Chapter 2
Reconstructing Professional Identity of Educators to the Common Good

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores ways to reconstruct stronger ties between an educators' professional identity to Aristotle's held view of the importance played by "civic friendship" to the common good of democracies nurtured and sustained by education. Virtual environments offer benefits for supporting the development of an educators' professional identity around the common good by means of sustained "in situ" deliberations and engagement with the transcendent (nonmaterial) aspects of virtues in practice.

INTRODUCTION

It has been sixteen years since the publication of the *Reconstructing The Common Good in Education: Coping with Intractable American Dilemmas* (Cuban & Shipps, 2000). In this publication, honoring the retirement of David Tyack from Stanford in 2000, his colleagues and past students offered several essays on the theme of the common good in education. The underlying theme explored by the essays is the role of "civic friendship" for achieving the common good in America through education. This chapter explores ways to reconstruct stronger ties between an educators' professional identity to Aristotle's held view of the importance played by "civic friendship" to the common good of democracies nurtured and sustained by education. Virtual environments offer benefits for supporting the development of an educators' professional identity around the common good by means of sustained "*in situ*" deliberations and engagement with the transcendent (nonmaterial) aspects of virtues in practice.

## A POST-PROGRESSIVE VIEWPOINT OF THE EDUCATOR'S IDENTITY AND ROLE WITH THE PROMISE OF VIRTUAL LEARNING

An early post-progressive viewpoint advocating educators to help learners to connect directly to higher purposes that shape one's conduct and belief in the common good was offered by George Counts in a 1932 speech to the Progressive Education Association in Baltimore, "Dare Progressive Education Be Progressive?" Counts advocated for:

… Strengthening moral quality necessary to quicken, discipline, and give direction" to the energies of the young…'which will create new enthusiasm and devotion'…'which will unify and guide' …'men and women crave a tangible purpose towards which to strive and which lends richness and dignity and meaning to life'… 'They strive to belong in a culture which gives meaning, direction, and significance to life'…[which] 'lifts the person out of narrow personal interests'…'to be touched by great passions'… 'The educator's role is to bring to the younger generation a vision which will call forth their active loyalties and challenge them to creative and arduous labors'. (pp. 8-56)

Counts' post-progressive argument evolved from his concerns with educators holding progressive Depression-era viewpoints of education that placed emphasis on developing individual students above shared democratic commitments. It is worthwhile to quote Counts at length on his concerns:

The weakness of Progressive Education thus lies in the fact that it has elaborated no theory of social welfare, unless it be that of anarchy or extreme individualism. In this, of course, it is but reflecting a viewpoint of the members of the liberal-minded upper middle class who send their children to the Progressive schools—persons who are fairly well-off, who have abandoned the faiths of their fathers, who assume an agnostic attitude towards all important questions, who pride themselves on their open-

Figure 1. Scene of schoolhouse in virtual 3D New Harmony
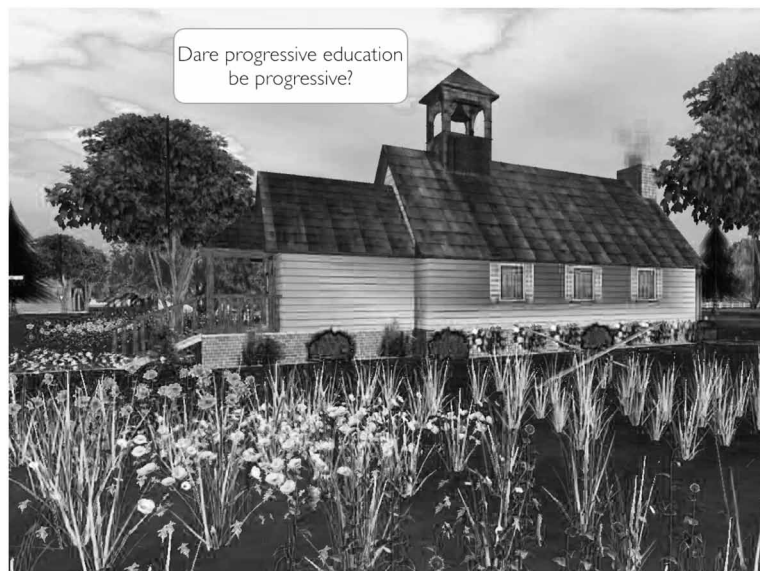
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