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Toward an Environment-based Pedagogy of Creativity: Learning from the Bauhaus and Dewey's Pragmatism

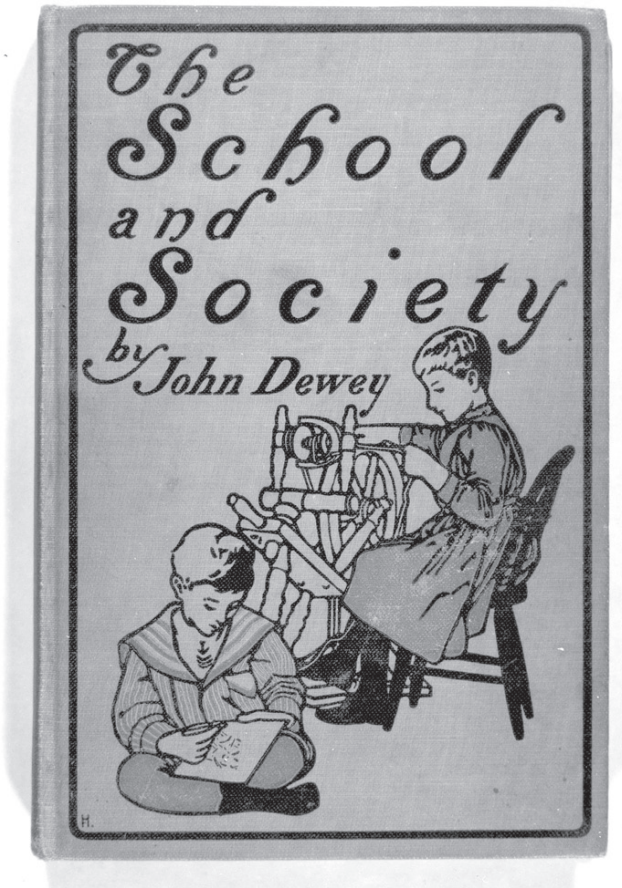

Fig. 1: First edition of *School and Society*, by educator John Dewey (1899)

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Students, teachers, and practitioners of design disciplines have still much to learn from the Bauhaus's successive pedagogical experiments. From the Weimar of 1919 to 1930s Harvard and Chicago, their programs famously attempted to bypass disciplinary boundaries through the organization of collective workshops on materials, classes to teach craft techniques such as drawing, weaving and carving, and practical exercises on color, composition and form. It is well known that all successive Bauhaus pedagogies focused on manual work, shared tasks and creative imagination. However, these attempts have been the subject of various interpretations and narratives throughout the school's history, especially during the Dessau period and after Gropius left the Bauhaus in 1928. The school's pedagogy, following the new ideological standpoint of the teaching staff under the guidance of Hannes Meyer, shifted toward cooperative, social and reformist concerns, while maintaining and even tightening relations with entrepreneurship and industry. From 1928 onward, new forms of pedagogical cooperation between artists' skills, craftmanship and scientific knowledge (including the social sciences) were envisioned and tested. The emphasis on creativity through cooperation and collective work was arguably enhanced and enlightened by this reorientation.[1]

The scope of this chapter is not to contribute to the core of this fascinating history, especially as I am no historian myself. Rather, I will seek to sketch a parallel between some central aspects of the Bauhaus pedagogy (especially during the second period inaugurated with the arrival of Meyer, without wishing to overstate the significance of this turning point) and another intellectual tradition, which thrived during the same decades on the other side of the Atlantic: philosophical pragmatism. American pragmatism emerged as an intellectual tradition around the turn of nineteenth and twentieth centuries among a few philosophers and psychologists.[2]One of the most distinctive features of this movement of thought is its carefully crafted and widely discussed approach to education and pedagogy, based on multiple experiments led especially by John Dewey and George Herbert Mead. Both were trained psychologists as well as philosophers, and taught at the recently founded University of Chicago (before Dewey moved to Columbia University in New York, in 1904), where they trained teachers. Dewey inaugurated a »Laboratory School« within the University, still in activity to this day. Through an impressive series of courses, conferences, syllabi, press articles and books, he and Mead developed a flexible conceptual and methodological framework capable of capturing, describing and improving education at different scales.

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1 See Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau: *Bauhaus, Ausgabe 7: Kollektiv*, Leipzig: Spector Books 2015, 32–39; Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau/Möller Werner (Hg.): *Das prinzip coop – Hannes Meyer und die Idee einer kollektiven Gestaltung*, Leipzig: Spector Books 2015.

2 Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), William James (1842–1910), John Dewey (1859–1952) and George Herbert Mead (1863–1931) are considered as the »classical pragmatists«. For a general presentation of philosophical pragmatism, see Legg Catherine/Hookway Christopher: »Pragmatism«, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2019 Edition [online]), Edward N. Zalta (ed.).

In the first section of this paper, I shall recall how Dewey emphasized education's environmental and social conditions, describing learning as a shared and situated activity; for him, education constitutes part of the integrated flow of experience. These conditions form the context of any individual or collective experience – including work, teaching, and pedagogy itself. Human activities and interactions are anchored in these social and ecological circumstances. The second section will draw a parallel between pragmatist views of education and the Bauhaus pedagogy, which articulated multiple scales of experience in the training of students. The practical purpose of the school brings it even closer to the pragmatist stances. In examining the content and the limitations of this parallel, my third section will point out the similarities between the Bauhaus's teaching programs (between 1919 and 1932) and classic pragmatist views of education (as they appear in Dewey's and Mead's writings). I will show that both pedagogical approaches were environment-based and will examine how they both fostered creative imagination through concrete applications. My conclusion elaborates on this parallel: in comparing our own context – surrounded and pervaded by technical objects, infrastructures and procedures – I argue that we could take inspiration from this parallel in order to improve our pedagogical approaches to the disciplines of design and planning.

A philosophy of pedagogy

> I believe that education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living.[3]

As a trained psychologist devoted primarily to matters of pedagogy, transmission and education, John Dewey developed an inspiring experience-based conception of these processes, understood in their broadest sense. He never ceased working on a »new philosophy of education […] committed to some kind of empirical and experimental philosophy.«[4] He was engaged in the reformist movement of »progressive"«education, which led to the opening of an impressive number of experimental schools throughout the United States. During the years when the original Bauhaus was established, in the 1920s, Dewey continually argued for a close examination of contextual conditions of education, intended as a crucial and defining step of both personal and collective development within society. His approach to education and pedagogy, based on social psychology and years of experimental practice, emphasized the notions of interaction and continuity. It was thus essentially social and ecological, and relied, to a large extent, on Dewey's cooperation with his colleague at the University of Chicago, the social psychologist George Herbert Mead. Dewey's standpoint on the question of education was also tightly connected to his psychological, anthropological and political views, making educational issues the

3 Dewey, John: »My pedagogical creed« [1897], in: Larry A. Hickman/Thomas M. Alexander (eds), *The Essential Dewey, volume 1: Pragmatism, Education, Democracy*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1999, 230.

4 Dewey, John: *Experience and Education* [1938], New York: Touchstone 1997, 25.

nexus of his experience-driven thought. In order to enlighten its possible connections with the Bauhaus school, let us briefly examine the main insights of Dewey's pedagogy.

For this American philosopher, »transactions« with a moving environment are a constant and unifying factor of human experience.[5] Unlike basic causal determinism, they involve reciprocal interaction, in a circular fashion: a living organism actively modifies the shape of its surroundings by responding to their salient properties. While it is being affected by them, it also makes itself sensitive to certain qualities of the environment, which increases its possibilities of perception and action. This situation makes education a »biological necessity« and a »vital process.«[6] Human beings, in particular, dramatically transform their environment: in most cases, human flourishing involves deep alterations of their physical and social surroundings. In that coordinated development, physical space and material topography count just as much as the living web of social relationships in which any individual existence takes place. One of the most important features of Dewey's approach to education, then, is to characterize its situation in detail, in order to contextualize the activities and experience that we call »pedagogy« within a concrete »process of living.« In his eyes, pedagogy should always be problem-driven, in order to foster active and cooperative responses by the pupils or students.

Such orientation can be called a social ecology of education. This perspective sheds light on the practical goals and means of education and training. More precisely, it shows that ends and means cannot be separated from each other – just as intellect and affect, logic and psychology, or knowledge and action should not be segregated in the first place in processes of education.

Dewey's holistic view holds that the success of pedagogical processes relies on the active participation of the pupils themselves. Like any other social activity, education depends on cooperation and association. A successful pedagogy should therefore include ways of making teachers and students cooperate on practical tasks, in order to make possible the emergence of a shared intelligence and coordination of actions. Since an experience can be more or less educative, or even »mis-educative,«[7] the pedagogue's task is to develop the skill of preparing and arranging cumulative sequences of experiences, in order to make them fruitful and formative for students and apprentices.

What are the concrete means of achieving this sort of cooperation? In order to avoid idealistic or wishful conceptions of »spontaneity,« Dewey argues in favor of a contextual and experimental approach. He defends the necessity of defining methods and

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5 Ibid., 43. See also, by Dewey: *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, New York: Henry Holt 1920; *Experience and Nature* [1925], London: George Allen & Unwin 1929.

6 Dewey, John: *Democracy and Education* [1916], Hazleton: Pennsylvania State University, Electronic Classics Series, 2001, chapter 1.

7 Dewey: *Experience and Education*, 25. See also: Ibid., 37.

plans, »criteria of experience«[8] instead of mere abstract ideas and principles. Thus, the pedagogue should work primarily on the surrounding material conditions of the child's experience and improve the shared control, through direct manipulation, of these conditions. His or her role is to carefully "select" the "material" presented for a given activity and "determine the environment of the child"[9] in the most incentivizing and suggestive way. The process remains open-ended, as it should help reveal the »power, capacity, or attitude«[10] of children, in »series of situations« made by »interactions.«[11]

As a broader consequence, in Dewey's eyes, the plea for a public education only makes sense in relation to what goes on outside of schools. His conception of education as rooted in a substantial philosophy of experience even becomes a strong element of justification, in his eyes, of a democratic society, to the extent that it may foster a comparatively »better quality of experience«[12] than other political regimes. Reciprocally, democracy itself could not be sustainable if it was not considered a continuous educative process – a sort of uninterrupted pedagogical experiment led by citizens themselves on their own attitudes, choices and actions.[13] The ultimate meaning of education seems to be to maintain collective intelligence through vivid interactions and improve shared social control over changing situations, by reinforcing pupils' or students' curiosity and initiative.

Learning scales: from »the school as a special environment«[14] to urban planning

During the same period, on the other side of the Atlantic, Walter Gropius (succeeded by Hannes Meyer after 1928) and his colleagues actually built an original social and spatial learning environment at the Bauhaus. They shaped a specific learning and living atmosphere in their avant-garde school. The Bauhaus's innovative pedagogy – a visionary interdisciplinary program – was constantly modified and improved over the years, building on lessons drawn from the experience itself. Since the components of

8 Ibid., 33 sq.

9 Dewey: »The Child and the Curriculum« [1902], in: Hickman/Alexander: *The Essential Dewey*, 245. See also Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 40, 45.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., 43.

12 See for instance ibid., 34–35. Also see Steven Fesmire: *Dewey*, London: Routledge 2015, 173–180.

13 Dewey, John: »Creative Democracy – The Task before us« [1939], in: Boydston, Jo Ann (ed.), *The Later Works*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press 2008, vol. 14. See also Westbrook, Robert B.: *John Dewey and American Democracy*, chapter 10: »Philosophy and Democracy«, Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1991, 319 sq.

14 Dewey: *Democracy and Education*, 23.

this pedagogy are well-documented,[15] I shall instead focus on several features shared by both pragmatist views and the Bauhäusler's pedagogical innovations.[16]
In close collaboration with Gropius, the »masters« Johannes Itten, László Moholy-Nagy and Josef Albers, successively, were in charge of the famous »preliminary course« – the Vorlehre. In many ways, this program seemed to experiment with pedagogical intuitions that recall Dewey's principles, first and foremost the continuity and quality of experience,[17] the intensity of interactions, and the virtues of experimentation. As Albers phrased it in »Creative Education,« a public talk he gave in 1928:

> The best education is one's own experience. Experimenting surpasses studying. To start out by »playing« develops courage, leads in a natural manner to an inventive way of building and furthers the pedagogically equally important facility of discovery […]. While experimenting, the students often recognize that presumed innovations are already in existence. But there is no harm in that, because the end effect is the experience which the student has gained for himself and hence is a possession, for he has learned and not merely been taught.[18]

Beyond this general confidence in experience, the pedagogy strived to articulate its different scales and scopes into a unified process of learning. Manual work and training were integrated into this broader process. In Gropius's eyes, designing a new educational institution involved paying increased attention to the school's built environment – from student housing or the dining hall to new »classrooms,« conceived as spacious open studios; and to the corridors, stairs, doors and windows. The Dessau building helped to organize and stage educational experience as a shared social activity. The idea of cooperation, central to Dewey's progressive views, could not have been more clearly considered than Gropius did at the Bauhaus. The »simplification,« »organization,« and »order« in pedagogy often called for by Dewey[19] find a literal echo in the Dessau building. Significantly, the influence of American modernism in art and architecture (starting with its assumed functionalism and general »state of mind«) was a prominent and important influence on Gropius himself.[20] »We never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment.«[21] As if to amplify the principles tested by Dewey in his experimental »Laboratory School« at

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15 See Richard, Lionel: *Encyclopédie du Bauhaus*, Paris: Somogy 1985; Wingler, Hans Maria: *The Bauhaus: Weimar, Dessau, Berlin, Chicago*, Cambridge: MIT Press 1993; Fiedler, Jeannine/Feierabend, Peter (Hg.): *Bauhaus*, Köln: Könnemann 1999; Coll.: *Bauhaus, a conceptual model*, Berlin: Hatje Cantz 2009; *L'esprit du Bauhaus*, Paris: Les Arts décoratifs/Hermès 2016.

16 Looking for their probable common sources in nineteenth-century theories of pedagogy would be yet another way of bringing them closer – beginning with the declared influence that the Swiss social pedagogue Johannes Pestalozzi had on Hannes Meyer, for instance. (See Richard: *Encyclopédie du Bauhaus*, 13–22.)

17 »Everything depends upon the quality of the experience which is had.« (Dewey: *Experience and Education*, 27).

18 Albers, Josef: »Creative Education« [1928], in: Wingler: *Bauhaus*, 142.

19 Dewey: *Experience and Education*, 30.

20 See Breuer Gerda/Jaeggi Annemarie (Hg.): *Walter Gropius Amerikareise 1928*, Berlin/Wuppertal: Bauhaus-Archiv/Bergische Universität Wuppertal 2008.

21 Dewey: *Democracy and Education*, 23.

the University of Chicago between 1896 and 1903,[22] the Bauhaus classrooms were actual workshops, engaged in coordinated activities aimed at manipulating, producing and transforming material objects (the following section will consider these activities in detail). Gropius even hoped to turn the school's workshops into »laboratories« where prototypes could be designed with a view to larger-scale industrial production. Students' inventiveness, creativity, and exploration were guided by the judgment of the »masters« – first on the basis of their own personal experience, but also according to technical criteria for machine production. Indeed, the directors (Gropius and Meyer especially) expected to establish closer connections with the emerging standards of industrial design (a tendency reinforced under Meyer's guidance).

As in any educational institution, encouraging creative imagination had nothing to do with advocating an attitude of laissez-aller or disorder; it involved strict attendance, appraisals and evaluations, counseling, and guidance. The »free painting« class, for instance, opened space for studying the elements of graphic representation – forms, colors and composition – through constantly repeated exercises and applications.[23] It was both open-ended and carefully directed, since its purpose was to assemble pictures or studies. As a rule, direct interactions between teachers and students were constant and included other students. This overall program of learning through cooperative work could only be made possible through shared attitudes and intentions, as well as a coherent organization of the physical space of the school building itself.

Designing the school was not limited to organizing space. It also meant structuring time through the periodization of study. The exercises developed at the Bauhaus followed, in principle, a sharply defined curriculum – resulting in the famous »diagram for the structure of teaching at the Bauhaus« designed by Gropius in 1922. Though this schema is striking for its centripetal and integrative dynamic,

> it was by no means a question of recapitulating any actually existing program of studies, but instead of a representation that had been reduced to an abstract essence with an affirmative character. Clustered in the schema and concentrated to the point of graphic visual expression and general validity were only the essential aspects; it visualizes a principle whose abbreviated formulation endows it with ideological force.[24]

Could pedagogy free itself from ideology? Gropius's curriculum diagram fulfilled, at least, the task of visually expressing the coherence of thought, imagination, and action that was the ambition of the Bauhaus program over the whole course. It increased the motivating disposition of both teachers and students, since it provided a useful unified image of a complicated and uncertain process; the real working conditions at the school, especially during the first years, were in fact quite tough.

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22 Mayhew, Katherine Camp/Edwards, Anna Camp: *The Dewey School: The Laboratory School of the University of Chicago, 1896–1903*, New York: Appleton 1936.

23 Badura-Triska, Eva: »Freie Malerei am Bauhaus«, in: Fiedler/Feierabend, *Bauhaus*, 160–171.

24 Jaeggi, Annemarie: »Bauhaus: A conceptual model«, in: *Bauhaus: A conceptual model*, 15–16.

For eight years, the architecture section could not even be opened and remained a distant event on the horizon – even though it was mentioned in the very first sentence of the Bauhaus's original manifesto. However, the pervasive energy carried by such documents (along with other similar »programs of study« edited by the Bauhaus in 1928, 1932 and 1933, for instance) is still conveyed to readers in a convincing way. They exhibit a strong practical commitment and a catching desire to optimize collective activity through teamwork. In a way that echoes, to some extent, the »somber spirituality«[25] of Oskar Schlemmer's famous pictorial composition (Bauhaus Stairway, 1932), the schematic programs embody the enduring quality of expressivity that singles out the Bauhaus pedagogy and history. This distinctive quality helps us to understand how and why its influence extends beyond the usual dimension of a method or a school, bringing it closer, perhaps, to an actual philosophy of education through shared experiences.

Beyond the school itself, Gropius's aim was, eventually, to address the whole context of mass industrialization – including working and housing conditions, as well as urban and regional planning. This explains why his views on »handicraft« and manual instruction may appear ambivalent. Gropius never intended craftsmanship, the study of materials, and the design of manufactured objects to be ends in themselves, but instead viewed them as necessary steps within the teaching and learning process, at a point in the curriculum between the »preliminary course« and the specialized workshops. With regard to corporate capitalism and big industry, he sought to hold the practical and efficient standpoint of a pioneering educational institution capable of training a new, comprehensive type of architect and planner. This ambition appears in 1919 as well as in several unambiguous passages of his 1965 retrospective work:

> I saw that an architect cannot hope to realize his ideas unless he can influence the industry of his country sufficiently for a new school of design to arise as a result […] This idea of the fundamental unity underlying all branches of design was my guiding inspiration in founding the original Bauhaus.[26] [...] My idea of the architect as a coordinator – whose business is to unify the various formal, technical, social and economic problems that arise in connection with building – inevitably led me on step by step from study of the function of the house to that of the street; from the street to the town; and finally to the still vaster implications of regional and national planning.[27]

This cumulative »idea« at the heart of the organization of studies is thus anchored in the principle of articulating scales of »problems« and the related tasks of future architects. But how was this general intention transposed in the existing Bauhaus pedagogy? Interestingly, by designing the curriculum itself as a successive integration of different scales of associated work and learning-by-doing. In practical terms,

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25 According to Lilian Tone, who throws an interesting light on the circumstances and purpose of the painting (in: *Bauhaus: A conceptual model*, 312). See also Wagner, Christoph (Hg.): *Esoterik am Bauhaus, Eine Revision der Moderne?*, Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner 2009.

26 Gropius, Walter: *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*, Cambridge: MIT Press 1965, 48–51. See also: Ibid., 52–54.

27 Ibid., 98.

this was achieved by organizing the school and the curriculum as a specific material environment, controlled by cooperation. The next section will attempt to make this connection more explicit, specifying the reasons for a closer comparison of the Bauhaus teaching program with pragmatist educational notions.

Associated pedagogies of participation: Redesigning education in context

What sort of evidence might prove the affinity between the Bauhaus's teaching programs (between 1919 and 1932) and classic pragmatist views of education, as they appear in Dewey's and Mead's writings? Two main features, essentially: the definition of practical methods for varying and revising teaching activities within educational institutions; and their consideration of a broader social environment or milieu, beginning with industrialization and urbanization. Geographical and cultural distance notwithstanding, the pragmatist pedagogues and the masters of the Bauhaus provided similar answers to the same contemporary problems – anchored in the respective contexts of American academia and of a German professional training institution. On the one hand, Mead and Dewey – committed to reforming school systems – proposed a philosophical »reconstruction« of education according to progressive views, while they tested them through situated learning experiments (in particular the »Laboratory School«). On the other hand, the Bauhäusler put a »conceptual model« into practice as they were inventing and revising it. They explored innovative pedagogical situations and changing working objectives and methods as they tested them through experimentation; this lasted for almost fourteen years, thanks to continuous revisions and cooperation, often conflictual. The Bauhaus made possible new sorts of social interactions between students and teachers, taking place in a specifically designed material environment that functioned like an open laboratory.

These two legacies have more in common than casual similarities: they share an idea of education founded on lively participation, dynamic organization, and collective intelligence – instead of imitation, passive accumulation of knowledge, or disciplinary formatting by a closed system. They were also attentive to affective and emotional states. The pragmatists built their conceptions upon experimental psychology and actual situations of interactions; the Bauhaus advocated a continuous and inclusive approach to human existence – to the point that the first years of the institution were heavily tainted by a diffuse mysticism (yet, in a quite different tone and color, Meyer's 1929 text on »Bauhaus and society«[28] sketches out a highly encompassing view of existence as well).

Ultimately, both developed associated pedagogies that conceived education as a collective activity, capable of turning its spatial and social environment into a direct

28 Meyer Hannes: »Bauhaus und Gesellschaft«, in: *Bauhaus. Vierteljahr-Zeitschrift für Gestaltung* 3 (1929) 1, 2 (reprinted in: Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau/Möller, Werner (Hg.): *Das prinzip coop – Hannes Meyer und die Idee einer kollektiven Gestaltung*, Leipzig: Spector Books 2015).

resource. »The very process of living together educates,[29]« Dewey wrote in 1916, reminding the reader that conservative schooling institutions might forget this fact, in both its internal and external meanings. Since education unfolds within broader social contexts, educators should display – and pass on to their students – a meticulous attention to complex and dynamic environments. One should learn to deal practically with the rapidly emerging world of industrial cities, factories, sites of production, movie houses, luminescent store windows, and press and printed material aimed at the masses. This idea was clearly addressed by the Bauhaus's successive experiments, especially during the years of Moholy-Nagy's teaching.

Concrete applications took the form of repeated exercises. At the Bauhaus, classes fostered learning by doing, through manipulation of material objects and the study of raw materials. They also reinforced interactions between students through group study and teamwork (the principle of associating two different »masters« during workshops being a key element from the beginning). In each workshop, students were progressively involved in every step of the conception, design, and production of objects or prototypes. This integratory tendency avoided artificial divisions and segmentations: between theory and practice, conception and application, matter and form, intellect and emotion, etc. It also organized the continuity of training, from the generalist preliminary course to more specialized workshops. Even then, open-endedness avoided any partitioning of the pedagogy:

> The characteristic of the Bauhaus pedagogy was that every Bauhäusler could participate in the different fields of study, in order to be confronted with other problems. That is, every student could contribute his thought to every subject.[30]

No separation between topics, porosity between classes, constant interactions among students who exchanged views on concrete issues and tasks: every aspect of these pedagogical principles would obtain the approval of pragmatists, who constantly emphasized that »there is no such thing as educational value in the abstract.«[31] One might also point out that both filiations insisted that students should acquire attitudes and dispositions not in a disciplinary and codified way but rather in a dynamic and practical sense. They aimed to help people become autonomous, that is to say »responsive« and capable of getting the most out of their own experiences, instead of having them mechanically repeat segmented activities.

Turning to Dewey's philosophy of education and Mead's social psychology,[32] one could further explore the echoes and proximities between pragmatist views and the Bauhaus pedagogy. In particular, the flourishing of creative imagination involved in

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29 Dewey: *Democracy and Education*, 10.

30 Kranz, Kurt: »Pädagogik am Bauhaus und danach«, in: Eckhard Neumann (ed.), *Bauhaus und Bauhäusler. Erinnerungen and Bekenntnisse*, Köln: DuMont 1985, 340.

31 Dewey: *Experience and Education*, 46.

32 Mead, George Herbert: *Mind, Self and Society*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1934; Mead G. H., *The Philosophy of the Act*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1938.

acknowledging the central role of play, amusement, and humor, affects and emotions – the famous parties held at the Bauhaus school were the most visible emblems of this idea.[33] Emotional states constitute the living heart of the processes that can make a successful education – that is, one that may enrich the quality of a person's experience and his or her capacity to take an interest in and benefit from his or her own past, present and future experiences.

Accordingly, the proximity of these two intellectual heritages is far from limited to promoting manual work and cooperation (which were already a classic element of nineteenth-century reformist or progressive pedagogy). A key factor of their shared originality lies in their common attention to the social context and the practical stakes. Organizing a pedagogical program capable of fostering creativity and imagination not only presupposed careful attention to the school's environment, it also involved a full awareness of what was going on outside the institutions. »I believe that knowledge of social conditions, of the present state of civilization, is necessary in order properly to interpret the child's powers«[34]: considering education as a transversal and diffuse process, Dewey and Mead insisted on understanding children from a socio-psychological and anthropological standpoint. But this was true for the Bauhaus as well. The orientations taken at Dessau toward an integrated »education of vision« from multiple perspectives (coordinated by Moholy-Nagy but also involving Kepes, Kandinsky, Klee, Schlemmer, Breuer, and Albers) confirmed the original tendency to address human experience as a living whole. At the same time, Meyer's guidance insisted that the attention to context should include, primarily, social needs and concerns. In »Bauhaus and society,«[35] he emphasized that design must extend to environmental design and »landscape.« Concrete applications of this idea are visible, for instance, in the project realized in Breslau, but they also became pervasive in teaching, from Albers' renovated Vorkurse on structure and materials to the program of conferences held at the school.

This orientation toward broader social and political concerns represents another possible convergence of views between the Bauhaus and pragmatist perspectives. Both share democratic concerns and enthusiasm for cooperation; a critique of alienating work and dispossession of sensory experience. On the one hand, they reject academic dualism, whether in philosophy or in art and architecture. On the other hand, they direct their pedagogical attention toward technique and industry, the press and the media, and advertising. Indeed, Meyer was not referring to a fictitious »nature« when he mentioned »landscape« but rather exhorted students to examine actual living conditions in contemporary society, which presupposed »reading the newspapers«[36]: staying aware of one's current changing environment.

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33 See »The Bauhaus Celebrates: Parties as Communal Art«, *Bauhaus, Ausgabe 7: Kollektiv*, 32–39.

34 Dewey: »My pedagogical creed«, 230.

35 Meyer: »Bauhaus und Gesellschaft«.

36 Kranz: »Pädagogik am Bauhaus und danach«, 340.

Meanwhile, Dewey insisted that »we live from birth to death in a world of persons and things which in large measure is what it is because of what has been done and transmitted from previous human activities«[37], which recalls that this attention to the environment should extend to the shared historical past, in order to anticipate the long-term consequences of our own decisions and actions.

Conclusion: Our present and future schools

These affinities between pragmatism and the Bauhaus may inspire our own syllabi for training designers, architects and landscape architects. In order to foster cooperative dispositions and creative imagination, pedagogues should primarily be attentive to the social and environmental conditions of shared experience, both within and outside schools. At the urban and suburban scales, (re)designing built space as a series of communicating and open-ended places, able to accommodate many different uses, would appear to be the most important task to achieve. Within our schools, how can we reinforce creativity and interdisciplinary applications? One possible way is to emphasize, as the pragmatists and the Bauhäusler did, the need to improve the environmental conditions of experience in education, both materially and socio-psychologically. Approaching education from an interactionist and ecological standpoint highlights the need for active participation, exchanges, and confrontation of the technically mediated environments we inhabit. This is why continuous learning, or adult education, is also a crucial factor to consider. Processes of education do not have limits. Reflecting on the complexity of our perceptions and attitudes regarding these conditions, and regarding the people with whom we grow, exist and work, is a priority for educators who seek to foster the creativity of educational experience – their own as well as that of the students they are guiding.

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37 Dewey: *Experience and Education*, 39. See also »Social as a Category«, *The Monist*, 1928.

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Fig. 2: Activity of moulding terracota figurines, class at the University of Chicago Laboratory School, undated (probably early 1900s)

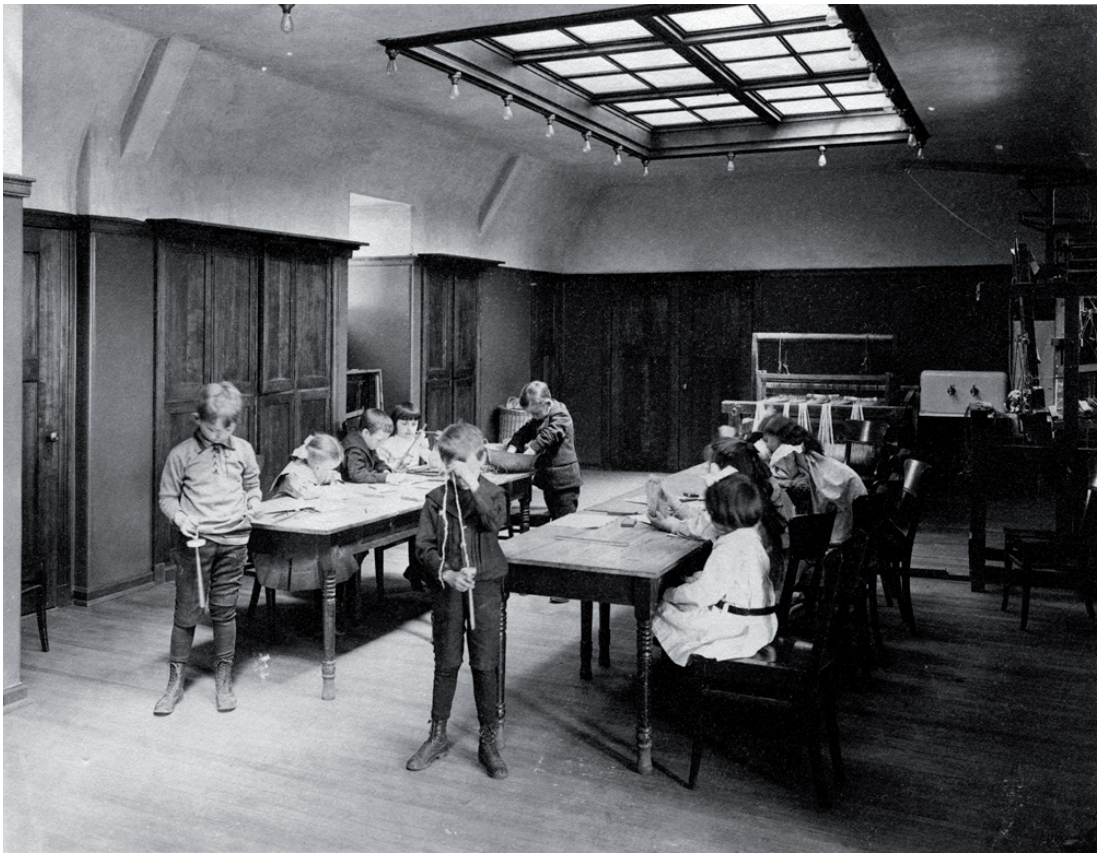

Fig. 3: Manual activity, class at the University of Chicago Laboratory School, undated (probably early 1900s).

Fig. 4: Weaving and textile class at the University of Chicago Laboratory School, circa 1904. As with most work done at the Lab Schools, the study of textiles involved the entire process from spinning to dyeing to weaving. History lessons were linked to the invention of the spinning jenny; geography was learned through the distribution of various fibers such as wool, cotton, and silk.

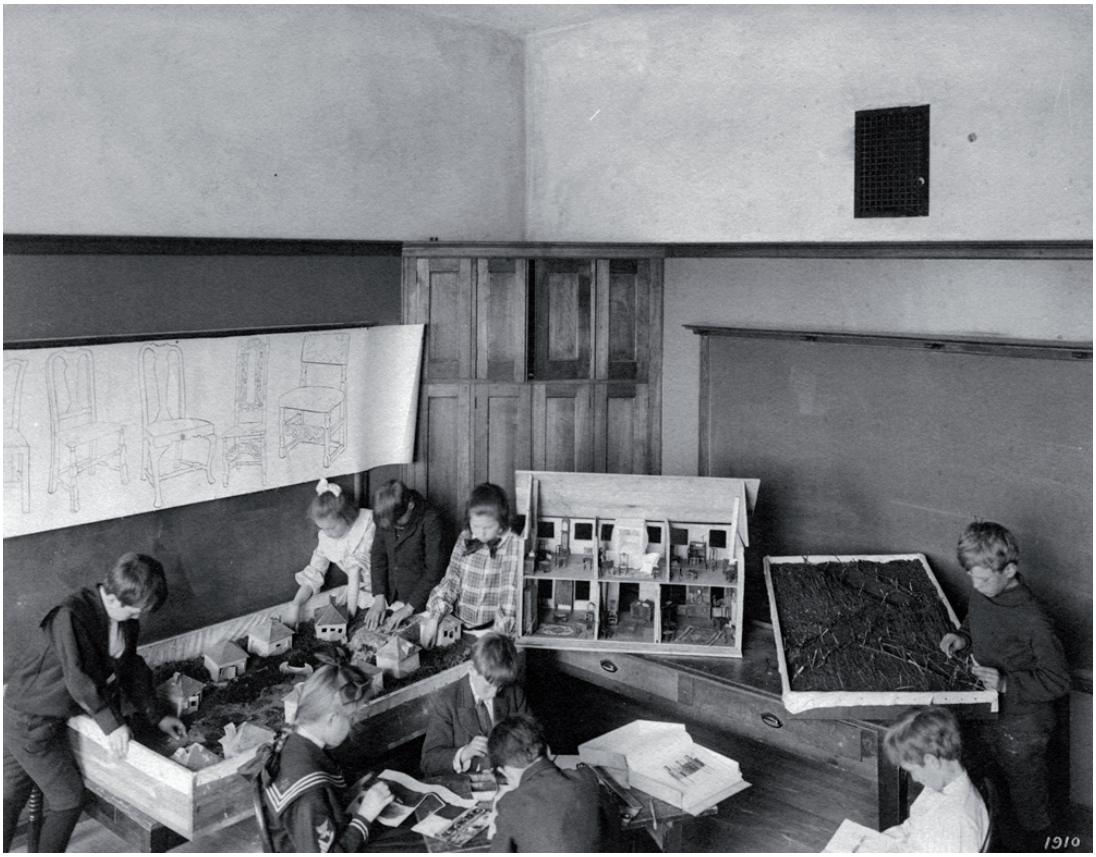

Fig. 5: Models of houses and residential neighborhood (?), class at the University of Chicago Laboratory School, undated (probably 1910)

Fig. 6: Associating drawing with geometry, class at the University of Chicago Laboratory School, undated (probably 1910)

Fig. 7: Geography lesson, class at the University of Chicago Laboratory School, undated (probably early 1900s)

Fig. 8: Manual training wood shop in Belfield Hall, University of Chicago Laboratory School, circa 1908