can make to clarify or illustrate abstract concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use an Analogy</td>
<td>Way to make abstract concepts more concrete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Connection</td>
<td>Way that science ties in with other curricular areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Diversity</td>
<td>Current or historical background on a custom or belief associated with a science concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Science Words</td>
<td>Strategies for students to learn word origins, meanings, and uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Reading Strategies</td>
<td>Strategies to help students read and understand content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Journal</td>
<td>Writing exercises that promote writing and critical thinking skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Assessment</td>
<td>• Location of Portfolio, Performance, and Content Assessments in the section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Assessment</td>
<td>• Ideas for Portfolio and Performance Assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Resources</td>
<td>• List of Reproducible Masters, CD-ROMs, and other technologies for assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is worth pointing out here that the chronological time relentlessly strives for determinacy, completeness, control and compliance. All possibilities are exhausted and all angles are covered. Teaching fourth grade science is almost on a par with sending a space shuttle with humans in it to Mars and back. Nothing is left in the dark. All possibilities are foreseen and accounted for. Nothing is left to chance. All contingencies are planned and prepared for. You as a teacher do not have to think. You just have to operate. You do not create; you just manipulate. You have at your disposal the manual in which everything is provided. There is neither room nor any need for spontaneity. Surprise elements are eliminated. There is a protocol for every conceivable situation. There is no room for ambiguity and indeterminacy. There are clear-cut objectives, strategies, and resources. The entire curriculum is a comprehensive vision but there is no story; there is no drama; there is no thickening plot; and there are no characters for there is nothing that is unfolding (no experiencing the real heaviness of our own existence). The whole thing has already been laid out in full. Furthermore, the vision is absolutely impersonal. There is no conversation; only imperatives—do this first; do that next.

As is mentioned in the textbook itself, the purpose of such a comprehensive and ambitious vision aiming for absolute clarity and completion is to create a scientifically literate society. Even if it is assumed that teaching science within the framework of such a vision were possible—the whole point of this dissertation is that it is not for the experience of teaching and learning is anything but a dutiful implementation of a perfect vision—what Dewey has in mind for an educative experience, that is, an experience that grows, has no kinship whatsoever with such a static vision that can only be
conceptualized within the structure of the chronological mode of time in which the vision is supposedly made wholly present in its entirety.

In order to bring out the significance of the contention that teaching and learning cannot be adequately described within the terms of the chronological mode of time, I would like to suggest, from my own experience of teaching CI 204, Social Foundations of American Public Education, the inappropriateness of using a textbook in this course despite the occasional temptation to doing so.

Sometimes when I feel a little under the weather and exhausted, especially when I feel somewhat frustrated seeing my CI 204 students devoid of vital emotion—they at times appear to be numbed, “what is numbing them like this?” is a constant question in my mind; are they on some sort of drugs that make them anesthetized to what is happening in the world?—I ask myself why I don’t use one of those well-established “Foundations of American Education” textbooks in my class. That would make life easier not only for me but for my students as well. They want structure; the textbook gives them structure. They want predictability; the textbook gives them predictability. They just want to memorize information and get tested on it; the textbook gives them information to be memorized and then they get tested on them.

Why don’t I use a textbook? After all, using textbooks is a common practice in most mainstream K-12 public school settings as well as in higher education. My students are used to them. They feel comfortable with them. Many university professors prefer to use a textbook of one kind or another, especially with low-level required mass courses—CI 204 is one of them—and they seem to be quite satisfied with the outcomes.
Textbooks are orderly, well-structured, compact, streamlined, and organized both in terms of form and content based on the standards and benchmarks of their respective fields in complete alignment with them. They follow a sequenced presentation of major topics. Furthermore, they come with all sorts of handy-dandy pedagogical features, companion websites, instructor resources (including Microsoft PowerPoint lecture slides already prepared for you, the instructor), pre-packaged assessment tools including multiple-choice, true/false, matching type question banks, and so forth.

These textbooks are considered very reliable. In many cases, they are composed by multiple authors (supposedly reflecting an objective consensus of their relevant field). They are diligently crafted and regularly updated. They reflect the latest research in their respective fields. They claim to be exhaustive. They are the detailed topographical maps of the terrain they presume to cover.

So why not use a textbook?

The answer is obvious. Textbooks are static. They are the marvelous products of a state of mind dominated by the chronological mode of time. They embody a view of reality—a very positivistic one—which is at odds with the true nature of teaching and learning for teaching-and-learning is not static. It is dynamic. It is a lived experience best understood within the mode of phenomenological time. Textbooks give a false sense of truth for they have an aura of authority. Not only that we more often than not end up confusing the map for the territory. The static map, the textbook, which is supposed to guide us, replaces the dynamic territory. Instead of dealing with the actual living territory, we withdraw from the world into the confines of the map. The map becomes the territory.

It must be pointed out before we proceed any further that a positivistic view of
reality is not necessarily at odds with the true nature of physical sciences. The objects of physical sciences are relatively static compared to the object of human sciences. The object of human sciences is the human being, which certainly cannot be objectified the way, for instance, geological formations are objectified. Yet the whole idea (dream/illusion) behind the positivistic project of a unified science is that human beings can be treated and studied in the same way planets, rocks, and lakes are. I beg to differ. Studying gravitational force, atomic structure, photosynthesis, and so forth is not the same as trying to understand the human behavior. Using textbooks in teaching—in the sense of transmitting the accumulated scientific knowledge of—say, physics, chemistry, astronomy, etc., is probably the most efficient way to impart a tightly organized body of knowledge to the next generation. The issue under consideration here is the use of textbooks in human sciences as opposed to physical sciences. To some extent the use of textbooks in physical sciences can be justified. It is my conviction that the use of textbooks in human sciences such as education cannot. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to dispute the way knowledge is constructed in the physical sciences themselves; therefore, I will not engage in a discussion of how even in the case of the so-called hard sciences elements of human subjectivity and intersubjectivity enter into the picture of our understanding of the objectivity of Reality. It is within the scope of this dissertation however to argue for the fundamentally different nature and purpose of human sciences.

Instead of using textbooks, therefore, I use books; books that do not purport to have a neutral—scientifically objective—stance on things; books whose content has not
been watered down and overly simplified (and therefore grossly distorted); books which are still alive; books each of which has been written from a perspective.

Each book comes with a perspective. Each book reveals something peculiar to its own perspective. Each book brings about something that others cannot. Each book is uniquely situated to have a certain take on things. Therefore, in a class where multiple books are used, there are necessarily multiple perspectives to be reckoned with. The goal of being a participant in such a class is not to learn the material presented from an allegedly neutral position (and therefore reduce multiple perspectives to a single dominant perspective). Rather, the goal is to be able to inhabit a situation which is constituted by the tensions—non-coincidences—inhomogeneous in the interplay of multiple perspectives and enjoy being an integral part of the drama that unfolds as a result.

Only in such a dramatic situation can one’s subjectivity—the process whereby one comes to an understanding of who one is—be formed. Textbooks, because they are conceived within the limits of the mode of chronological time, are not designed to help students form and re-form their subjectivities. They merely impart “knowledge” that is true, factual, and up-to-date regardless of how this knowledge is appropriated by the individual student. They do not operate on the assumption that a dramatic encounter takes place between the information provided in the textbook and the students. They merely transmit information. What the students do with that information as far as their subjectivities are concerned is not their problem. Textbooks are not meant to provide dramatic encounters with multiple contentious perspectives. They assume a neutral position vis-à-vis all perspectives and pretend to provide a survey of all available perspectives.
In the absence of a dramatic tensive duration experienced in the here and now, instead of a vital process of self-formation—Bildung—what you get is a process of deformation. Instead of an educative experience which directly involves the unique subjectivity of each learner, an insulated harmless cataloguing of information takes place. I do not use textbooks for, despite their best intentions, they induce a state of mental numbness in students. The static nature of textbooks induces a passive attitude on the part of students. They rely too much on the authority of the textbook. When I use books (primary sources) that embody perspectives that reveal alternative ways of seeing one’s reality, I come closer to creating a situation in which consummatory teaching and learning experience, that is, educative experience, can unfold.

For instance, one of my students has expressed her frustration with B. F. Skinner’s *Walden Two*, one of the books I use in my class, where an account of a utopian co-operative society—as opposed to the mainstream competitive capitalistic society we ordinarily live in—based on the principles of behavioral engineering is given, in the following manner:

I don’t agree with this book at all! But I don’t speak up and express my disagreement in or after class because I know you are going to ask me why I disagree and expect me to articulate the reasons why. Right now, I am unable to articulate them. But I am working on it, not just in class but outside of class as well. After class, I go back to my dorm and talk to my roommates. We talk about what we have discussed that day in class.

Notice that she is alive as she is expressing her frustration with this book. She is not frustrated because she doesn’t get it. It is not a matter of her cognitive inability to process
the information. She processes the information just fine. What makes her alive is that she
does more than process the information. Her entire being is at stake here. She is frustrated
because there is something substantial at stake here. A certain set of values she holds dear
is being challenged. She is trying to come to terms with it. The goal here is not to learn
the material for the test. She is not principally concerned about her grade really. The
reason she is trying to come to grips with it has nothing to do with the test. They will not
be tested on the book anyway, and they already know it. They are expected to compose
an essay in which they reflect on their experience in relation to the themes discussed in
class. Rather she is personally engaged with the situation at hand created by the
productive tensions involving, on the one hand, her understanding of who she is, her
values, where she stands, and, on the other, an alternative set of values that is suggested
in the book we are reading. An encounter has taken place and she has to respond to it.
Even if she does not agree with the alternative set of values presented in the book—
actually, she is considerably aversive to them—she is compelled to evaluate them for she
realizes that her value system does not exist in a vacuum. What she has assumed to be the
only way to see the world is being challenged now and she has to come to terms with this
challenge for her own sake, not for a test.

This is a consummatory experience not only for her but for me as well. It is
consummatory not because she now feels and thinks as I do, not because, that is, I have
successfully imparted my wisdom. She now knows what I know. There is a near-perfect
coincidence between my understanding and hers. The dream of all educators has finally
come true! My intention was never to make her think like I do (although I would not
oppose to it). Consummation is never about perfect coincidence. My intention rather was
to make her think, and think for herself. As she comes to her own, as she realizes who she is and becomes clearer about where she stands and what makes sense to her, she will become a confident individual able to express herself and freely engage in this dynamic interaction where we mutually recognize each other. This mutual self-recognition is consummatory.

In my classes, I do not use textbooks for they are too static to create a learning environment conducive to education as Bildung. Bildung as self-formation/self-cultivation is only possible through consummatory experience. Consummatory experience requires the ability to inhabit an unfolding dramatic tensive duration. A dramatic tensive duration comes into being through the interplay of multiple perspectives. Self-formation, which is the goal of education as Bildung, is only possible through engaging with experience constituted by multiple perspectives. You identify who you are vis-à-vis others. Self-formation is not an isolated process. It is a transactional process through which you come to your own through the other.

The purpose of Deweyan education is consummation rather than completion. Consummation is never something given. Rather, it is something that unfolds. It is something that happens. Consummation belongs to time. The time of consummation, however, is not the time of minutes passing on a clock, the chronological time. Rather it is the phenomenological time, the time of dramatic tensive duration. The experience of teaching does not exist in a vacuum. It exists in a situation. As teachers, we work with the situation as we find it.

We find ourselves delivered to a situation that must be dealt with somehow (past). Yet we are not mere slaves to this situation, since we go to work on our current
situation by glimpsing possibilities in it that we can try to actualize (future).

Finally, every moment of factual life is a profound tension between what is given to us and how we confront it (present). (Harman, 2007, pp. 28-29)

In contrast to the objective of mastering a complete curriculum already laid out and made visible for us, a teacher education in which the phenomenological mode of time is engaged understands the practice of teaching as something that “must be seen in the very act, performance, or execution of its own reality, which always exceeds any of the properties that we can list about it” (Harman, 2007, p. 25).

The following narrative account given by a student in a teacher education program exemplifies the practice of consummatory teaching. Notice how the teacher experiences time from the way a variety of tenses and aspects (retrospective, prospective, and durative forms) are used to indicate the dramatic elements and transitions in the unfolding story of learning about plants and their environments. It is impossible to capture these moments and how they are linked together in the experience of the teacher as well as the students in a formal impersonal way in a textbook intended to transmit a certain body of knowledge in a pre-specified and pre-determined timeless manner without due regard to the specificities of an emerging situation. The way the teacher and her students experience time is part of the way they experience the situation they find themselves in. The responses on the part of the teacher to the changes in the situation are not mechanical and pre-determined. Rather they are appropriate responses executed in the then-and-there of the moment that is experienced within the whole duration of the situation. The spontaneity and the creativity of the responses of the teacher are not random but are guided and called for by the emerging situation.
What makes this experience consummatory for the teacher is not the complete transmission of the curriculum on plants: knowledge regarding plant characteristics, plant cells, origin and evolution of plants, classification of plants, and the essential chapter vocabulary that includes words like cuticle, cellulose, vascular plant, nonvascular plant, rhizoid, stomata, xylem, phloem, cambium, gymnosperm, angiosperm, monocot, dicot, and so forth. What makes this experience consummatory is the experience of the meaning of a given situation and how this situation has been transformed into something richer and more meaningful. In other words, consummation comes when “we go to work on our current situation by glimpsing possibilities in it that we can try to actualize” (Harman, 2007, p. 29). Consummation does not come when all the possibilities are exhausted and actualized once and for all, which is not really possible given the temporality of time. Rather consummation comes when some possibilities are realized and are acted on in such a way that the whole situation grows in meaning. Now, let’s hear what this fourth grade science teacher has to say:

This unit is coming about because my fourth grade class has noticed that there are lots of insects in the class garden which are eating up our vegetables. We eat these vegetables for snacks and share what we don’t use with the other sections of the fourth grade. The children have realized that they want to learn about these insects to be able to understand them and maybe get rid of them. They are also just plain curious about the bugs they have been seeing now for weeks. We are not really supposed to do our unit on small creatures until next term, but this would tie nicely to our garden and plant unit we just finished. . . . OK, I have made up my mind. I believe that the timing is right.
I round up the kids and we return back indoors to our classroom. As the children are washing up in the hand sink, I contemplate what my course of action should be. They begin to return to their desks one by one. I lean back on the marker board and inspiration strikes me. I suddenly remember the Dewey school I learned about in a class at ISU. The tactics used in that school storm back into my mind. Before the kids get too comfortable, I have them push their desks aside and form a circle on the floor. I also take a spot in the circle.

I start off by asking them what they thought about our garden time today. They relate their experiences to their classmates and me. I point out that many of them mentioned something about the bugs in the garden. A boy comments that it sure would be nice to learn about bugs, even though he knows that we are about to start a different unit. The other students nod their heads enthusiastically in agreement. I smile warmly and tell the class that we are going to try something we haven’t done before. Their eager, surprised, and somewhat skeptical faces are fixed on me and they are hanging on my every word. I tell them that they are going to decide what needs to be learned next, and how to explore it.

A few excited children smile and gasp joyfully, but others just stare at me sort of puzzled. One girl quickly suggests to the class that they learn about bugs. To my amazement and joy they immediately come to a group consensus and begin making plans about what they could do. I ask for a volunteer to write on the board and one boy jumps at the opportunity. They start brainstorming and end up with a delightful amount of activities reflecting their likes and past experiences. I
make sure to let them know that they don’t need to do everything on the list, and they can individually add to the list later on if they want.

After about 15 minutes, I point out that they haven’t said how long they want to spend on their explorations. They reply that they would like to spend the two days left of this week on it and maybe use the weekend and finish up on Monday. They are again looking at me and expect me to either give the go ahead or change my mind and scrap the whole idea. I again smile warmly and encourage them to get to work.

I know that we will need to enlist the help of teachers in classes like art and P.E., and luckily they are very willing to help. Over the next few days, the children use their library time to research insects. They practice their library research skills they previously learned. They insist that the librarian read a book about bugs during storytime. They act like bugs during P.E. In art, they make models out of clay, paint pictures of bugs, and make face masks of bugs. They play a guessing game in music using recordings of animal sounds. In our classroom, they research bugs on the internet under the supervision of our classroom volunteer. A couple of children also use the computer to play a bug game they borrow from the library. They decorate the room with their art projects, and especially enjoy hanging up the pictures they drew. A few children decide they want to decorate the reading corner of the classroom like a home for bugs. They realize that they need to do some additional research and proceed to enlist the help of some classmates. They decide more than ever before to investigate the bugs during garden time. I invite my horticulturist/entomologist friend from
college, who we listened to in our garden and plant unit, back to our classroom for a question and answer session at the request of the children.

On Friday afternoon, I ask the kids to write down what they did and learned and what they enjoyed or didn’t enjoy about this experience and if they think they spent their time wisely and what grade they think they should be assigned. They use cursive writing, which we have been working on this year. One girl insists that we bind the writings and form a scrapbook to read and to refer to later. We then have a discussion about what we the gardeners should do about the bugs in our garden environment. They decide they will implement their methods on Monday and will leave a small section of the garden to the bugs, which they have come to like. As I am driving home on Friday afternoon, I can’t help feeling proud of the students and everything we accomplished. I hope to use Dewey’s ideas more than I have been. I know I will have a classroom of energetic students come Monday morning.

Consummatory experience is made possible and pervaded by the quality of openness to the temporality of the present. In consummatory experience, we are open to the present. We are alive to the present. The present, however, is not an infinitesimal instant between the future and the past. It is not a now point. Rather, it is an infinitely complex composite duration that unfolds. The present is not a homogeneous simple. What constitutes the present is our past experience and anticipations and their interplay. The present is that “profound tension between what is given to us and how we confront it” (Harman, 2007, p. 29). Being open to the present means being open to the tensive movement of life. The tensive movement of life cannot be captured in theory for it cannot
be cut down to size. The tension cannot be removed. It cannot be re-presented in crystal-clear sets of knowable properties. Since the tensive movement of life is, well, moving and we are moving with(in) it, it cannot become totally visible and we cannot look at it from outside like neutral tension-free observers. We remain within the tensive movement of life and discover the possibilities in it.

When we encounter our students, the encounter is not theoretical. It is not something we entertain or imagine in the privacy of our mind. It is something shared. It is an event that takes place between me and my students in a context. We see each other; we feel each other; we sense each other; we size each other up; we care about each other.

The dialectics involved in the process of being and becoming a teacher arises from the tensions, or non-coincidences that constitute the temporal character of teaching. The fact that the experience of being in the classroom is consummatory—that it is a unified qualitative whole, an integrated state of experience whereby what is experienced is experienced as meaningful—should not be taken to mean that it is a completed end state of a blissful nature, where finally an unobstructed transparent transmission of information from the mind of the teacher to those of the students has been successfully achieved and now everybody feels great. We can all go home. Even in some of the rare instances, where one feels really good about being a teacher, consummatory teaching experience does not refer to a finality or completeness but rather to openness to becoming a teacher understood as a trajectory of continued growth (enhanced heightened meaning).

*Part 4.2.2 Example 2: Consummatory experience of an early literacy methods teacher.*
One such trajectory of continued growth is beautifully narrated by Lori A. Norton-Meier, a teacher educator in literacy education, in her article “A Thrice-Learned Lesson from the Literate Life of a Five-year-old” (2005). Despite the fact that she never uses the word “consummatory” in her article, she is definitely a consummated teacher and is narrating a consummatory experience of teaching. Since she primarily works with narrative approaches to research, it comes as no surprise to see her start the article by providing a narrative account of an actual lived experience through the telling and re-telling of which her “professional journey of continual transformation” (Norton-Meier, 2005, p. 286)—her growth experience—is made sense of. The article as a whole can be seen as one big story unfolding over many years—an experience—rather than a conventional academic sharing of research results. The reader of this dissertation is strongly encouraged to read Norton-Meier’s article in its entirety. For the purpose of our analysis, I would like to share the initial story that Norton-Meier uses to weave together the elements of her consummatory experience. What warrants our description of her experience as “consummatory” will be explored by engaging in an analysis of the initial story itself and how she appropriates it throughout her entire career. Therefore, it is essential to reproduce the story—Aaron’s story—here so that we can make sense of the analysis that accompanies it (my comments are italicized).

It is 3:05. It is interesting to note that Norton-Meier starts the narration by indicating the time—in this case, the chronological clock time. As we will shortly see, however, it is not the chronological time itself that matters. Rather, the clock time sets the time, and therefore, the mood of the day. It really does not matter whether it is 3:05 or 3:04. What matters is what the time signifies and how it contextualizes the drama that is
The bell rings and children from Laramie Elementary School move hurriedly out of classrooms as they buzz about the day’s activities. I escort my group of 28 kindergarten students to the front of the school building because I am always worried they will get lost in the chaos of over 400 children leaving the building! We can see right at the start the way Norton-Meier experiences solicitude for the well-being of her students. She feels responsible for them outside of as well as within the classroom. Her attitude is one of genuine care and concern for her students. This is an important aspect of consummatory experience. Again, consummatory experience is not just about having a good fulfilling time. Rather, the whole movement of consummation gets started with an experience of some sort of unease or perturbation. They tell me when they see their ride or a sibling who has come to walk them home. Aaron walks by himself, which always worries me a little in this urban Midwestern neighborhood because the school sits right next to a major four-lane highway, and traffic moves very quickly. This particular neighborhood is also situated close to a busy downtown area that sees its share of gang violence, drug trade, and prostitution. Here Norton-Meier is not merely giving an objective description of the physical setting surrounding the school building. There is a certain quality that guides her observations. She is not a neutral observer. Rather, the aspects she notices in the environment are colored by the quality of uneasiness and the perceived threat of danger. The situation is qualitatively experienced; it is imbued with uneasiness.

“Bye, Aaron,” I say to him, “Hurry on home now.” His deep brown eyes glow when his lips turn to a smile and he tells me that he isn’t going home. He is on his way to see his mother at her work.
In the few short months I had known Aaron, I learned that he and I had much in common. Aaron lived in a single parent home as I did at his age. We both had roots in rural ways of knowing. Aaron’s extended family farmed in the South, my family in the Midwest. Aaron spoke the language of his family and community, African American Vernacular English. I spoke a standard form of English wrought with what many would call rural “farmisms.” Here Norton-Meier reveals some of the affinities in their respective backgrounds by making a retrospective detour. We see how the recent past enters into the temporality of the present experience of the relationship between Aaron and Norton-Meier. Furthermore, besides the similarities of their past and its acknowledgement, Norton-Meier also hints at the non-coincidence between Aaron’s language and hers.

I smile back and ask him where his mother works. Aaron stretches out his arm and points to the local drinking establishment that sits on the corner across from the school. I am shocked and wonder to myself, “He goes to a bar after school? Is this dangerous? Is this true? Is this really where his mother is working?” Concerned, I decide to walk with him to be sure he will be okay. This is an important moment. Norton-Meier is taking a risk. She, instead of turning around and going back to school, or walking towards her car, continues conversing with Aaron, which she did not have to. She is eager to find out more about Aaron’s destination for she is concerned about his safety. As she finds out that he is headed to a bar nearby, a torrent of questions rushes into her mind for this is quite an unexpected situation. At this moment, the context is thickening. By asking him where his mother works, Norton-Meier renders herself vulnerable by irreversibly committing herself to hearing a response that she has no control over, and when she receives a response she has not expected a bit, she is caught in an off guard
moment. Then and there she makes a decision at the heat of the moment without going through an extended rational deliberative process for she is already engaged with the unfolding events in the present moment.

Aaron lights up when I say I will walk with him tonight. He takes me by the hand and we walk towards the bar that has been a source of great controversy in the short time I have been at this school. Petitions have circulated to get the dilapidated building closed down, with residents arguing that a bar next to a school is inappropriate. Others argue that the bar has historical significance and has been in the neighborhood longer than any other building, so it must be preserved for future generations. The students on the playground often wonder out loud when it will fall down since the building is in such poor repair. As we walk, Aaron continues to talk non-stop about his mom, her work, and what he does when he gets there. It turns out, however, Norton-Meier’s experience of “shock” when she hears that Aaron is going to a bar after school is not directed to “bars in general” and does not arise solely based on the commonsense notion that children should not go to bars. Rather, there is a certain history here. It is not any bar they are talking about. It is a specific bar with historical significance. Moreover, there is a certain controversy surrounding the issue of the proximity of the bar to the school. This aspect of the story reveals another dimension to the temporality of their interaction—which works somewhat in the background—that brings these two characters and their relationship together. The context is not limited to two people only. It is a social environment to which both of them are related. Norton-Meier, whether she likes it or not, is already a party to this controversy by virtue of being a teacher in the school. She is inevitably concerned about the issue for she is already given to it. She is already in the midst of it. This is only
one instance of how the past impacts her present. And the issue is a contentious one.

There is a tension—a non-coincidence—between two perspectives which accentuate two
different values and therefore two different courses of action: close down the building or
preserve it.

When we walk through the door, several of the patrons shout greetings to Aaron.

It is dark, and I notice that I am the only White person there. Aaron tugs me along as an
older Black man comes forward to shake my hand. He says that he knows who I am
based on how much Aaron talks about kindergarten and Mrs. Norton-Meier. Another
climactic moment. Notice how Norton-Meier communicates her mood as well as the
atmosphere of the environment by referring to her experience of the quality of the
situation. She says “It is dark . . . and I am the only White person there.” Quality, as
was discussed before, is not that of the physical objects per se—their color, shape,
quantity, texture, solidity, and so forth—but it is the pervasive quality that informs us
about the overall significance of the situation we are experiencing. In her case, she feels
singled out. She immediately understands the significance of being the only white, for
there is a whole history to this feeling and this history is saturated with events that are
still alive in the way people react and relate to each other. This understanding, however,
is not a matter of thematic knowledge. She does not really think about it and comes to a
conclusion that she is indeed the only white person in there. The significance of the
situation is immediately felt and undergone.

Aaron crawls onto a barstool next to an elderly man and asks, “Hey Joe, ya’
ordered yet? I can read the menu to you again.” Breaking into a big smile, the elderly
man pats him on the back and says how glad he is that Aaron is here to help him.
Aaron comes over and whispers to me that it is a good thing that I am teaching him to read because they need him to read a lot here at the bar. I stammer and stare as I watch Aaron communicate in the language of his home, his community, and his world—a language that he easily uses to negotiate the knowledge about reading and writing that blend home and school for him. I question myself, “Why don’t I see more of this in school? Do I create a space for Aaron’s home language in my classroom?” Norton-Meier stammers and stares for she is having an epiphany. She realizes, maybe for the first time—by her own admission, this whole experience with this child “shattered her thinking, shaking her to her core”—the importance of the child’s own horizon of meaning, that is, the child’s own world, his own meaning universe and the role of the social environment in shaping this universe, setting its parameters. Prior to this transformative experience she had never understood the significance of the role of context in our understanding of the world and the way we navigate ourselves vis-à-vis this world. Maybe she had read in one of her educational psychology textbooks when she was in college that context matters in learning. However, the meaning of this vital information had never materialized before since it was not really experienced in the there and then of a situation. It merely was a piece of information—a truism almost—to be memorized and regurgitated in an exam. She had successfully passed her exam, but she failed to really learn what it meant. Now, things are different. She finds herself in a situation and she is learning what it means to appreciate the context of the learner and the learner’s perspective by being within a situation. As she experiences a peculiar unease, she is forced to re-evaluate her role and significance for this child. She experiences, in other words, a non-coincidence, not as an idea (in the form of cognitive
dissonance) but as in the concrete flesh and blood of a transaction—or more poetically put, an encounter—taking place in an unfolding situation. The non-coincidence between her life-world and that of Aaron. The non-coincidence between her understanding of her role as a teacher and how inadequate this is in addressing the needs of her students. The non-coincidence between her identity as a teacher and the identity of Aaron as a student. The non-coincidence between her identity as a White teacher and the identity of Aaron as a colored student. All of a sudden, Norton-Meier finds herself asking difficult questions. She is compelled to ask these questions for she is alive to the situation she is in. She could have dismissed this encounter without dwelling too much on it. She could have anesthetized herself to the unease she was going through. Instead, she engages the situation by being present to it. She opens herself to what the situation has to reveal to her. She is now exploring certain possibilities that she has never thought were even relevant before. This is definitely an eye-opening moment for her. This is a consummatory moment for she is open to the temporality of the present. Notice, nobody is trying to teach her anything, but she is learning nevertheless. She is learning a lot.

Neither Aaron nor the old man is trying to teach her anything. But they are her teachers anyway by virtue of having significance in the situation that they are—all three of them—mutually constituting.

Aaron’s mother comes out of the back looking nervous to see me as she smoothes her hair and apron. Her eyes fall from my face to Aaron’s as she says, “Has Aaron been bad?”

“Oh no,” I quickly responded,

“Aaron just told me I could walk with him today.”
“Yeah, mama,” Aaron takes my hand, “I’m gonna show her around!” She nods slowly. I don’t really know what to do but follow Aaron, his excitement obvious as he flashes a smile at his mom and begins the tour. As we walk, Aaron points to each word and reads every beer sign on the walls. Norton-Meier follows Aaron’s lead; she submits to his excitement. She doesn’t really know what to do but follow Aaron. Exactly. She doesn’t have to know what to do. She doesn’t have to control everything. She doesn’t have to manage Aaron’s or others’ behavior. She doesn’t have to manipulate anyone. She can relax into the situation. She can trust the flow of the situation. She can let Aaron take charge. She can delegate responsibility to this little fellow. She is not an isolated subject up against a world of foreign objects. She is already part of an immensely meaningful situation. She touches and is touched at the same time. She is already outside of herself giving and receiving, acting and being acted upon. There is a certain rhythm she is part of and she is moving with it within it. This time, for a change, she just has to be at the receiving end of this experience in which she is encompassed.

“How about it, momma?” he asks as we exit the beer hall. “You gonna come in on me?”

“Why sure, honey,” she answers as she smiles. “I’m gonna come in on you!”

We stop by a table where four men are playing cards. Aaron cries, “What are you doin’, Roy? That’s a full house.” I realize that Aaron knows how to play poker—a complex game with its own vocabulary, rules, and complicated ways of thinking about your opponent’s next move.
Roy asks, “Did you do any writing for me today?” Aaron gets his journal out of his backpack and reads every page to Roy. In return, Roy tells him stories from his own life and how he used to write letters every day when he was in the war so his mother would know he was okay. Aaron sits on his knee, hanging on his every word. By now, the initial epiphany is consolidated and is transformed into a revelation. The meaning of the situation can be clearly discerned now. The meaning is heightened: Aaron is not illiterate!

I say my good-byes and they all tell me to come back and visit any time. Aaron’s mother gives me a bag full of food to take with me. I walk back to the school with a million thoughts racing in my head. Aaron was at the top of my “kids who are struggling” list. He had just exposed me to a whole new world that I am not representing in my classroom. He carries the classroom into his outside world but do I let him bring his world into the classroom? Do I allow any of the children to? Norton-Meier is experiencing growth. She is revitalized. Her taken-for-granted understanding of the meaning of her interaction with Aaron has been transformed. A new more expansive meaning has emerged. She has learned how to relate to Aaron in a better more unified way, in a way that lets her see the whole individual, and not a caricature of it. She is exhibiting an attitude of full attention to life and its requirements. This does not, however, mean that she is experiencing complete tranquility and bliss, maybe something along the lines of Zen satori (Japanese Buddhist term for enlightenment). On the contrary, her experience is riddled with tensions, yet it is anything but fragmentary, disconnected, inchoate, deadening, mindless, blunted and anesthetic. Rather, it is aesthetic. The aesthetic quality of the experience, its beauty, so to speak, does not originate from, say,
the carefree enjoyment of the idyllic simplicity of nature. The aesthetic quality originates from her experience of the dramatic tensive unfolding of events and her willingness/openness to let herself become part of the flow. Moreover, the shift in her perspective affords her the ability to move from the particularity of the situation—her experience with Aaron’s world—to a more encompassing (universal) understanding of the experience of all her other students. Yet again, such enhancement in her understanding—from the particular to the universal—is not an antiseptic theoretical construct. Her new more expansive understanding has emerged out of the situation she found herself in but it did not leave the situation behind to be transmitted to a level of existence beyond any situation. Her experience is still situational but more unified and expanded now. In other words, she has not graduated from the messy world of practice to the orderly and precise world of theory. She is still in the messy world of practice for that is the only world we have!

I am ashamed by my ignorance and judgmental attitude. Aaron has taught me a powerful lesson. I go to the teacher’s lounge to share my epiphany in relation to this experience and my concerns with my own teaching. My colleagues’ responses are surprising to me.

“Oh, you can’t let that world come in here.”

“That world is violent . . . so sad.”

“His mother is awful for letting him be in that environment.”

“He’s around drunks all the time.”

“Reading beer labels is not literacy.”
“He is doomed to failure.” The reversal of the roles—Aaron becoming her teacher—is a powerful and transformative experience for Norton-Meier for she is sufficiently attuned to the situation and its tensions that she is brave enough to acknowledge the power a little guy can have over her. In other words, because she is open to the temporality of the present, she has experienced growth. This is by no means the case for her colleagues though. They are not willing to leave the familiarity of their mundane understanding of the world. They are pretty content with their own convictions. They are closed off to further inquiry. They are closed off to growth for they are closed off to the possibility of seeing things in a different way. Norton-Meier’s journey, in many ways, exemplifies “the monomyth of the hero’s journey,” the theme brilliantly written about by Joseph Campbell, the foremost scholar of mythology and author of the enormously popular The Hero with a Thousand Faces. Norton-Meier leaves her familiar understanding of the world and ventures out into the unknown. There she confronts dragons (inner and outer)—the unfamiliar—wrestles with the forces of tension and conflict, and wins a decisive victory; she returns to the world she once belonged to in order to bestow the results of her achievement on her fellow colleagues, but to no avail. Departure, transformation, and return: the basic rhythm of growth experience, situational through and through. Yet there is a universality to it. Notice that the return is always returning to the situation itself experienced qualitatively and immediately in the here and now with this group of people in this place at this time. When we are transformed, our understanding of the situation is enhanced. The situation is not eliminated and replaced by theory. Theoretical understanding—the cognitive picture—is a phase in the unfolding drama whereby we articulate the new understanding in order to consolidate it. Once we
have consolidated it, once it becomes habitual, that is, once it becomes part of us and we become part of it, once our self is infused with “intelligent habit,” we are capable of receiving the future in its novel possibilities.

I walk to my room thinking that a value—or lack of value—has been attached to the experience Aaron is getting by the same people who will try to help him learn in the next few years. I worry that he may come to feel that his world is bad, that his mother is bad, that all the things he has learned in the initial years of his life are meaningless. How will Aaron ever find success in this world of school when his freedom to live his life is judged as not good enough by individuals on the outside, people who do not understand or value his world? Will Aaron be a risk taker? Will he have the freedom to choose his future? Being no longer on the outside, Norton-Meier is genuinely concerned about the future of Aaron, and also about the future of all her students in the person of Aaron. With some intensity, she is now asking existential questions, questions related to the meaning and value of our lives, questions related to the meaning of our relations with others, questions related to the direction of our lives, questions related to the purpose of our lives. In short, these are all questions that are oriented towards the future. The answers to these questions are not meant to provide accurate predictions of the events that will take place at some future time. She is not trying to predict the future. The concern here is not with the chronological time. Norton-Meier is not trying to come up with a new scientific model of teaching—a new heuristic maybe, a magic wand—that will guarantee that certain outcomes are attained by controlling the initial conditions and variables. Her concern is not the calendar future. Her concern is the immediate understanding of the present regarding its meaning and purpose. She is looking at the present, and the present
is always oriented towards the future for future gives us the direction and purpose to our actions in the present.

On the following day during writing workshop, I pull my chair up alongside Aaron, and we decide to write a story together about our experience. When we share our story with the rest of the class, many more children are prompted to share stories from their worlds—stories of Sandra’s next-door neighbor who raises 200 birds and of Manuel’s grandma who had a runaway tamale! Norton-Meier returns to life. She is alive, and not at the expense of Aaron but thanks to him. It is beautiful. Aaron and she radiate this beauty. This is an experience for them, a consummated experience. As a result, many more children participate in life with them.

The story does not end here, however. Rather, it represents a turning point [italics added] in my teaching career. I was faced by my own small view of the world and my limited definition of language, literacy, and learning. It was as if a door opened up to an exciting new world that I had not considered as a source of my teaching. I realized with the help of Aaron and the other children that it was my job as a teacher to use strategies that let children learn about the languages of their cultures through sharing their stories and their personal literacies and experiences. (Norton-Meier, 2005, p. 288)

For Norton-Meier, her interaction with Aaron was a real experience, of which one says “that was an experience.” It stands out as an enduring memorial of what true teaching and learning experience may be. It stands out because it is “marked out from what went before and what came after” (Art as Experience, LW10: 43). It was “a turning point” for her. She was transformed and her horizon of meaning has been expanded. She is now
open to “an exciting new world.” This sums up the essence of consummatory experience—a unified heightened sense of meaning leading to truly educative experience. The heightened sense of meaning experienced here is not an esoteric meaning; on the contrary, it is everyday meaning, or put more accurately, the aesthetic dimension of everyday meaning. The aesthetic potential of everyday experience has been tapped. Such a potential cannot be actualized in chronological mode of time. We can theorize about it all we want and provide first-rate guidelines, instructions, heuristics, models, etc., none of which can substitute for the actual experience itself in the phenomenological, that is, lived, time.

This, however, does not mean that the chronological mode of time is totally useless and has to be entirely jettisoned. The truth of the matter is that the chronological mode of time is always embedded within the phenomenological mode of time. Lived experience precedes and prepares the ground for the experience of reflection about the possibilities of the lived experience. Norton-Meier’s realization of an exciting new world prompts her to reflect on the taken for granted understandings regarding teaching, learning, language, literacy, culture, pedagogy, and their inexhaustively rich interrelationships, and causes her to look for novel ways of thinking that would help her integrate her experience at a higher level of understanding. In other words, she is compelled to grow.

With the compelling energy of this heightened sense of meaning, Norton-Meier goes to work. She is introduced to a variety of literature—I would venture to claim that not coincidentally for now she is sensitized to see things that she has not even considered existed—that suggests ways to transform her curriculum in ways that would consolidate
the new insights gained through her experience with Aaron. After a series of similarly transformative experiences which were triggered by the initial experience with Aaron and were built on it, Norton-Meier decides to go back to school to pursue a graduate degree.

It was the questions I had about curriculum, print in the real world, and creating home-school partnerships that brought me back to graduate work. Little did I know that I would show up with a few questions and leave with many more as my thinking was challenged and learning continued. (Norton-Meier, 2005, p. 289)

As the second phase of her professional (as well as personal) transformation, the graduate work Norton-Meier now engages with is driven by real-life experiences gained in the first phase of her journey with Aaron. She does not out of the blue decide to pursue a graduate career. Her experience, much like a river, is flowing “without holes, mechanical junctions, and dead centers” (Art as Experience, LW10: 43) from phase one to phase two. Phase one leads into phase two. However, this should not suggest that these two phases melt and fuse into unity. They do not disappear and lose their own character. As phase two carries on what went before, each phase gains distinctness in itself. For Norton-Meier, there is a clear-cut division between the first telling of the story when she was Aaron’s kindergarten teacher and her second telling of the story as a graduate student.

The two phases, however, are connected. What connects the two is the process of growth which can only take place from within. This growth is not merely an intellectual growth. Yes, her intellectual understanding in regards to issues like literacy, language, culture, pedagogy, and so forth has expanded and now she is capable of handling higher level of work in the graduate school. But the whole point is that Norton-Meier has grown as a whole, as an individual who is much more open and sensitive to what is transpiring in her
environment. She is more in touch with her social and physical environment. She feels she is integrally related to her environment. She is not merely smarter. Rather, she is much more unified in her understanding of the world and how she is connected with it. She is more aware of and receptive towards the processes unfolding both within and without so much so that the distinction between what is within and what is without is no longer static and hypostatized. It has become dialectical. There is a dynamic ongoing conversation—a dialogue—taking place in her experience.

As part of this dialectical experience—the ongoing dialogue transpiring at multiple levels—Norton-Meier engages in professional inquiry. A variety of professional readings helped to offer me new perspectives on Aaron’s experiences and my own related experiences. Discussion with other teachers and students played an essential role, as well as various opportunities to write, share, and receive feedback from others. (Norton-Meier, 2005, p. 293)

She delves into an intensive theoretical work as part of her studies and comes across a framework through which she re-interprets her work and her experience with Aaron. Whitmore and Crowell’s appropriation of Ken Goodman’s theory of invention-convention (as cited in Norton-Meier, 2005) becomes a useful tool to understand “the teacher’s role in keeping the tension alive [italics added] between personal invention and social convention” (Norton-Meier, 2005, p. 289). The non-coincidence between these two opposing forces—invention and convention—becomes very instructive for Norton-Meier. Utilizing the theory to explore further the myriad interrelationships involved in teaching and learning literacy reveals deeper and wider dimensions in her understanding of the original situation experienced in phase one. As she continues the dialectical inquiry
process, which she is increasingly encompassed and intimately engaged with (as opposed to being on the outside as a spectator), she asks more and more penetrating and refined questions as a result of which she finds herself “with a new lens to view Aaron’s story with many new questions” (Norton-Meier, 2005, p. 291).

The crucial message we need to take home with us is that the theoretical work at this phase is grounded and driven by her original experience with Aaron. Furthermore, it always goes back to real-life experience. Theory never remains theoretical. It is fed back into our experiences. Moreover, theory is not meant to provide us with ultimate unchanging incorruptible answers. Rather, as we see in Norton-Meier’s case, we are pushed to ask more (and more refined) questions.

The significance of the original experience Norton-Meier had with Aaron cannot be underestimated for, far from being dissipated, it is still vital and dramatically shapes and directs her academic career now as a teacher educator—the third phase.

I read Aaron’s story to help [my students] see that our entire semester will be based on learning from a child’s point of view. After reading the story, we talk. The discussions lead to the sharing of personal literacy and schooling experiences as well as the questioning of our assumptions about language and learning, the pervading deficit view in relation to family, and the creation of a student-centered curriculum that values and validates each student’s culture and ways of knowing.

(Norton-Meier, 2005, p. 292)

“Aaron’s story” is not just another trick in the bag that Norton-Meier is utilizing to transmit a certain technique to her pre-service teachers. “Aaron’s story” is her story. She embodies it. She is who she is as a teacher educator (and as a person) because of the
meaning experienced in that story and the way that meaning has been incorporated into her life experience. The events that compose the story are chronologically in the past. They are gone. However, in Norton-Meier’s experience, they are present and alive. The story is not finished. It is still unfolding. It is still pregnant with novel meanings. This is a *consummatory* experience.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION:

IMPLICATIONS OF TEACHING AS CONSUMMATORIAL EXPERIENCE FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

In this final chapter, I will specifically look into the implications of teaching as consummatory experience for teacher education. It is my conviction that a solid teacher education program requires first and foremost a unifying principle—a clear unifying vision of what good teaching means. Deweyan consummatory experience provides such a vision. Teaching as consummatory experience is what good teaching is all about. For a teacher education program, teaching as consummatory experience not only provides a unifying principle that permeates all coursework and clinical experiences it also embodies a principle of unity for consummatory experience is unified experience where theory and practice are integrated. The goal of teacher education is unified experience for teachers. This means that coursework and clinical work should not be divorced from each other. Theory and practice are to be integrated.

Tightly interwoven clinical and coursework lead to consummatory experience of learning to teach. This idea will be spelled out in two parts. In the first part, the focus will be on the priority and importance of the clinical work. In the second part, the principle of Bildung as self-cultivation that should form the basis of the coursework in teacher education programs will be articulated. Basically, it will be argued very strongly in favor of a solid liberal arts and sciences coursework that cultivates autonomy in the individual teacher—that is, a liberal arts and sciences curriculum that fruitfully develops the attitude of openness to the temporality of the present in the teacher. In other words, besides a
curriculum “grounded in knowledge of child and adolescent development, learning, social contexts, and subject-matter pedagogy, taught in the context of practice” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 41), teachers should be encouraged to cultivate their own self-development.

Part 5.1 Clinical Work

We learned a lot in university classes, but I think that that which we really needed to know, we did not get. I think that a lot has to do with the “here and now.” It is easy to think of, “Well somebody does this to me, then I follow this and this and this.” But every situation is so different and every student is so different. So what I learned in the abstract does not seem to fit any particular case. (Roth, 2002, p. 132)

That which all teachers, pre-service and in-service alike, novice and seasoned alike, really need to know cannot be taught but can be learned. That which cannot be taught but can be learned is the consummatory experience of being and becoming a teacher in a classroom. This experience is not a matter of cognition alone. In other words, it is not about knowing per se. Therefore the sense of panic experienced in any discussion of knowledge needed for teaching is misplaced. Teaching and learning to teach, when approached with an aggressive objectifying attitude, appear to be an immensely complex and demanding task to teacher educators. When teacher educators waltz with the illusion that the best way to get knowledge of things is to objectify them, that is, when we grasp things not as events with significance unfolding in a multifaceted dynamic situation to which we belong but as things looked at by an outside observer disconnected from their environment, we “de-live” them (Harman, 2007).
When the consummatory experience of being and becoming a teacher in a classroom is “de-lived,” all of a sudden, we remove ourselves from the temporally unfolding situation we are immersed in and delude ourselves into thinking that we can “rise above our environment to some pure, lofty pedestal and pass judgment on the world, as if we were untainted by it” (Harman, 2007, p. 31). Moreover, we sincerely believe that the distance gained will engender clarity and a firm grip on the situation. What it engenders instead is distortion. The living situation, when “de-lived,” becomes distorted. Instead of living in tune with the significance of the situation we are immersed in, we frantically attempt to control it from outside. We do this by analyzing, or rather, compartmentalizing the situation we have objectified into manageable bits and pieces. The situation then looks incredibly complex. We become overwhelmed with all the elements that need to be accounted for and controlled. We literally become control freaks! We freak out for we have isolated ourselves from the situation at hand but at the same time we need to get a grip on the situation as well. This is an impossible situation: trying to be in and out at the same time!

For Dewey, this conception of knowing—the quest for certainty as he calls it—is at best ill-conceived, at worst seriously pathological. For him, the situation is never atomistically constructed; rather, it is always already holistically given and us within it. It is not composed of separate and independent elements that need to be combined through the agency of a misconceived Cartesian cogito. As teachers, we are not Cartesian cogitos trying to know the world to give an encyclopaedic account of it from an invulnerable Archimedean point (Burke, 2000, p. 111). As teachers, we are not “calm, antiseptic observer[s] dressed in a white coat, standing on a lofty tower and describing everything
neutrally” (Harman, 2007, p. 43). We are never isolated creatures, but live vulnerable human beings immersed in a specific environment made up of other live things and humans that are equally vulnerable as us. We are situational creatures through and through and the enfolded meaning within the situation dramatically unfolds, and we unfold with it. We are not out there on our own seeking to know, control, and manage the world we are not a part of. We are in the world in association with other people in it. It is a shared world. We share it with our students and colleagues and others. We do not have to know everything; we do not have to control everything; we do not have to be on top of everything. We do not have to be an expert. We can rely on others. It is okay. We can rely on their judgment. We can trust them. We can ask for help. Other people, including our students, know a thing or two as well. We need to relax a little bit. We are not running the show by ourselves. It is not a one wo(man) show in the first place.

Besides, the students are not merely there to be known about so that they can be controlled and managed. They are fellow human beings just like us. They are as alive as us (if they are not already anesthetized through years of mindless schooling). They are as part of the situation as we are. We can rely on their judgment, understanding and perceptions. They will tell us what we need to know and what we need to do, not necessarily verbally and explicitly, so we have to be mindful of the situation and be able to feel what is going on. When we encounter them, we are also encountered. When we experience them, we are also experienced. The relationship is reciprocal. It is not one way. It is not a matter of us controlling them. People and things respond to us as much as we respond to them; they let us know who they are and how they are.
The consummatory experience of being and becoming a teacher in a classroom, therefore, is not as complex and solitary a process as it might appear to the eyes of a theoretically inclined university researcher who has made knowing what is going on in a classroom (analyzing every bit of it) her life’s work. It is rather quite simple, immediate and enjoyable as a matter of fact once we stop trying to know everything—once we relax the impulse for control—for being and becoming a teacher is not something to be known, it simply is to be had. It is an existential condition. That is, it is situational. It is not theoretical. It needs to be lived in the here and now with this group of students in this classroom at this time. It can only be experienced in the concrete with the presence of others.

The point that particularly matters in relation to the presence of others is that we not only can rely on our students to get a grip on the situation, but also on our more experienced colleagues. As a matter of fact, they are probably better sources of wisdom and knowledge regarding teaching and learning than all the books on teacher education put together. It is not surprising that we find it hard to learn certain activities just by reading instruction manuals. It is hard, if not impossible, to learn to rock climb just by reading a manual in rock climbing, no matter how brilliantly it was crafted. It is hard to learn to operate on someone’s appendix just by reading a manual in human anatomy. We need to do something more. That something more we need to do is to “go and engage in these activities with someone else [italics added] who has already developed a certain level of expertise” (Roth, 2002, p. 112). To put it succinctly, the clinical work.

Now, the only implication worth noting of teaching as consummatory experience for teacher education is the consummatory experience of teaching itself. That is,
“teaching as consummatory experience” is not a thing (a new idea, a model or a heuristic). It is an experience, something to be lived. Only in living can it be experienced. Therefore, first thing you need for a solid teacher education program is not a new model, a groundbreaking heuristic, a brilliant dissertation on Dewey, a new policy, initiative, plan, protocol, algorithm, or an administrative gimmick. What you need is simple: teachers who actually enjoy teaching. What is needed is teachers of consummatory experience, teachers who experience teaching in a consummatory way. First, therefore, find teachers who enjoy teaching (there are some around; it is not like we have to create them ex nihilo in the lab) and then couple them with those teachers-to-be. The sane and obvious thing to do is to work side by side with someone who actually enjoys being a teacher, that is, who lives the consummatory experience of teaching and since this experience is not a private subjective event that only takes place within the confines of a tight little skull, it is bound to have a positive impact on those who share the situation with the teachers of consummatory experience.

After everything that has been said up to now, one does not really have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that in order to become a teacher of consummatory experience, you have to be one. And the only way to be one is to be with one. We cannot reproduce good teachers in the lab (in the absence of good teachers actually teaching) although that is what we are trying to do in most teacher education programs.

Consummatory experience is not something that can be pre-packaged for sale and distribution. It is not a model that can be implemented either. It is not a consumer product. It does not come with a barcode. Since it is not merely an object of cognition, it cannot be transmitted the way information is transmitted. Consummatory experience is
about meaning, the meaning of the present, which can only be experienced in the present. Consummatory experience is about being attuned to the temporality of the present: about that quality of openness to the temporality of the present. We cannot teach this; we can only create situations where it is experienced in practice. The situation where it is experienced is the classroom situation: the alpha and omega point of teacher education where actual people have actual interactions in real time. The classroom situation cannot be simulated. We are not training Navy pilots. The object of our attention is not machines or inanimate matter or targets. The object of our attention is not an object at all. It is being human, which is not a fixed entity. Being human is becoming human. It is a temporal process. It unfolds and you unfold with it. It is not a problem to be solved. It is not an objective to be attained. It is not a target to be obtained.

The implication is clear enough. It is not possible to become a teacher without actually being a teacher. It is not possible to learn to teach except by being immersed in a real classroom situation. The clinical work has to come first. The coursework is not independent of and separate from the clinical work. The coursework is an integral part of the clinical work to the extent that it emerges out of the needs of the clinical work. First comes practice (that is, the necessity to deal with the present in the here-and-now). Then, as you deal with the present, you inevitably encounter problems—non-coincidences—in your practice. The present is not an oceanic state of bliss and harmony. Rather it is constituted by a profound and creative tension due to the non-coincidences which open us to a field of possibilities. Then and only then the problems you encounter in the here-and-now acquire real-life significance and you are compelled to do something about them. You seek assistance. You ask questions. You inquire. You can go to books; you can go to
other teachers. Or you can go to the teacher you are teaching with. S/he is already there. S/he is already part of the same present with you. You two share the same medium.

Teaching in pairs (a novice and a seasoned teacher side by side), or as Roth (2002) calls it “co-teaching,” is essential. For consummatory experience is about our ability to attune to the dramatic tensive duration that dialectically unfolds. Notice that consummatory experience does not come about when all the conflicts in a given situation are resolved once and for all and we finally experience a state of calm and serenity. The sense of consummation, the sense of unity, the sense of being at home in the classroom, is not the result of total lack of tension and drama in the situation. Rather, consummation, that experience of unity which is aesthetic, emerges to the extent that we are capable of attuning to the many subtleties of the classroom situation without cringing in fear from it and instead by embracing the unfolding drama and our place in it.

When you find yourself in a situation that is dialectically structured—and all situations (at least the way Dewey understands them) are so structured—in order to be a living participant of the situation as opposed to a mere spectator, you have to be similarly structured. That is, you have to be receptive to develop the dialectic between you and your students, you and your subject-matter as well as you and your more experienced colleague. By dialectic what I mean is basically the ability to communicate with all the various elements that compose the classroom situation you are in. The fundamental basis of communication lies with non-coincidences. If there were no non-coincidences, there would be no need for communication. If perfect transmission of meaning among interlocutors were possible, there would be no tension, no drama, and therefore no movement. A pervasive stillness would take over. As Dewey repeatedly points out,
however, the kind of world we live in forbids both absolute stillness as well as completely random unstructured meaningless movement. The world we live in is both stable and precarious. In other words, the classroom situation where teaching qua praxis unfolds is neither completely serene, transparent, and still, nor completely out of whack. It is always somewhere in between.

Teaching therefore is not about creating and sustaining a completely stable environment in which every single trace of precariousness is eliminated. Nor is it about a purposeless unmotivated drift. Teaching is about existing in the middle ground where neither complete stability (complete knowledge, complete control) nor utter precariousness obtains. That is the ground where life unfolds and consummation occurs.

The question then is how to exist in that middle ground. The answer given in this dissertation has been to engender the attitude of openness to the temporality of the present, which does not exist in the abstract. It is something lived and lived with others in a shared social situation. Such an attitude furthermore cannot be learned since it is not a form of knowledge that can be instilled under external pressure but can be cultivated from within for we are already endowed with it. It just needs to be intentionally developed and cultivated. Presence of a seasoned teacher who enjoys teaching in a consummatory way—a teacher who has cultivated the attitude of openness considerably—is the best starting point for the intentional development of consummatory experience in a novice teacher.

This means that teacher education programs should prioritize the clinical work in which novice teachers work together from day one with experienced teachers who enjoy teaching, viz., teachers for whom teaching is “both means and end, that is, useful for what
it produces and enjoyable for what it is” (Lachs, 2003, p. 199). From day one, teacher candidates should be paired with experienced teachers who enjoy teaching and put into classrooms with them to co-teach. “Being in the same situation and being with another practitioner explicitly build learning from one another into praxis and arise from getting the day’s work done together. Coteaching therefore is colearning, which does not arise by focusing in learning tasks but by doing a job” (Roth, 2002, p. 111). Doing a job together creates a situation whereby we are open to non-coincidences which make consummation possible. As non-coincidences emerge in a concrete fashion in the situation, the novice teacher is compelled to do something about them. The need for coursework should originate with that compulsion to do something about the non-coincidences that have been experienced in the concrete classroom situation. Learning to teach is like a dance whose steps must be learned along the way. You cannot first teach the steps in isolation for four years without actually having them practice the dance, and then expect them to dance afterwards. The dance is composed of steps but cannot be reduced to its parts for the whole is larger than the sum of its parts. It has to be experienced as a whole. The coursework therefore should not be separate and prior to the clinical work. It has to be aligned with the requirements of the clinical work. The needs that emerge during the course of the clinical work should dictate the actual content of the coursework. In other words, a very flexible framework should be provided for teacher education students in which self-directed curriculum building will be allowed and encouraged by teacher educators.

In the final analysis, the content of the coursework should be largely determined from the side of the personal growth of the teacher education students in order to
minimize the breaks, blocks, arrests, sudden switches and gaps, futile repetitions, duplications and overlappings in the curriculum ("General Principles of Educational Articulation," LW5: 299). Teacher education programs should not be “merely a juxtaposition of mechanically separated parts” ("General Principles of Educational Articulation," LW5: 299). The administrative side of things should be subservient to the needs of the individual growth of each student.

Ultimately, such growth is the goal of Deweyan consummatory experience. It should be reiterated, however, that growth, as Dewey explicates it, is to be understood “in terms of the active participle, growing” (Experience and Education, LW13: 19). That is, “growing as developing.” This deceptively simple remark—that experience is in its nature developmental—when understood in relation to the statement that “education is a development within, by, and for experience” (Experience and Education, LW13: 13) brings to awareness Dewey’s contention that “inquiry is always situated and contextual, and that it is undertaken in response to actual perceived problems” (Hickman, 1998, xviii). In order for growth to take place, in order for the individual student teacher to develop into a consummated being capable of experiencing life as a unified whole composed of “means-end integrated actions” (Lachs, 2003)—for Dewey, experience, borne of non-coincidences, aspires to unity (Haskins, 1999)—teacher education has to proceed within, by, and for experience. This means that the training of prospective teachers cannot be confined to lecture halls disconnected from what is transpiring in classrooms. Their growth as teachers can only take place within the experience of teaching, by the experience of teaching, and for the experience of teaching.
That closely interwoven clinical and coursework is essential for successful teacher education programs was brilliantly depicted by Linda Darling-Hammond (2006)—in collaboration with a fine team of renowned researchers in teacher education—in her ground-breaking work, *Powerful Teacher Education: Lessons from Exemplary Programs*. In this work she has conclusively demonstrated that the old adage, “good teachers are born and not made,” is absolutely unfounded. It is possible to make outstanding teachers. Period. Not in the university lecture halls though. Darling-Hammond (2006), in this compelling book which is based on solid and diligent research, identifies seven exemplary teacher education programs across the U.S. that are known to produce highly successful teachers and examines what they do that sets them apart. In relation to our discussion, I would like to highlight her findings regarding the priority of practice over theory in teacher education.

In criticizing the lack of genuine theory-practice integration in traditional—and less than satisfactory—teacher education programs, Darling-Hammond (2006) points out that historically teachers were taught to teach in lecture halls by instructors who had not themselves ever practiced what they were teaching, using texts that imparted psychological principles divorced from examples drawing on the real work of schools. Students’ courses on subject matter topics were disconnected from courses on teaching methods, which were in turn disconnected from courses on foundations and psychology. Students completed this coursework before they began student teaching, which was typically a brief taste of practice—usually
eight to twelve weeks—appended to the end of their senior year, with few connections to what had come before. (p. 152)

In traditional (and detrimental) approaches to clinical training, Darling-Hammond (2006) observes, the consummatory experience of learning to teach is sabotaged from the start for “the central feature of all experience, namely, that it emerges out of an ongoing interaction between the individual and its natural and cultural environment” (Haskins, 1999, p. 102) is totally disregarded. The experience of learning to teach can emerge and be vigorously educative if and only if the student teachers are engaged in the clinical work as embodied and enculturated parts of a classroom situation. Devoid of such a situation the consummatory experience of learning to teach does not materialize, and therefore, is not realized.

In other words, it is not allowed to compose itself into a situated inquiry for the student teacher. Only through the unfolding course of such an inquiry does the student teacher grow. That is, s/he develops a more dynamic—dialectical—understanding of her/his teaching experience by connecting the vicissitudes of her practice—the problems s/he encounters in the problematic situation of the classroom—with a reflective attitude whereby these problems are dwelt upon with their resolution in view. Since theory is learned in isolation from practice and classroom practice is divorced from theory—means and ends are disintegrated and/or fragmented—no course of inquiry forms in the first place. There is no drama, no unfolding narrative, no flow. There is “merely a juxtaposition of mechanically separated parts” (“General Principles of Educational Articulation,” LW5: 299) that are disconnected from each other. There is no sense of inquiry running its course for juxtaposition does not imply integration. As remarked
repeatedly before, for Dewey, inquiry originates with a problematic situation. It is always undertaken in response to actual perceived problems. If no such situation exists, there is no need for inquiry. Unless the student teacher is immersed in a problematic situation, in this case, a classroom situation—which is always problematic—s/he will not be compelled to reflect on anything. By now it should be evident that simulating classroom situations in university coursework is at best a well-intentioned misconception, at worst a flagrant distortion, for situations are not solipsistic events entertained in the mind. Rather they are embodied transactions undergone in lived sociocultural environments.

Furthermore, being an embodied and enculturated part of a classroom situation affords student teachers to have an immediate experience of that which is unpredictable, spontaneous, unformulable and ineffable. As Dewey remarks in *Experience and Nature*, “standardizations, formulae, generalizations, principles, universals, have their place, but the place is that of being instrumental to better approximation to what is unique and unrepeatable” (*Experience and Nature*, LW1: 97). In other words, the function of theoretical inquiry (which, by its nature, works with generalities) is always embedded within and is meant to enhance the immediate experience of practical encounters in a classroom situation. It is worth reiterating that, for Dewey, only in such practical encounters—in teaching qua praxis—is aesthetic consummatory experience possible. Consummatory experience is never a theoretical mode of activity enjoyed as a private affair in the inner life of a solitary subject standing over against a world of objects. Consummatory experience is a development of a sense of unity as a result of the miracle of shared life and shared experience.
In Darling-Hammond’s view, we have to take full advantage of such a miracle by involving teachers in clinical work throughout their entire program. In all the exemplary cases she reports on, “prospective teachers participate in at least thirty [italics added] weeks of mentored clinical practice under the direct supervision of one or more expert veteran teachers” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 153). Moreover, “the placements are carefully selected to offer settings where particular kinds of practices can be observed and learned by working with expert teachers and with students having particular characteristics (various developmental levels, special needs students) in a range of community and school types” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 153). Those who design these exemplary teacher education programs “understand that it is impossible for novices to learn to teach well by imagining what good teaching might look like, or positing the opposite of what student teachers see” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 153).

Darling-Hammond (2006) remarks that student-teachers have to be immersed in an experience where university-based work and clinical work are made compatible, that they cohere, that there are no unnecessary breaks, gaps, holes, ruptures. Appalled by the traditional divide “in which the university owns the theory and the school owns practice” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 154), she advocates “a more integrated set of experiences in which the school mentors rely on and impart theoretical understandings of practice while university instructors use and help develop practices that are theoretically rich but also eminently practical” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 154).

It is not Darling-Hammond’s (2006) preeminent concern to engage in a *philosophical* inquiry as to why (and how) tightly interwoven clinical and coursework
lead to consummatory experience of learning to teach. It has been the task of this
dissertation to explicate why.

**Part 5.2 Bildung as Self-Cultivation**

In regards to the coursework that is to be undertaken in a teacher education
program structured around the unifying principle of consummatory experience, the idea
of *Bildung* as self-cultivation should be considered to be the guiding principle in
curriculum building. *Bildung* as self-cultivation presupposes the autonomy of the
inwardness—subjectivity—of the individual and has the goal of the “full development of
the powers of each human individual” (Gur-Ze’ev, 2002). The assumption here is that in
the American *Bildung* tradition the aim of educative experience for students is to help
them realize *self-definition* (autonomy). If this is the case, only teachers who have taken
this task to heart in their own struggle for the realization of their autonomy can be
instrumental in motivating their students to pursue their own potential for autonomy. In
other words, if you want students who are fully alive and open to life (as opposed to
students who would be exclusively prepared to be workers to compete in the global
economy, for instance) that is, who develop towards the kind of maturity associated with
“the ability both to act autonomously in conformity with the current state of affairs and to
take part in the making and shaping of future society” (Uljens, 2002, p. 358), you want
teachers who are likewise open to life in an autonomous manner.

But what is autonomy? Or put differently, what does it mean to be a self-defining
subject? In order to tackle this pivotal question, a brief account of a modern notion of the
subject is in order. According to Charles Taylor (1975), one of the most prominent
contemporary philosophers,
the view of the subject that came down from the dominant tradition of the ancients, was that man came most fully to himself when he was in touch with a cosmic order, and in touch with it in the way most suitable to it as an order of ideas, that is, by reason. This is plainly the heritage of Plato; order in the human soul is inseparable from rational vision of the order of being. For Aristotle contemplation of this order is the highest activity of man. The same basic notion is present in the neo-Platonist vision which through Augustine becomes foundational for much medieval thought. (p. 6)

Here Taylor (1975) provides a most concise summary of the conception of the self that was dominant throughout the entire pre-modern Western philosophy—the self as defined in relation to a cosmic order. He then contrasts this with the modern shift to a self-defining subject whereby “an identity which I can define for myself without reference to what surrounds me and the world in which I am set” (Taylor, 1975, p. 6) becomes prominent. According to Taylor, this shift is revolutionary and defines what it means to be modern. When we moderns dispense with the notion of a meaningful cosmic order that is in many ways enchanting, we “draw back from the world, and concentrate purely on our own processes of observation and thought about things” (Taylor, 1975, p. 7). This modern sense of detachment from the world that used to be seen as an embodiment of meaning was facilitated “with the mapping of the regularities in things, by transparent mathematical reasoning, and with the consequent increase of manipulative control” (Taylor, 1975, p. 7). In other words, the modern shift to a self-defining subject went hand in hand with a sense of control over the world, which is now seen as “the locus of neutral,
contingent correlations” (Taylor, 1975, p. 7) rather than a text or embodiment of a meaningful cosmic order.

Seeing the world “not as a locus of meanings, but rather of contingent, de facto correlations” (Taylor, 1975, p. 8) leads to a vision of things devoid of intrinsic meaning—to use Max Weber’s famous phrase, a vision of things as “disenchanted” (Taylor, 1975, p. 8). The denial to the world of inherent meaning “marks a new, modern notion of objectivity correlative to the new subjectivity” (Taylor, 1975, p. 10). As Taylor (1975) articulates further,

the new notion of objectivity rejected the recourse to final causes, it was 

mechanistic [italics added] in the sense of relying on efficient causation only. Connected with this it was atomistic [italics added], in that it accounted for change in complex things not by gestalt or holistic properties, but rather by efficient causal relations among constituents. It tended towards homogeneity [italics added] in that seemingly qualitatively distinct things were to be explained as alternative constructions out of the same basic constituents or basic principles. (p. 10)

As can be seen from this brief account of the birth of the modern notions of subjectivity and objectivity, 19th and 20th century positivisms are direct descendants of this 17th and 18th century philosophical revolution in Western Europe, particularly, in England and France (the mechanistic and materialist Enlightenment). Moreover, we can also see the more holistic and idealist reaction of the German Enlightenment, or Aufklärung (and associated with it the German Bildung tradition, which underlies the American Bildung tradition) to this new notion of self-defining subjectivity and
correlative with it the new objectivity. In other words, as we will see shortly, the forms
the Western Enlightenment took in England and France as opposed to Germany underlie
today’s rivalry between positivism, a direct descendant of British empiricism, and the
American Bildung tradition, which is a direct descendant of German humanism.

How did the German Enlightenment react then to the climate of radical
Enlightenment, as it was unfolding especially in France, which completely did away with
the notion of a philosophy of cosmic order in which things have intrinsic meaning and
purpose? As a reaction to the model of a self-defining subject according to which
“notions like ‘meaning,’ ‘expression,’ ‘purpose’” were “inappropriate descriptions of
objective reality” and should be confined to the mental life of subjects (Taylor, 1975, p.
14), German thinkers, most notably, Herder, talked about human activity and human life
as expression, that is, as the realization of an unfolding self whose meaning is internally
generated and made determinate in that realization.

To talk about the realization of a self here is to say that the adequate human life
would not just be a fulfillment of an idea or a plan which is fixed independently of
the subject who realizes it, as is the Aristotelian form of a man. Rather this life
must have the added dimension that the subject can recognize it as his own, as having unfolded from within him [italics added]. This self-related dimension is
entirely missing from the Aristotelian tradition. In this tradition a proper human
life is ‘my own’ only in the sense that I am a man, and this is thus the life fit for
me. It was Herder and the expressivist anthropology [italics added] developed
from him which added the epoch-making demand that my realization of the
human essence be my own, and hence launched the idea that each individual has
its own way of being human, which it cannot exchange with that of any other
except at the cost of distortion and self-mutilation. (Taylor, 1975, p. 15)

This is momentous. For here we see the idea that the realization of my essence, my life, is
my *self-realization*. In other words, I no longer define myself in relation to an ideal order
beyond (as in Plato), or in relation to my powers to treat the world as object of my control
(as in British empiricism, which underlies the positivist scientific attitude), but rather I
define myself in relation to something which unfolds from myself (German humanistic
tradition to which Dewey belongs).

The notion of the self-unfolding subject is unique to the anthropology developed
by German thinkers. According to this new understanding of the subject, “my humanity
is something unique, not equivalent to yours, and this unique quality can only be revealed
in my life itself” (Taylor, 1975, p. 16).

The idea is not just that men are different; this was hardly new; it was rather that
the differences define the unique form that each of us is called on to realize. The
differences take on moral import; so that the question could arise for the first time
whether a given form of life was an *authentic* [italics added] expression of certain
individuals or people. . . . In the course of living adequately I not only fulfill my
humanity but clarify what my humanity is about. As such a clarification my life-
form is not just the fulfillment of purpose but the embodiment of meaning, the
expression of an idea. (Taylor, 1975, p. 17)

As an authentic self, in this view, I struggle to come to know myself by expressing what I
am and recognizing myself in this expression. I feel most fully alive when my life
culminates in self-awareness through expression. This expression takes form and is
realized through language and art. The latter two are no longer understood as an imitation or picturing of reality; rather, as the expression of self. “A notion of art as expressive,” Taylor (1975) points out, “is not just a giving vent to feelings, but a transformation of them to higher form. For the same reason, this expression of feeling is not subjective in the restrictive sense, making no claim to truth. On the contrary, the highest art is so because it is true to Nature; but not in the sense of an imitation, rather as the highest and fullest expression of its potentialities” (p. 20).

As a result of this new notion of a self-defining subjectivity—a subject’s self-realization through the expression of profound feelings that complete and expand her existence—“art was given a central part to play in the realization of human nature, in the fulfillment of man” (Taylor, 1975, p. 21). Teaching as consummatory experience involves such an expressive realization of the meaning of one’s activities as a teacher. The realization of what it means to be a teacher involves an expression, in the sense of a clarification, of who one is as a teacher. This expression, as it is recognized by the teacher herself, becomes a mode of self-awareness. Such self-awareness is the aim of Bildung as self-cultivation.

Only a true liberal arts and sciences curriculum is capable of fostering such self-awareness in prospective teachers. A teacher education program that is informed and guided at every step of the way by the unifying principle of consummatory experience is bound to implement a true liberal arts and sciences curriculum to foster the type of self-awareness Bildung as self-cultivation embodies and strives for. Therefore, it should come as no surprise to suggest that the core coursework of teacher education programs should be constituted on the basis of a unified liberal arts and sciences curriculum. The goal of
teacher education programs is not to train teachers, that is, not to merely impart certain techniques to be used in managing classrooms. Rather, the goal is to help them self-develop (physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, and morally) so that they in turn can help their own students self-develop.

   It is clear that self-development is not the development of a solitary self. It is an open-ended ongoing social process whereby we are in tune with the world we inhabit in such a way that we are alive to its existing and possible meanings.
REFERENCES


intervention. [Electronic version]. *Philosophical Studies in Education* 36, 135-147.


1 In this dissertation, the use of the term “consummatory experience,” or “consummation,” is based on Dewey’s own articulation and use of it in Art as Experience, particularly, in Chapter 3, “Having an Experience,” pp. 42-44.

2 It is extremely difficult to translate this term into English; therefore, the German term will be left untranslated throughout this work. For an initial description, the following remarks by Beiser (2003) should be helpful.

The German term Bildung is notoriously untranslatable. Depending on the context, it can mean education, culture, and development. It means literally “formation,” implying the development of something potential, inchoate, and implicit into something actual, organized, and explicit. Sometimes the various connotations of the term join together to signify the educational process or product of acculturation, or the ethical process or product of self-realization. (p. 26)

McGough (2005) provides a more concise rendition of the term in the following way: “[Bildung] entails a lifelong process of self-development through the cultivation of the student’s mind and soul” (p. 140).

In the classical Greek tradition, there is a “contrast between the scholar and the wise man on whom the scholar depends . . . and its content is based on the distinction between the ideas of sophia and phronēsis. It was first elaborated by Aristotle, developed by the Peripatetics as a critique of the theoretical ideal of life, and in the Hellenistic period helped define the image of the wise man” (Gadamer, 2003, p. 20). “Practical knowledge, phronēsis, is another kind of knowledge. Primarily, this means that it is directed towards the concrete situation. Thus it must grasp the ‘circumstances’ in their infinite variety” (Gadamer, 2003, p. 21).

The following excerpt from Burke (2000) succinctly illustrates the Cartesian and modern empiricist view of experience and will be quoted in length:

According to the view of ourselves which we have inherited from Descartes, Locke, and others, experiences are occurrences in the individual human mind, occurring as ideas impressed on it by external things, more or less at the mind’s periphery, injected into the mind through irritations of nerve endings and so forth. The main business of the mind is to reason and formulate intentions and plans and otherwise make choices and control actions on the basis of existing beliefs and desires, and all of this mental activity somewhere back up in the inner reaches of the brain is geared or otherwise answerable to evidence supplied to it through sensory experience. Experience in this view is a flux of sensory excitation at the interface between the mind and the world. The main point here is that, in this
modern view, mind (soul, the faculty of reason, etc.) is central to human nature, and experience is a peripheral (but of course important) activity which serves the mind’s needs and purposes. (p. 104)

6 The terms “clinical work” and “clinical experience” replace the use of “fieldwork” and “field experience” and reflect the latest terminological shift in the professional teacher education literature. They basically refer to the actual teaching experience that takes place in classrooms (student-teaching and/or practicum included) and are contrasted to the coursework—the ideas, theories, and concepts addressed in the academic work. Contrary to the common associations of the term “clinical” with a hospital, and therefore, sterile, antiseptic, and somewhat cold and uninviting environment, the term is meant to bring out the sense of teachers being engaged in a concrete embodied way with their students embedded in a particular physical as well as socio-cultural environment.

7 This is an undergraduate education class (CI 204) I teach at Iowa State University where a broad range of topics from history, sociology and philosophy of American education to contemporary learning theories and issues pertaining to the No Child Left Behind legislation is discussed. The quotation in the text is part of an answer given to an open-ended question in the final take-home exam by one of my students. The course was taught in the fall semester of 2006.

8 As opposed to, for instance, the possibility of defining learning within the framework of the American Bildung tradition in the following manner:

The vision of the human as a learner, who is endowed with the authentic possibility of transforming given structural constraints into dynamic processes of
self-realization. . . . Learning, in this connection, is the procedure by which our bodies are valorized to become aesthetic expressions of ourselves. The true function of education as character-building is *learning to be human*. Through humanization, we embody the humanity inherent in our nature. By digging a well into our ground of existence, we are empowered to tap into the spiritual resources of our own life water to create, nourish, and sustain an ever-expanding network of human-relatedness as well as to actualize our full potential as feeling, thinking, and willing individuals.

9 “It should be noted that in German, the word for science (*Wissenschaft*) is not restricted to the exact natural sciences, as is usually the case in English. Instead, it refers to any kind of systematic knowledge at all. In the German sense of the term, history, sociology, and literary theory are also sciences; numerous German philosophers have used the word ‘science’ to describe what they do” (Harman, 2007, p. 21).

10 Again, a narrowly conceived notion of rationality, that is, “instrumental rationality” is meant here rather than the concept of rationality as it is understood in the Hegelian tradition.

11 Growth, in this context, refers to the process of self-formation from within. This process takes place in relation to an environment, broadly speaking, the world, and not in sheer isolation. It is “from within” because the self and the world are not linked externally. The two co-exist reciprocally and constitute each other mutually. In other words, growth is an *organic* process.

12 *Bildung*, for the time being, can simply be defined as “an organic model of *education as growth* [italics added]” (Good, 2006, p. xix).
The significance of the term "autonomy" will be discussed in more detail in relation to Bildung as self-cultivation in Part 5.2.


15 Neo-humanism is distinguished from Renaissance humanism.

16 Incidentally, the reader should be reminded that in German Idealism, “spiritual” does not primarily refer to a supernatural/transcendent realm. Rather, the term Geist, for which there is no proper counterpart in English and can be translated as “spirit” or “mind,” is used by Hegel to refer to “spirit as humanity rather than divinity above or an elusive soul within” (Good, 2006, p. 13). It is a process of self-development the aim of which is the realization of freedom.

17 For Hegel, Bildung is undergoing the experience of moving from confident “certainty” of our taken-for-granted unexamined everyday ordinary consciousness—the dogmatic natural attitude—to despair in the sense that we come to realize the intractable difficulties caused by our one-sided understanding of the world which prevents us from making the world a home, to renewed certainty—the renewed natural attitude devoid of the naivety of the initial phase—as we finally apprehend the unity that underlies the terms of the self-world interaction. Dewey’s notion of consummatory experience points to such a movement. Again, the final apprehension of the unity that underlies the terms of the self-world, or organism-environment, interaction is not a state of knowing, much less an ultimate revelation of truth. Rather, it is a state of being at home in and with the world pervaded by the quality of openness to the temporality of the present, or simply, porousness. Porousness is a term I coined in collaboration with the philosopher Graham Harman during one of our email exchanges in 2004. I do not intend to adopt the use of
this phrase within the scope of this dissertation. It will have to await some other occasion for its elaboration.

18 Dewey, here, evokes the concept of Bildung and does not merely refer to physical growth of the organism.

19 The idea of the quality of openness in relation to education as Bildung is meant to provide a viable articulation of the goals of education against the attacks of extreme postmodern discourses that tend to be overly skeptical of any consistent narrative that would provide an account of the aims of education to the point of paralyzing any action on the part of educators.

20 Garrison’s use of “hyperrationalization” is akin to Prange’s (2004) use of “technicality” and Reichenbach’s (2002) discussion of “economic rationality” both of which basically refer to Habermas’ conception of the “colonialization of the lifeworld (Lebenswelt)” by technical/instrumental rationality (Habermas, 1997).

21 In this study, “consummatory experience,” “an experience,” “aesthetic experience,” “experience as growth,” “experience pervaded by quality of openness” will be used interchangeably to refer to Bildung as educative experience in general. The distinctions among them will be dealt with within the main body of this dissertation.

22 Noddings in several places acknowledges the German philosopher Martin Heidegger’s influence on her idea of caring.

23 It might be objected that it is possible to be a public school teacher in contexts other than school classrooms. This is true. However, it is not my intention to provide an exhaustive analysis of all the possible places in which one can be a teacher. The point of the ensuing analysis is to discuss the situational characteristics (its holism and
temporality) of the everyday lifeworld of public school teachers. A public school classroom as the most common physical environment inhabited by public school teachers serves our purposes. Any physical environment can be used to demonstrate Dewey’s conception of the situational nature of experience. The situational nature of experience cannot be limited to any particular physical environment. Physical environment, any physical environment, is always encompassed within the inclusive integrity of experience. In other words, experience cannot be reduced to its physical component.

24 Its utility expires, however, as soon as it reduces the wholistic experience to its cognitive component (the whole being reduced to its part).

25 That the plurality of understandings of the Good Life is irreducible means that there are alternative understandings of what truth is and they do not absolutely coincide with each other. There is always an element of non-coincidence among them.

26 Temporality of modernity is dynamic and still unfolding and unfinished because of the non-coincidences among alternative understandings of truth (see Footnote 25).

27 The following text is an answer given to one of the final take-home exam questions for Curriculum and Instruction 204 (CI 204)—Social Foundations of American Education—course I taught at Iowa State University (ISU) in the Spring semester of 2007. The question was: in your subject-area (or your interest-area), plan a unit based on the principles of The Dewey School.

28 The terms “retrospective,” “prospective,” and “durative” are suggested by the linguist Michael Lewis in his book The English Verb: An Exploration of Structure and Meaning to replace the traditional terminology used to explain the structure of English verb forms. Lewis in this book endeavors to argue that the English verb system is much
more logical and regular than most teachers and students realize. As a long-time TEFOL teacher in Turkey, I have come to benefit from his work immensely. In any case, “retrospective” replaces the perfect forms such as “I’ve just seen him” or “I’d already heard.” “Durative” forms replace what is traditionally referred to as continuous or progressive forms such as “I’m waiting for Ann.” Finally, there is no exact counterpart in the traditional terminology for his “prospective” forms such as “It’s going to rain.” The reader is strongly encouraged to consult this work to deepen their understanding of the English verb system.