

While it is clear why words from Dewey, Friere and other important philosophers are posted in this particular forum , I'll start with a decidedly sea-level analogy, but one that might later bring us back up to the lofty philosophical heights regularly enjoyed here.

Let us suppose a philosophical course voyage through the often choppy seas of theoretical abstractions and philosophical debates on education, with the captain-professor at the helm and the crew-students with oars working the water. The next moment, one of these crew-students is pitched overboard and the space he had once occupied among his fellow travelers is left quite visibly empty. Now the man overboard remains within view of the ship and its crew and shouts for some assistance. The captain and crew remaining aboard nevertheless stay focused both on their destination and the work at hand that will get them most quickly and safely to that destination. Seeing this, the man overboard tries to indicate that we all might seriously question the value of both their destination and their work when it is done at the expense of a crew member who had just moments earlier worked along side them toward that common destination. The man overboard also tries to indicate to them that his crew members' refusal to stop even long enough to consider his plight necessarily makes each one of them all the more likely to suffer his same plight. And the man overboard continues to shout...

Of course, the sorts of philosophical elements in the above analogy are easily grasped by a ten-year old, but this fact does not reduce their significance. In fact, it appears that once we've moved far above such elementary philosophy into the rarified air of courses within the academy, such basics are quickly forgotten and are thereby entirely dispensed with. And while I risk insulting some with the obvious in the analogy, it seems a risk worth taking due to the seriousness of the issues the analogy is based on.

It should be clear enough (requiring little if any education in philosophy) that the work of Dewey, Freire, and others (and the study of their work) is predicated upon an institution operating on basic principles that both Dewey and Freire took for granted in their approaches to the practical and philosophical issues in education.

So we could safely say that both Dewey and Freire would have us recognize the following: When a UCLA student's faculty advisor and his division head (within the GSE&IS) write that "no enquiries" were made to verify the information used to terminate a student's academic career, the entire UCLA student body faces an administrative operation

that significantly imperils its place within the university. When a student's faculty advisor states that he is willing to argue that his student "has been made to pay" with his academic career for "department error," "professor and university disorganisation," and "carelessness by whoever issues the dismissal notice (for their failure to verify the situation)," and this faculty member is not provided a forum to make this argument, every UCLA student then stands in a significantly diminished student/ faculty relationship. And when a student is told by a UCLA administrator that a student cannot expect the university to check facts before it terminates a student's academic career, every UCLA student is put on notice that a UCLA administrator can and does act with complete impunity.

And clearly, there can be no serious work by or about Dewey, Freire or others in an institution of higher education when the above facts are found in the termination of a student's academic career in that same institution of higher education.

...and for the man over board who continues to shout, of course, the analogy above leaves out one more point that is perhaps of more significance than the two already made by the man overboard. Provided he continues to keep within shouting distance of the captain (professor) and crew (students), he also correctly points out to the them that their responsibility is ultimately to the ship that carries them, as well as many others later on, and that this responsibility requires them to actively work to protect the integrity of the ship's structure from damage done either unwittingly or wittingly by others whose actions show no concern for their ship.

This much at least starts to bring us back up to the level of philosophy that one must actually practice so as to seriously engage in the work of Dewey and Freire. However, the captain-professor and crew-students who disregard the individual who has been pitched overboard in the above-described manner also disregard the most basic level of philosophy, which holds that while they may indeed continue to focus solely on their individual academic work and reach a material destination, they will have intellectually and ethically already gone down with that proverbial ship.

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