



# Contents

Preface ix  
Correlation Guide xxi  
Topic Guide xxv  
Introduction xxvii

## UNIT 1 BASIC THEORETICAL ISSUES 1

### Issue 1. Should Schooling Be Based on Social Experiences? 2

**YES:** John Dewey, from *Experience and Education* (Macmillan, 1938) 4

**NO:** Roger Scruton, from “Schools and Schooling,” *The American Spectator* (June 2006) 11

Philosopher John Dewey suggests a reconsideration of traditional approaches to schooling, giving fuller attention to the social development of the learner and the quality of his or her total experience. British philosopher Roger Scruton expresses the traditionalist view that Dewey’s progressive education, with its emphasis on “child-centeredness” and “relevance,” has had a disastrous effect on quality education.

### Issue 2. Should the Curriculum Be Standardized for All? 15

**YES:** Mortimer J. Adler, from “The Paideia Proposal: Rediscovering the Essence of Education,” *American School Board Journal* (July 1982) 17

**NO:** John Holt, from *Escape from Childhood* (E. P. Dutton, 1974) 24

Philosopher Mortimer J. Adler contends that democracy is best served by a public school system that establishes uniform curricular objectives for all students. Educator John Holt argues that an imposed curriculum damages the individual and usurps a basic human right to select one’s own path of development.

### Issue 3. Should Behaviorism Shape Educational Practices? 30

**YES:** Carson M. Bennett, from “A Skinnerian View of Human Freedom,” *The Humanist* (July/August 1990) 32

**NO:** Carl R. Rogers, from *Freedom to Learn for the Eighties* (Merrill, 1983) 38

Professor of educational psychology Carson M. Bennett presents the case for adopting the radical behaviorism of B. F. Skinner to improve the power

and efficiency of the process of learning. Professor of psychology and psychiatry Carl R. Rogers offers the “humanistic” alternative to behaviorism, insisting on the reality of subjective forces in human motivation.

#### **Issue 4. Is Constructivism the Best Philosophy of Education? 47**

**YES:** David Elkind, from “The Problem with Constructivism,” *The Educational Forum* (Summer 2004) 49

**NO:** Jamin Carson, from “Objectivism and Education: A Response to David Elkind’s ‘The Problem with Constructivism,’” *The Educational Forum* (Spring 2005) 56

Child development professor David Elkind contends that the philosophical positions found in constructivism, though often difficult to apply, are necessary elements in a meaningful reform of educational practices. Jamin Carson, an assistant professor of education and former high school teacher, offers a close critique of constructivism and argues that the philosophy of objectivism is a more realistic and usable basis for the process of education.

#### **Issue 5. Should “Public Schooling” Be Redefined? 63**

**YES:** Frederick M. Hess, from “What Is a ‘Public School?’ Principles for a New Century,” *Phi Delta Kappan* (February 2004) 65

**NO:** Linda Nathan et al., from “A Response to Frederick Hess,” *Phi Delta Kappan* (February 2004) 74

Frederick M. Hess, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, advocates a broadening of the definition of “public schooling” in light of recent developments such as vouchers, charter schools, and home schooling. Linda Nathan, Joe Nathan, Ray Bacchetti, and Evans Clinchy express a variety of concerns about the conceptual expansion that Hess proposes.

### **UNIT 2 CURRENT FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES 89**

#### **Issue 6. Are Truly Democratic Classrooms Possible? 90**

**YES:** Kristan A. Morrison, from “Democratic Classrooms: Promises and Challenges of Student Voice and Choice, Part One,” *Educational Horizons* (Fall 2008) 92

**NO:** Gary K. Clabaugh, from “Second Thoughts About Democratic Classrooms,” *Educational Horizons* (Fall 2008) 102

Associate professor of education Kristan A. Morrison explores historical and theoretical bases for implementing democratic practices in schools that would make student experience more appealing and productive. Professor of education Gary K. Clabaugh examines such factors as top-down management, compulsory attendance, business world influences, and federal mandates to declare Morrison’s ideas to be “out of touch” with reality.

## **Issue 7. Has the Supreme Court Reconfigured American Education? 109**

**YES:** Charles L. Glenn, from “Fanatical Secularism,” *Education Next* (Winter 2003) 111

**NO:** Paul E. Peterson, from “Victory for Vouchers?” *Commentary* (September 2002) 118

Professor of education Charles L. Glenn argues that the Supreme Court’s decision in *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* is an immediate antidote to the public school’s secularist philosophy. Professor of government Paul E. Peterson, while welcoming the decision, contends that the barricades against widespread use of vouchers in religious schools will postpone any lasting effects.

## **Issue 8. Is No Child Left Behind a Flawed Policy? 126**

**YES:** Frederick M. Hess and Chester E. Finn, Jr., from “Crash Course: NCLB Is Driven by Education Politics,” *Education Next* (Fall 2007) 128

**NO:** Dianne Piché, from “Basically a Good Model,” *Education Next* (Fall 2007) 134

Frederick M. Hess and Chester E. Finn, Jr., review the development of the NCLB policy and conclude that political compromises have produced sputtering machinery and weak sanctions that require an extreme makeover. Dianne Piché, executive director of the Citizens’ Commission on Civil Rights, supports the testing and accountability measures of the federal law as the best way to advance the interests of the poor and minorities.

## **Issue 9. Can Failing Schools Be Turned Around? 139**

**YES:** Karin Chenoweth, from “It Can Be Done, It’s Being Done, and Here’s How,” *Phi Delta Kappan* (September 2009) 141

**NO:** Andy Smarick, from “The Turnaround Fallacy,” *Education Next* (Winter 2010) 147

Karin Chenoweth, a senior writer with the Education Trust and author of *How It’s Being Done*, describes strategies employed to bring about dramatic improvements in low-performing schools. Andy Smarick, a visiting fellow at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, advocates the closing of failing schools to make room for replacements through chartering.

## **Issue 10. Are Local School Boards Obsolete? 156**

**YES:** Marc Tucker, from “Changing the System Is the Only Solution,” *Phi Delta Kappan* (March 2010) 158

**NO:** Diane Ravitch, from “Why Public Schools Need Democratic Governance,” *Phi Delta Kappan* (March 2010) 162

Marc Tucker, president of the National Center on Education and the Economy, calls for shifting the running of public schools to the states,

allowing local boards to focus solely on the improvement of learning. Education historian Diane Ravitch feels that a movement of control to the state level or to the mayor's office will undermine democratic deliberation and move toward a top-down business model.

### **UNIT 3    CURRENT SPECIFIC ISSUES            169**

#### **Issue 11.    Are Undocumented Immigrants Entitled to Public Education?    170**

**YES:** **William J. Brennan, Jr.**, from *Undocumented Children Deserve Equal Protection* (June 15, 1982)    172

**NO:** **Warren Burger**, from *The Decision Distorts the Function of the Court* (June 15, 1982)    182

Justice William Brennan argues that the action of the Texas state legislature to authorize local school districts to deny enrollment in public schools to children not "legally admitted" to the country violates the Fourteenth Amendment. Chief Justice Warren Burger, in dissent, counters that the Court has no business assuming a policymaking role simply because the legislative branches of government fail to act appropriately.

#### **Issue 12.    Has the Time Arrived for Universal Preschool?    189**

**YES:** **David L. Kirp**, from "The Kids-First Agenda," *Big Ideas for Children: Investing in Our Nation's Future* (First Focus, 2008)    191

**NO:** **Douglas J. Besharov and Douglas M. Call**, from "The New Kindergarten," *The Wilson Quarterly* (Autumn 2008)    200

David L. Kirp, a professor of public policy and author of *The Sandbox Investment*, calls for expansion of federal support for universal preschool and other child care services. Professor Douglas J. Besharov and research associate Douglas M. Call of the University of Maryland School of Public Policy examine the development of child care programs and conclude that the case for universal preschool is not as strong as it seems.

#### **Issue 13.    Is Privatization the Hope of the Future?    210**

**YES:** **Chris Whittle**, from "Dramatic Growth Is Possible," *Education Next* (Spring 2006)    212

**NO:** **Henry Levin**, from "Déjà Vu All Over Again?," *Education Next* (Spring 2006)    218

Chris Whittle, founder and CEO of Edison Schools, contends that public school systems still operate in an eighteenth-century mindset and offers an "independent learning" model as a replacement. Professor of economics and education Henry Levin criticizes the assumptions on which Whittle bases his prediction of successful operation of schools by for-profit management organizations such as Edison.

## Issue 14. Is the Inclusive Classroom Model Workable? 224

**YES:** **Mara Sapon-Shevin**, from "Learning in an Inclusive Community," *Educational Leadership* (September 2008) 226

**NO:** **Wade A. Carpenter**, from "The Other Side of Inclusion," *Educational Horizons* (Spring 2008) 233

Professor of inclusive education Mara Sapon-Shevin presents a redefinition of the inclusive classroom and offers specific strategies for bringing it about in practice. Associate professor of education Wade A. Carpenter expresses concerns about the inclusive ideology's uncritical infatuation with socialization.

## Issue 15. Do Teachers Unions Stymie School Reform? 239

**YES:** **Andrew Coulson**, from "A Less Perfect Union," *The American Spectator* (June 2011) 241

**NO:** **Louis Malfaro**, from "Lessons on Organizing for Power," *American Educator* (Fall 2010) 247

Andrew Coulson, director of the Center for Educational Freedom at the Cato Institute, contends that the NEA and AFT monopolize public school operations, resulting in a collapse of productivity. Louis Malfaro, an AFT vice president, sees the teachers unions as uniquely able to build productive relationships and exert positive influence on the improvement of teaching and learning.

## Issue 16. Can Merit Pay Accelerate School Improvement? 259

**YES:** **Steven Malanga**, from "Why Merit Pay Will Improve Teaching," *City Journal* (Summer 2001) 261

**NO:** **Stuart Buck and Jay P. Greene**, from "Blocked, Diluted, and Co-opted," *Education Next* (Spring 2011) 267

Steven Malanga, a senior fellow of the Manhattan Institute, draws on examples from the corporate world and from public school systems in Cincinnati, Iowa, and Denver to make his case for performance-based merit pay for teachers. Professor of education reform Jay P. Greene and doctoral fellow Stuart Buck recognize the theoretical and empirical reasons for expecting merit pay to have a positive impact but contend that the prospects are not promising for a variety of reasons.

## Issue 17. Are Single-Sex Schools and Classes Effective? 276

**YES:** **Peter Meyer**, from "Learning Separately: The Case for Single-Sex Schools," *Education Next* (Winter 2008) 278

**NO:** **Vincent A. Anfara, Jr. and Steven B. Mertens**, from "Do Single-Sex Classes and Schools Make a Difference?" *Middle School Journal* (November 2008) 284

Journalist Peter Meyer examines the history of single-sex schools and recent concerns about “shortchanging” girls and the “crisis” in boys’ education and lauds the current resurgence of single-sex schooling. Associate professor of education Vincent A. Anfara, Jr. and assistant professor of education Steven B. Mertens review research on student culture, academic climate, and attitudinal effects, concluding that the benefits of single-sex schooling remain unclear.

### **Issue 18. Can Zero Tolerance Violate Students Rights? 295**

**YES:** **Hon. David Souter**, from Majority Opinion in *Safford Unified School District #1 v. Redding* (June 25, 2009) 297

**NO:** **Hon. Clarence Thomas**, from Dissenting Opinion in *Safford Unified School District #1 v. Redding* (June 25, 2009) 303

Supreme Court justice David Souter, delivering the opinion of the Court, hold that school officials, in carrying out a zero-tolerance policy on drug possession, violated a student’s Fourth Amendment right against unreasonable search and seizure when they included a strip search of the girl. Justice Clarence Thomas, in dissent, states that the majority opinion imposes too vague a standard on school officials and that it grants judges sweeping authority to second-guess measures those officials take to maintain discipline and ensure safety.

### **Issue 19. Do American Students Need More Time in School? 309**

**YES:** **Chris Gabrieli**, from “More Time, More Learning,” *Educational Leadership* (April 2010) 311

**NO:** **Larry Cuban**, from “The Perennial Reform: Fixing School Time,” *Phi Delta Kappan* (December 2008) 320

National Center on Time and Learning chairman Chris Gabrieli claims that current school time schedules are outmoded and calls for expansion of the instructional day and year to close the achievement gap and provide enrichment opportunities. Stanford University professor emeritus Larry Cuban reviews the history of school time expansion and finds scant research to support such demands.

### **Issue 20. Do Computers Negatively Affect Student Growth? 333**

**YES:** **Lowell Monke**, from “The Human Touch,” *Education Next* (Fall 2004) 335

**NO:** **Frederick M. Hess**, from “Technical Difficulties,” *Education Next* (Fall 2004) 342

Lowell Monke, an assistant professor of education, expresses deep concerns that the uncritical faith in computer technology in schools has led to sacrifices in intellectual growth and creativity. Frederick M. Hess, while sharing some of Monke’s observations, believes that the tools of technology, used appropriately, can support innovation and reinvention in education.

**Issue 21. Is the “21st Century Skills” Movement  
Viable? 350**

**YES: Andrew J. Rotherham and Daniel T. Willingham**, from  
“21st Century Skills: The Challenges Ahead,” *Educational  
Leadership* (September 2009) 352

**NO: Diana Senechal**, from “The Most Daring Education Reform  
of All,” *American Educator* (Spring 2010) 359

Education policy expert Rotherham and psychology professor Willingham see great promise in the movement to bring needed skills to all students if the delivery system works satisfactorily. Education writer and former teacher Diana Senechal expresses deep concern about the movement's focus on current societal needs to the detriment of core academic studies.

Contributors 372