


“B.S. vs. Intellectual Virtues: Inviting Students into the Intrinsic Teleology of Teaching and Learning”

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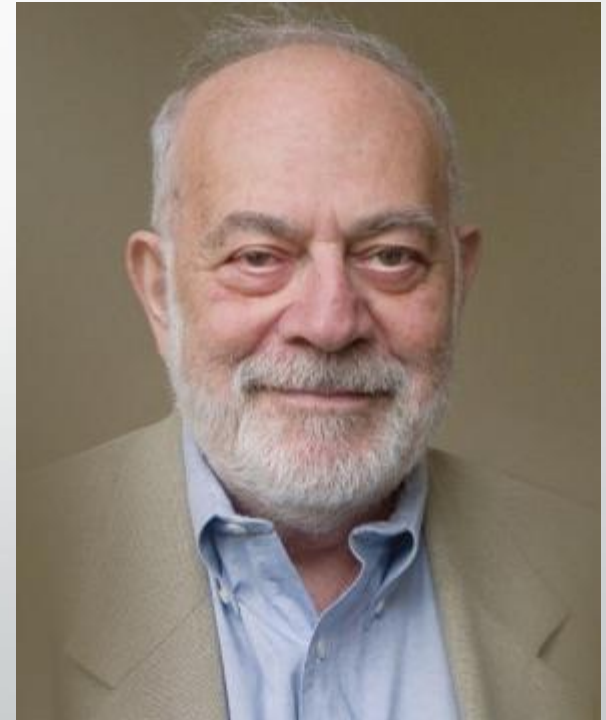
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Problem 1:
students producing B.S.

Defining B.S.

- “On Bullshit,” Harry Frankfurt
- Why this term? Metaphor?
- Carefully constructed b.s.?



Defining B.S.

- A statement that “is grounded neither in a belief that it is true nor, as a lie must be, in a belief that it is not true. It is just this lack of connection to a concern with truth—this indifference to how things really are—that I regard as of the essence of bullshit.” (8-9)
- “What bullshit essentially misrepresents is neither the state of affairs to which it refers nor the beliefs of the speaker concerning the state of affairs...What he does necessarily attempt to deceive us about it his enterprise. His only indispensable characteristic is that in a certain way he misrepresents what he is up to.” (13)

Lying vs. bullshitting




- “Telling lies does not unfit a person for telling the truth in the same way that bullshitting tends to.” (15)

When do we b.s.?

- “Bullshit is unavoidable whenever circumstances require someone to talk without knowing what he is talking about.” (15)





Problem 2:
Students producing b.s. is the
natural product of our educational system

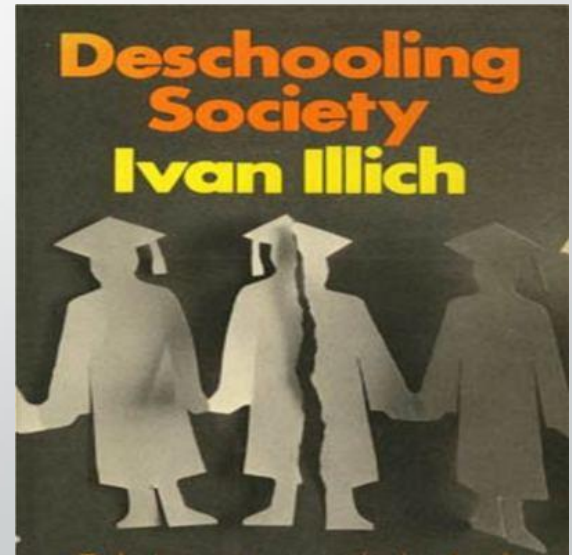
Student perception: extrinsic teleology

- Assignment → Grade → Cumulative grade → Degree →
Job → \$\$\$



System of perception: The institution of schooling

- The great divorce: certified, documented, assessed learning vs. “learning”
- Learning in the classroom: what’s the *telos*?
- Learning outside the classroom: what’s the *telos*?



The establishment of schooling

- “The very existence of obligatory schools divides any society into two realms: some time spans and process and treatments and professions are ‘academic’ or ‘pedagogic,’ and others are not. The power of school thus to divide social reality has no boundaries: education becomes unworldly and the world becomes noneducational.” (Illich, 35)

The perpetuation of schooling

- “Most educational alternatives proposed converge towards goals which are immanent in the production of the cooperative man whose individual needs are met by means of his specialization in the American system: They are oriented toward the improvement of...the schooled society. Even the seemingly radical critics of the school system are not willing to abandon the idea that they have an obligation to the young, especially to the poor, an obligation to process them, whether by love or by fear, into a society which needs disciplined specialization as much from its producers as from its consumers and also their full commitment to the ideology which puts economic growth first” (Illich, 97).



Step 1: An Invitation to Teleology

- What is the chief end of mankind?
- What are the two great commands?
- Becoming proper biblical/Aristotelian

Step 2:

An Invitation to Re-view the Curriculum

- Assignments → Knowledge, skills, attitude → competency → vocation → love God and love neighbor
- “Intellectual character is often the difference between well-meaning but impotent feelings and life-transforming expressions of practical love” (Dow, *Virtuous Minds*, 105)
- “Charity is a theological virtue, and is prompted, no doubt, by a theological emotion, but it is also a practical virtue because it must be practiced. The requirements of this complex charity cannot be fulfilled by smiling in abstract beneficence on our neighbors and on the scenery. It must come to acts, which must come from skills” (Wendell Berry, “The Gift of Good Land,” in *Art of the Commonplace*, 298).



Step 3: An Invitation to Awareness

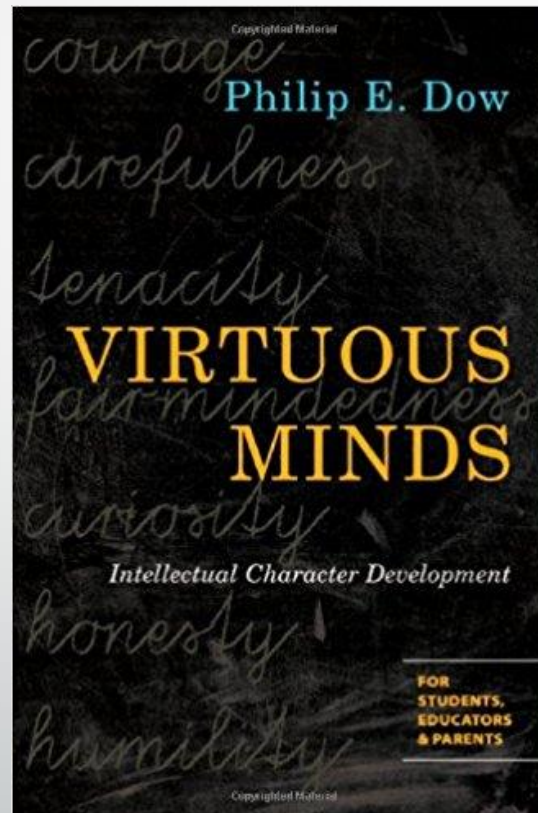
- Naming and gaming the system

Step 4:

An Invitation to New Language/Perception

Intellectual Virtues

- Carefulness
- Courage
- Tenacity
- Fair-Mindedness
- Curiosity
- Honesty
- Humility



“Secularizing” intellectual virtues





Step 5: An Invitation to Self-Evaluation

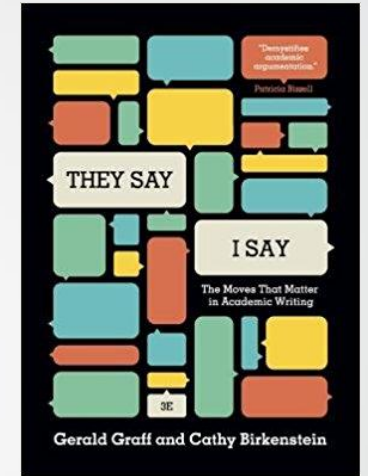
- See handout

Step 6: Naming and Perception

Research Process

- Ask: Curiosity and courage
- Listen: Tenacity, humility, and fair-mindedness
- Engage: Carefulness and honesty
- Answer: Courage and carefulness

Step 6: Naming and Perception



Writing templates

- On the one hand, _____. On the other hand, _____.
- Author X contradicts herself. At the same time that she argues _____, she also implies _____.
- I agree that _____.
- This is not to say that _____.
- Although I agree with X up to a point, I cannot accept his overriding assumption that _____.

Sources

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