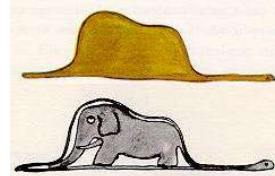


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Philosophy of Education

I am passionate about education's potential to empower learners – intellectually, socially, and emotionally. I believe education is empowering when learning incorporates youth's perceptions about academic discipline knowledge, about themselves, and about others in their community. Antoine de Saint-Exupery reminds us of the sophisticated level of perceptiveness that young people are capable of, as told in *The Little Prince* (1943):

Whenever I encountered a grown-up who seemed to me at all enlightened, I would experiment on him with my drawing Number One, which I have always kept. I wanted to see if he really understood anything. But he would always answer, "That's a hat." Then I wouldn't talk about boa constrictors or jungles or stars. I would put myself on his level and talk about bridge and golf and politics and neckties. And my grown-up was glad to know such a reasonable person (3).

An empowering education is one designed to channel the learner's interest, toward academic content (Dewey, 1916). Educational design can provide opportunities for learners to inquire into meaning making with symbols relevant in our everyday lives (Glenberg, 2008) – “a hat,” or a world filled with fascinating elephants or “boa constrictors or jungles or stars”? An empowering education is one designed to channel excitement from learners' voices, toward critiquing social norms (hooks, 1994). Educational design can cultivate opportunities for learners to transgress intellectual boundaries, while navigating historically and culturally pre-constructed meaning obviously upheld by society (Wertsch, 1998) – an “enlightened” grown-up, or a “reasonable” one on the “level of bridge and golf and politics and neckties”?

Paulo Freire reminds us of education's potential to empower young people to liberate themselves and others intellectually, socially, and emotionally, described in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000):

... a pedagogy which must be forged with, not for, the oppressed (whether individuals or peoples) in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity. This pedagogy makes oppression and its causes objects of reflection by the oppressed, and from that reflection will come their necessary engagement in the struggle for their liberation (p. 48)... This can be done only by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it (p. 51).

An empowering education is one designed “with” learner's critical perceptions of the world, and “not for” learners. Empowerment germinates by identifying “oppression and its causes” in society, and using it as the frame within which to study academic content knowledge, and as the frame through which to apply that disciplinary knowledge to bring about change in our world. This is achieved pedagogically through “praxis”, an act of initiating change by taking action from “reflection” on one's oppressive situation, and an act of initiating self growth by reflecting on that “action” taken. As a former urban teacher in the School District of Philadelphia, PA, and as a former youth development instructor/mentor in Camden, NJ, I am interested in how learner inquiry within a critical pedagogy can empower underrepresented youth, from under-resourced communities. I am particularly interested in designing learning environments that help young people learn mathematics in a way that motivates their matriculation through college. Educators and educational researchers must take responsibility to prepare young people for the rapidly changing 21st century global economy: by empowering them to capitalize on the 5.3% expansion of high-skill jobs internationally; and by simultaneously protecting them from what the OECD reports is an international occupational polarization, whereby the traditionally secure middle-skill manufacturing jobs are evaporating at a rate of 7.9% and forcing many into low-skill and low-pay alternatives (OECD, 2017).

Research Interests

As an apprentice Learning Scientist to Mitchell J. Nathan, my research examines the cognitive processes of preteens, adolescents, and young adults as they attempt to make meaning of the world they live in, from a constructivist epistemology (Crotty, 1998), and a grounded & embodied cognition (Barsalou, 2008) theoretical framework. On an elemental timescale, I investigate the affordances that learning interventions, based on embodied cognition, provide people for grounding meaning within academic discipline knowledge (Abrahamson & Lindgren, 2014). My focus is on effective ways to learn abstract mathematical symbol notation in deductive proof practices. On a systemic timescale, my future investigations will utilize an embodied perspective of cognition to inform the design of learning environments that incorporate social-cognitive constructs defined in motivational science research (Pintrich, 2003). My focus will be on effective ways to develop learner's self-efficacy, self-esteem, and achievement motivation. I believe the theoretical relevance of my research continues the Learning Sciences tradition of studying the development of “deeper conceptual understanding” (Sawyer, 2014), specifically focusing on math. I believe the practical relevance of my research creates example lessons for teachers of mathematics, a pivotal domain for providing access to careers in STEM, which are high-skill jobs projected to have increased by 17% in the United States between 2008 – 2018 (Langdon et al., 2011).

Publications and Conference Presentations

Nathan, M. J., Walkington, C., Vinsonhaler, R., Michaelis, J., McGinty, J., Binzak, J. V., & Kwon, O. H. (April, 2018). *Embodied account of geometry proof, insight, and intuition among novices, experts, and English language learners*. Paper presentation to the 2018 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, NY.

Education

University of Wisconsin, School of Education, Madison, WI

Department of Educational Psychology, September 2015 – August 2020

Area: Learning Sciences

Research Lab: Mathematical Action & Gesture in Instruction and Cognition

Doctoral Advisor: Mr. Mitchell J. Nathan, Ph.D.

St. John's College, Graduate Institute, Annapolis, MD

MA, Liberal Arts, August 2009

Focus: Western Liberal Arts Program

Masters Essay: *The Health and Wealth of the Individual Laborer Within the Economic Theory of Adam Smith: An Examination of "The Wealth of Nations" and "The Theory of Moral Sentiments"*

Master's Advisor: Mr. David Townsend, Ph.D., J.D.

University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education, Philadelphia, PA

MS, Teacher Education, August 1999

Focus: Secondary Education: Social Studies, with PA Grades 7 – 12 Certification

Masters Portfolio/Thesis in Secondary Education: *Multiple Teaching and Learning Strategies Within Urban Education*

Student-Teaching Advisor: Mr. James Larkin, Ph.D.

LaSalle University, Philadelphia, PA

BA, History, May 1996

Major: European History

Minor: English

Internship: LaSalle University Archives

Primary Source Research Paper: *The Evolution of the Art Museum of LaSalle University*

Internship Advisor: Br. Joseph Grabenstein, FSC

Wadham College, University of Oxford, Oxford, England

Bridgewater State College, College of Continuing Education, Bridgewater, MA, Summer 1996

Course Title: *Oxford: England in the Middle Ages to c. 1381*

Lecturer in Medieval History: Mr. Mark Philpott, D. Phil.

Bryn Athyn College, Glencairn Museum, Bryn Athyn, PA

Audited Course: Medieval Art, Spring 1996

Course Title: *Medieval Art*

Museum Director: Mr. Brian Henderson, M.A.

Professional Educator Experience

University City High School • School District of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA

Certified Teacher of Social Studies, September 1999 – June 2006

- Facilitated a partnership with the Center For Community Partnerships (now called the Netter Center for Community Partnerships) at the University of Pennsylvania that featured weekly presentations from graduate students of Urban Planning
- Established a peer mediation program, within the Health Academy of the high school, to train students in non-violent conflict resolution so they may act as mediators between students who have quarrels with one another
- Participated in the Greater Philadelphia High School Partnership – a monthly cultural exchange partnering urban students with those from suburban and private schools
- Partook in the Student Voices Program, an interactive study of politics and government designed by the University of Pennsylvania
- Contributed to a two-week cultural exchange program with 20 professional educators from Shanghai and Singapore exploring a multi-cultural curriculum

Curriculum Design

University City High School. “Urban Studies 101.”

- Curriculum addressed the issues of race and class that high school students confront in urban neighborhoods, and was approved by the principal and became a senior elective course offering

Legacy Youth Tennis and Education. “NJTL Intermediate and Advanced Summer Reading Packet.”

- Created a 3-year curriculum designed for middle and high school students about the great tennis champion and humanitarian Arthur Ashe, based upon his autobiography, *Days of Grace* – the scaffolded themes of family, friends, team, community, and self, guide young people through self-exploration of the relationships that are most powerful in their lives and support youth as they reflect upon their own identity within the larger community

Legacy Youth Tennis and Education. “NJTL Novice Summer Reading Packet.”

- Created a 3-year curriculum designed for elementary school students about Arthur Ashe, based upon a book called, *Game, Set, Match, Champion Arthur Ashe* – empowerment messages have been inserted into the text to serve as chapter titles, and are then utilized as character slogans that are emphasized throughout the session of tennis programming, ultimately becoming the basis for team oriented banners

Professional Youth Development Experience

Legacy Youth Tennis and Education ▪ Philadelphia, PA

Director of Education and Camden Initiatives, September 2008 – August 2015

Major Organization-Wide Initiatives:

Health, Wellness, and Fitness Initiative: Led, in conjunction with colleagues, a sub-committee of the Board of Directors, to identify and adopt a cross-cutting programmatic approach to drive behavior change among youth participants in the social impact area of improved child health levels

- Innovated a pilot program in Camden, New Jersey, delivering after school tennis, fitness, and nutrition education that emerged as the programmatic model for Legacy's adoption of the Health, Wellness, and Fitness Initiative
- Identified and joined the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's local chapter, which attempts to guide organizational level change toward compliance with national health standards
- Identified and implemented the nationally recognized Presidential Youth Fitness Program's official assessment tool – FitnessGram battery of tests
- Identified and implemented an evidence-based nutrition curriculum, "The Power of Choice," developed by The Food and Nutrition Service, of the USDA, and the Food and Drug Administration, of the DHHS
- Identified and implemented tennis specific cardio fitness drills from, the United States Tennis Association's High Performance Training regiment
- Identified and implemented a strength building exercise program from, Bret Contreras's book, "Bodyweight: Strength Training Anatomy"

"I Am Because We Are" Initiative: Created an organization-wide conceptual framework that serves as the umbrella theme for organizing and unifying multiple individually delivered tennis, volunteering, and education program strands

- Promotes an understanding that we are each a member of a larger community, locally, nationally, and globally, and encourages young people to form their own identity, specifically through reflection upon a role that they can each play which positively contributes to their larger community
- Utilizes reflective journal writing to promote self-awareness among young people

Charter School Initiative: Co-Led, with organization's President, a sub-committee of the Board of Directors, through a feasibility study of organizational capacity to co-administer a formal credit bearing school at the Legacy Center

- Represented a progressive approach to formal schooling, in which partnerships between youth development organizations, cultural institutions, and core academic providers were focused on creating a holistic experience

*initiative did not come to fruition

Program Innovation:

Early Learning Program: Developed a child-centric education program for 4 – 7 year olds that utilizes a variety of content activities designed to inspire a love of learning

- Active Engagement – Read a-louds delivered in popular costumes, such as, The Cat In The Hat, Elmo, and Mario
- Encouraging Inquisitiveness – Youth are encouraged to interject during reading with relevant questions of interest
- Stimulating Creativity – Art projects working with chosen mediums; emphasis on color and shape exploration
- Literacy Development – Personal student craft books with paragraph starters for story writing or dictation
- Fun With Science – Hands-on experiments with organic slims, shooting rockets, and small scale chemical reactions

Role Model Presentation Program: Designed a bi-monthly presentation series, delivered by Legacy's tennis coaches, featuring stories written about life lessons learned from tennis

- Stories written as 1st person autobiographical narratives to highlight the power and influence of a coach reflecting upon, and discussing, significant learnings from their personal lives
- Interactive activities accompany tennis coach presentations that feature young people reflecting upon, and making statements about, how they can be role models to others in their community and in their future

Family Health and Tennis Night Program: Organized monthly events at Camden After School sites attempting to engage parents and extended family members around the practice of healthy lifestyle choices

- Physical Activity For Family – provided a safe space for families to exercise together playing tennis
- Sharing A Meal – prepared healthy meals and fresh fruit smoothies that included take-home recipes
- Nutrition Workshop – delivered lessons from USDA's "The Power of Choice" nutrition curriculum
- Variety Of Special Topics – wellness lessons from nurses, goal-setting activities, and exercise dance classes

Character Education Program: Delivered a moral character education program from the Hamlin Family Foundation, called CITRS (Character, Integrity, Trust, Relationships, Success)

- Created a learning environment that promoted youth's critical thinking skills
- Examined athletes and musical artists, from the question, "How does society often portray being successful?"
- Examined Nobel Laureates from the question, "What does it mean to be successful?"
- Utilized reflective journaling and goal setting activities to encourage youth to develop their own sense of identity

Strategic Partnership Management:

University-Based After School Partnership Program: Cultivated a partnership in 2010 with Rutgers University in Camden, New Jersey, that grew into a 21st Century Community Learning Center federal grant in 2012

- Legacy is a program provider of tennis, fitness, and nutrition activities for the Rutgers After School Program
- Rutgers utilizes college students to deliver homework help, tutoring, and STEM academic enrichment classes
- 5 sites in Camden City Public and Charter Schools
- 270 total participants, grades 4 – 8

Full Day Summer Partnership Program: Formed partnerships designed to share programming responsibilities with other youth serving organizations enabling a 7-week full day program with a variety of learning experiences

- Camden City Public Schools delivered mornings of academic enrichment for first half of summer
- Education Works delivered mornings of academic enrichment for first half of summer
- Legacy escorted students from school site to local tennis courts for afternoon tennis, 5 days per week
- YMCA of Camden County delivered mornings of swimming and basketball for second half of summer
- Legacy arranged round trip transportation between young people's local tennis courts and the YMCA

Alternative Tennis and Education Partnership Program: Secured a partnership with Mastery Charter School for weekly tennis and education programming at the Legacy Center with an Emotional Support Special Needs class

- Managed collaboration with Mastery in program design, aligning behavior expectations, evaluation, and incentives
- Managed Legacy's staffing, on-site educational elements, and logistics

Grant Writing, Reporting, and Management

- Rutgers University, Camden: “Legacy’s Healthy Advantage Camden.” Primary proposal writer and lead program manager of Legacy’s tennis and education after school programming in Camden, NJ.
Amount range: \$40,000 – \$64,000. Awarded 2012 – 2014.
- Campbell Soup Foundation: “Legacy’s Healthy Advantage Camden.” Primary proposal writer and lead program manager of Legacy’s tennis and education summer programming in Camden, NJ.
Steady increase in funding from 2010 at: \$10,000, to 2014 at: \$30,000.
- Additional Camden Grant Funding: “Legacy’s Healthy Advantage Camden.” Including: Cookie Jar Foundation, Subaru of America Foundation.
Total Combined Amount: \$15,000. Awarded 2010 – 2014.
- AmeriHealth Caritas Partnership Grant: “Legacy’s Healthy Advantage Chester.” Co-writer with V.P. of Development, and Co-program manager with Director of Neighborhood-Based Programs, Legacy’s tennis and education after school and summer programming in Chester, PA.
Amount range: \$25,000 - \$35,000. Awarded 2013 and 2014.
- Additional Chester Grant Funding: “Legacy’s Healthy Advantage Chester.” Including: PECO, Ethel Sergeant Clark Smith Memorial Fund.
Total Combined Amount: \$15,000. Awarded 2013 – 2014.

Professional Sport-Based Coaching Experience

Indianapolis Community Tennis Program ▪ Indianapolis, IN

Head Player Development Coach For Ages 11 – 14, June 1997 – August 2008 (summers only)

Indianapolis Racquet Club ▪ Indianapolis, IN

Tennis Professional, September 1996 – August 1998

Awards and Certifications

- *Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers* Award, 2002
- Summer Reading and Writing Institute, Philadelphia Writing Project, 2000
- Professional Level Certified Tennis Coach, Professional Tennis Registry, 1996 – 2015
- Certified Tennis Racquet Stringer, United States Racquet Stringers Association, 1996 - 1998
- Partial Tennis Scholarship, LaSalle University, NCAA Division I, 1992 - 1996
- *Ranked #26*, Middle States Section, United States Tennis Association, Boys 16 and Under
- *Ranked #2*, Philadelphia District, United States Tennis Association, Boys 16 and Under
- *Scholar-Athlete Award*, at Cardinal Dougherty High School, Philadelphia, Pa, 1992
- *Most Valuable Player Award*, Philadelphia High School Catholic Tennis League, 1992
- *3 All Catholic League Tennis Awards*, Philadelphia High School Catholic Tennis League, 1989 – 1992
- *Team Champions*, Cardinal Dougherty High School, Philadelphia High School Catholic Tennis League, 1992

References

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/empl_outlook-2017-en
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