

Part Two: 1960 – 1980

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At least three key events set up the conditions for higher education in the 1960's. First, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the GI Bill in June 1944 that subsequently enabled eight million veterans to attend college (Cole, 2009). Beyond the sheer numbers of veterans who enrolled, this legislation gave recognition to higher education as the country experienced sharp economic and demographic growth following the war. It was the federal government's seal-of-approval for higher education, making explicit the expectation that college enrollment was good for the individual and the country.

The second key event was the 1957 launch of Sputnik by the Soviet Union. This was not only a technological victory for the cold-war nemesis of the United States, but a shattering recognition that the American school system might not be the best in the world. This raised economic and security questions, and led to a more intense federal involvement in higher education funding, especially in science, but also in K-12 educational policy.

And then in 1960, Clark Kerr, released the Master Plan of 1960 for Higher Education in California (Cole, 2009). Despite increasing federal involvement in education, states retained dominant control and responsibility for all education. This effort by Kerr was the most comprehensive plan to design a three-tiered system (community colleges, comprehensive colleges, research universities) that could enhance access for a wide variety of students and also aspire to the highest levels of academic quality, especially at the research institutions. In fact, Kerr's plan moved California to become one of the strongest state postsecondary systems in the country for almost five decades. It also provided a high profile for the role of community colleges—institutions that grew in number and in number of students served through the 1960's and 1970's.

The four essays in this section build from these three events that set up the context for higher education between 1960 and 1980. McNiff's essay about the first arts-based graduate program could not have been written without the changes that took place in higher education in the late 1960's. The anti-war demonstrations of that period led to anti-authority protests, especially at colleges and universities. Degree requirements and common core requirements were challenged. Styles of teaching (especially lectures) were associated with power structures and the passivity of students. Critiques of traditional education were widespread, from Paolo Friere's (1973) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, to Postman and Weingartner's (1969) *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*. Many educators were re-reading John Dewey. New institutions were started with new philosophies and new curriculum that sought to engage students more fully in their education, and more fully in the decisions about their degree plans. New institutions were started to serve adult learners that sought to craft learning opportunities for adults who were working and raising families. It was a period of criticism and creativity.

Each of these four essays is a post-sixties essay. McNiff's phrase, "how the arts can liberate human expression and understanding," and his comment about "my life-long commitment to self-designed learning" were actually made possible by the changes in higher education in the sixties. Marcow-Speiser's description of the expressive therapy program in Israel shows how that program came about through various historical realities and circumstances: her immigration from South Africa to Israel and the Yom Kippur War; her meeting Shawn McNiff and enrolling in the expressive therapies program and her eventual return to Israel to initiate the program there. Wauhkonen, Fink, and Pluto provide background about the curriculum expansion at Lesley College, specifically the liberal arts, but argue convincingly that this is an evolution of the college from its narrower, professional curriculum and that it retains the Lesley commitment to theory and practice, the classroom, and the community. Finally, Kossak provides a detailed description of the origins and growth of the expressive therapies programs, citing its academic origins and the tensions within the division as it grew and had the opportunity to specialize, some of it in response to state regulations.

Essays such as these would be rare in the 1950's or early 1960's. Each of these essays shows how individual faculty engaged in program developments that drew upon their academic background, their colleagues, and their worldview. The faculty also reveal a propensity to act, to shape not just programs, but their own futures. They sought to identify audiences who may benefit by programs that they could design and deliver, whether those potential students were in state hospitals, elementary schools, or communities traumatized by violence. These faculty have been able to craft new disciplines, or modify existing ones, to create programs and curricula that spoke to new realities.

Moving beyond the radical literature of the sixties and beyond the rhetoric of power and oppression, these examples show the application of theory to higher education program design, and the integration of academic theory with field-based practice in response to genuine community needs and opportunities.

Reference List

- Cole, J. (2009). *The great American university: Its rise to preeminence, its indispensable national role, why it must be protected*. New York: PublicAffairs.
- Friere, P. (1973) *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: The Seabury Press.
- Postman, N. & Weingartner, C. (1969) *Teaching as a subversive activity*. New York: Dell.