**SLIDE 1 –Title**

**FOR THE LOVE OF CHILDREN AND THE WORLD**

2015 JOAN IRVINE LECTURE

Faculty of Education

The University of Manitoba

John R. Wiens

December 3, 2015

Thank you, David. Good evening, Joan, and my good friends. Please let me begin by thanking Joan Irvine and the Faculty of Education for this unbelievable honour and privilege. If we need a reminder, Joan Irvine, in my view, is perhaps our greatest benefactor in regard to our undergraduate Bachelor of Education program. She was our Associate Dean for many years during which time the transition was being made from the Manitoba Teachers’ College where I received my teacher education to the Faculty of Education –while she may not remember she and I started at the Teachers’ College together and shut it down together – she came here to begin her illustrious university career, and I started teaching high school in Holland, Manitoba. More importantly, however, is the fact that I like to think Joan and I, and probably all of you, share the same passion, EDUCATION. Education, for me, is a very personal matter because it gets at our very notions of what it means to be human, in other words, who we are as humans, as people. Emily Benedek, in her 1999 book, The Wind Won’t Know Me, has this take on that:

Maybe the white man’s way of teaching is not for the Indian people, my mother says to me. Someday I would like to see a school, she says, maybe since you want to be a teacher, maybe you can start a school where you teach white children how to be Indian children. When you start teaching white children how to think like Indians, maybe we’ll have human beings again, she tells me.

And then I thought about it. What is a human being? What do you mean by that? Aren’t we all human beings? And she says no. A human being thinks with his heart, a person who thinks of the good all the time, that has respect for life around him, that has respect for even the smallest rock. A human being is a person that talks to rocks, a person that thinks the rock will talk to him and teach him a lesson. The smallest thing that Mother Nature has made available to us. A human being must understand why we are here on earth, why the plants are growing, why we have the four seasons. Why we have the heavens, that is a human being, somebody that understands nature. Somebody that thinks he is not better than anybody else. That thinks everybody is equal no matter what color they are or what language they speak. That is a human being. She says, I don’t want life to end. I want my children to grow and reproduce. And I want my children to get along with the white children, learn how to share and live like human beings. (272)

When I told one of my friends that the title for my talk tonight was FOR THE LOVE OF CHILDREN AND THE WORLD, he said it sounds like a sermon. And, in a sense it is, a civic sermon – it’s about how I understand or, if you wish, it’s what believe about, our desires and dreams regarding education and teaching. As well as being a tribute to Joan Irvine, my lecture tonight is a tribute to Hannah Arendt, arguably the most influential political philosopher of the twentieth century. Hannah Arendt, who escaped the Holocaust and immigrated to New York, spent her entire life trying to understand how humans could imagine and create something as horrific as the Holocaust, and trying to think about how we might prevent similar atrocities from being endlessly repeated. What Hannah Arendt and Joan Irvine shared was a deep love for children, others and our common humanity and, although they expressed that love in very different ways, it was evident in not only their work but also in the dedication they both brought to their work. Both were, and are, an ongoing inspiration to me, and it is largely to women like these two I owe my understandings about education and democracy for, when I pursued my PhD, I discovered that there were no women philosophers in my course outlines and I set out to find them. And like those I discovered, some of whom you will meet tonight, I am inviting you to join me in thinking together about our human condition and what it means for our ideas about education and democracy.

**SLIDE 2 -- Humility**

I am now in my fifty-first year of teaching but the ideas I am asking us to think about are not new, yet they never grow old in spite of their familiarity and, as long as we hold on to them, there is hope for our humanity and for democracy. In that sense, I apologize to you who think you know everything I have to say (especially to any former students who have heard it all before). To you this lecture is just a series of friendly reminders about things you already know and will want to remember – my biggest and most constant fear being not that people don’t know but that, caught up in their most recent enthusiasms, they forget that education is about who we are as humans together.

Hopefully I can present them to you in a way that is intriguing, meaningful and worthwhile. If nothing else, the Power Point which accompanies my talk contains some very powerful imagery and ideas and you’re welcome to use them (copies of this speech and the Power Point will be available from me or on line later). They are, to some extent background material, and they to reflect wayfinders of my own educational journey. In other words, this talk is what I’m thinking right now. This is how I understand the meaning of education – how all our human activity makes sense to me right now. Here are the ideas I’m inviting you to think about with me:

**SLIDE 3 – Thinking**

* What it about us as humans that requires us to think and do?
* What is it about children that demands that we educate them?
* Why is it about the world that requires educated people?
* What will we teach our young and who will teach them?

1. **What it about us as humans that requires us to think and do**

**SLIDE 4 – Miracle authors**

1. Human beings are history makers, authors of their own miracles – we not only constitute the world – we create it! This is a reasonable explanation for why things are as they are.
2. Since the Enlightenment and, in spite of postmodernism, we are not only beholden to notions of reason and reasonableness, but we are enamoured with them and bound to them – things have to make sense to us and, generally, things have to be done for a purpose, or a REASON.
3. We, as the adult world, just haven’t got it right yet. In fact, we’ve messed some things up pretty bad but, in spite of that, we’ve got some things a lot righter than those who went before us and we want to keep them that way – democracy, even in its feeble forms, is better than totalitarianism and fundamentalism; and most of our schools are amazing places for most of our children because of the amazing teachers in them.
4. But here’re some of the less wonderful things I want all of us to think about some time –although I won’t dwell on this tonight I find some of these not only sad but frightening or, as one of my friends said, creepy – they pose potential threats to education and democracy.
5. For example, in spite of living lives of unprecedented and unforeseen abundance, achievement and privilege, and unfettered information, our educational images and languages, which betray our sloppy incoherent thinking (zeroes and failure in the name of evidence-based decisions, standardized report cards and differentiated instruction), are also awash with pernicious and insidious nonsense.

**I think** …

1. We are being wooed and seduced on all sides by purveyors of educational snake oil (for example, the “all children can learn” mantra – all children can learn to all children can learn anything we want them to if only we did it right which led to NCLB which left more children behind, or the best practices theme which includes things like new pedagogies for deep learning and the list is seemingly endless).
2. In our desire to do good by our children we fall prey to ideological and fundamentalist scammers (the basics, standardized testers, Math fanatics, technology accelerates learning and the like).
3. In our rush to stay current, we let in a relentless parade of privateers (modern day pirates) who talk about children as products, resources, customers and consumers of an educational industry, some people as stakeholders who have a greater right to the politics and benefits of education than others, education as a commodity like cars and microwaves – Manitoba curricula for sake to rich families in faraway lands, our schools for sale to the highest bidders or the first on the scene, think Microsoft Showcase Schools, sports academies and on and on) – it is incredibly easy for creators and would-be creators to be led astray – or to deceive ourselves and lead others astray. A little humility and a great deal of caution would be in order!
4. A different example related to the first, in spite of the fact that we are deadly serious about what we do and go about our work diligently all our waking hours, we teachers do not **cause** learning (a current fixation), let alone education. In spite of all our best combined efforts and exquisite research, we’re still not sure why people learn what they do or how to get them to learn what we want them to.
5. And, if we were entirely ethical and honest about education, we would want children and young people themselves to take credit and responsibility for their own education within the values, tastes and passions that match our normative worldviews. That is not the same as leaving them to their own devices to figure out how to move and act in the world but rather understanding that, when all is said and done, each of us is somehow personally responsible for what we learned and did and what the consequences of our actions and inaction are – we need reference points or touchstones to think with, and they are readily available as starting points for thinking about education and about democracy. On the level of mid-abstraction the foundational wayfinders are that education is about learning to living well – learning how to flourish both as individuals and as humankind writ large, which is what living well implies which boils down to the relationship between adults and children. And democracy is about equality and inclusion, “all for each and each for all.”

SLIDE 5 – Educational Reference Points

Our touchstone question might be: **“Do our ideas and activities enrich and enhance education and democracy or do they distract, deceive or drain even further our capacity to understand, pursue and realize what is humanly meaningful and worthwhile?”** Surely our ideals are not for sale to the highest bidder, or our wishes and dreams for our children and ourselves dependent upon the smoothest talker!

1. Finally, what we do seem to know with reasonable certainty is that when someone loves us we seem to do better, and when someone loves children and people they seem to do better – and we all have the capacity to decide to love our individual humanness, others in all their humanity, and our collective humanity – the fact that we’re not alone on this earth – which is just where children find themselves when they show up here – there are already others like them here (some, like me, for a long time). Those of us who’ve been here for a while, I think reasonably, have a special obligation to those who show up to introduce them to this place that we had a hand in making and we need to do so with a special kind of love.

**SLIDE 6 – Love of the World**

**SLIDE 7 – Love of Children**

**SLIDE 8 – Love Defined**

**SLIDE 9 – Love Defined**

**B. What is it about children which demands that we educate them**

Children are the human equivalent of the technological “refresh” function on our computers – they are our hope for refreshing our world, for making it more current, meaningful, responsive and democratic. They are our constant reminders that if we don’t refresh the ideas and ideals we value they, like all our living things and our material goods, grow tired, stale and fade away as if we never had them.

**SLIDE 10 – Thought Experiment**

It was about this time of year about three decades ago that our receptionist came to my office and told me there was a young woman at the front desk who wished to speak to me. I welcomed her into my office and she began, somewhat hesitantly, in a voice filled with emotion,

Hi, I’m Mrs. Brown, Josie’s mother (not their real names). I just came by – I had to do this before Christmas – I need to thank you for saving our daughter and our family. Josie is doing quite well in school now – even when she has incidents the school just looks after it – they don’t even call me any more even though they keep a record. I just had to come by and thank you and the teachers and the principal at our school.

Thus began a long conversation where she recounted about how excited they were as parents when they were expecting their first baby,

We could hardly wait – we talked and talked into many nights about all the things we would do with and for our new baby – how our lives would be so much better – we had big dreams. When Josie was born we were over the moon with happiness. We didn’t know at the time what we were in for. It wasn’t long before we noticed that our beautiful little daughter was different – she didn’t cry when she was hungry, she didn’t seem to care for our hugs and our play, she didn’t grip our fingers like other babies we knew – at six months the doctors told us she was severely autistic. Later she did not learn how to talk, only learned to walk when she was already four, not because she couldn’t have – she just didn’t seem interested. And she didn’t play with others children – in fact, she had little interest in her own toys. But that was not all …

Pretty soon we started losing our friends who had children the same age as Josie – there always seemed to be some excuse why they couldn’t come over, they didn’t want their children to play with Josie because sometimes she lashed out at them and made weird noises – very soon we had no social life. But I need to tell you that school was our savior – we know it was difficult for you people, but everyone seemed to care not only for our Josie but also for us. Although we were reluctant at first we soon joined a group of “special needs parents,” people who also were experiencing the loss of social life because their kids were not the same as others. And the teachers and the assistants in school were awesome – we know they had huge challenges because Josie sometimes got very violent and there was no predicting it – but no one ever suggested that she didn’t belong there, even though I’m sure they often were at wit’s end. Now she’s in middle school – she still has outbursts but mostly seems to have found a rhythm and a routine where she’s OK and the other kids are OK with her, even working with her at many times of the day inside the classroom and including her at other times.

Mr. Wiens, in spite of all this, we would do this all over again – we love Josie very much, can’t imagine living without her – and we’re so happy that you love her too. Please thank everyone for us.

I could go on to tell you the rest of the conversation, but my point is already made – children sometimes show up in different ways than we would want them too – they are the penultimate newcomers who arrive at our doors with no past history, no warning labels, little security screening and no security checks. Because we are the adults who are were already here we have to literally take them as they come – and even as they do so unconsciously, they, in their novelty (because they all show up different from every other child and everyone else), transform the people around them if we let them and accept our responsibility to them. And they transform our lives in ways we would never have anticipated and, in retrospect, most often for the better. They are a supernatural gift and a sacred trust.

So, when we educators think about children, we must think beyond their “cuteness,” beyond our emotional inclinations, “aw,” beyond the immature errors of their ways, beyond their immediate gratification – every deliberate moment must conceive of them as game changers, as potentially the people who, in the future, will make their and our world better – in their families, in their workplaces, in the halls of learning, of justice and of power. This requires some discipline on our parts – a tough act to get right – teaching them first to be like us and then asking them to be individually different, pushing them to greater heights while celebrating their current achievements; accepting and valuing them even when they are on their worst behavior. But perhaps, more importantly, always giving the benefit of the doubt, not being too quick to judge negatively or dismiss or exclude – my own story is chalk full of people who overlooked my shortcomings, my bad behavior, my lack of maturity and my incomprehensible sense of humour.

Our children and young people are not objects to be studied from a distance with clinical detachment, but rather acknowledged with awe for their uniqueness and loved for their mystery, and seen as welcome additions to our worlds. That’s why, in our culture, we give all of them different names at birth and why, in some cultures, they receive different tribal names when they pass from childhood to adulthood and some schools say we teach “one child at a time.” Tracey, a young woman with Downs Syndrome, reminded me of this in church a short time ago when I said to her, “and how are you today, young lady?” and she responded rather testily, “My name is Tracey.”

Children are not people to be discredited, discouraged, maligned because of their lack of development in some areas – they are people who showed up here as legitimately as we did. We adults must take responsibility for initiating them into the world, not so much hiding from them how we have failed in our efforts but sharing with them the joy, the beauty and the goodness that humans are capable of.

There was a child went forth every day.

And the first object he look’d upon, that object he became,

And that object became part of [her] for the day or a certain part of the day,

Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.

The early lilacs became part of this child, … and the song of the phoebe bird,

And the Third month lamb …

And the school [teacher] …

And the friendly boys … and girls

And all the changes of city and country wherever he went.

[Her] own parents, he that had father’d him and she that had conceived [her] in

[her] womb and birth’d him

They gave this child more of themselves than that,

They gave him afterward every day, they became part of [her].

The family usages, the language , the company, the furniture, the yearning, and swelling hear

Affection that will not be gainsay’s, the sense of what is real, the thought if after all it should prove unreal,

The doubts of day-time and the doubts of night-time, the curious whether and how

Whether that which appears so is so, or is it all flashes and specks? …

The horizon’s edge …

These became part of the child who went forth every day, and who now goes, and will always go forth every day.

(Acknowledgement of, and Apologies to, Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

Yes, while it is much easier to say, and we must acknowledge that the world we are passing on to our children is misguided, mean-spirited, evil, polluted, exploitative, unfair, still it is more important for them to see the goodness and potential goodness in themselves, others and the world so that they can see themselves doing something about the things we’ve messed up or let slide. Our education must emphasize achievement over failure, for it is on achievement in understanding their humanity and that of others on which they can build good lives and help others do the same – not success as measured by performance tests.

We owe all our young the right to engage with us about matters serious to them, us and the world, we owe all our children the opportunities to imagine how things could be better, and we all owe our young the right to see and use us as role models for the way they wish to live – the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has with brute honesty shown us what happens when children’s role models are taken away or damaged. And we owe all our children the joy, comfort and peace that comes from an understanding that they are all our children and we love them all unconditionally!

**SLIDE 11 – All adults are Teachers**

**SLIDE 12 – Different Attitude**

**SLIDE 13 – Care about the World**

Nobody promises that it will be easy to see each child as a potential future citizen who makes better their home, their school, their workplace, and their country. Nobody guarantees us that it will be easy or get better. How do we compensate, for example, for our over 10,000 children-in-care the loss of biological parenthood? How do we help sexually exploited children trust again, trust being the very foundation of how we live together with others? How do we help adults who were damaged, marginalized and excluded in a variety of ways also become contributors to the education of the children they meet, and how do we help our young to see those people as also capable of teaching them something worthwhile? Perhaps, most importantly, how do we help young people recognize, acknowledge, accept and feel good about their achievements? In other words, how do we make sure that every child is recognized and loved, making a good future even possible even though not guaranteed? What education provides is hope and possibility for everyone!

Put another way, we teachers work at this by understanding that the school is the institution that the world invented and created to introduce children to the world and to prepare children to become contributing parts of the world. Schools protect children from the adult world (safe schools), and the world from children (compulsory school attendance) – one reason residential schools failed was because they forced an adult world on to children, where they were forced to engage in adult activities at too early an age, denying them the normative resources to participate in the world in a healthy way as adults. The educational questions for all school, teachers indeed all adults to ask is “how would we like our children to appear in the world now and as adult citizens” and “how do we not get in the way, but rather help them make an appearance in the world that is not only judged good by others but also is their free choice and desire?”

In order to deal with those questions, the world must also take certain responsibilities toward its children and possess certain characteristics – it must be worthy of each child that makes an appearance – it must be up to the task of renewing itself through natality, the birth of new people and education, the preparation of those new people. A welcome reminder is that the reason we teach the Sciences, Maths and indeed all of our subjects is because they represent human achievements for the purpose of participation and contribution – they have limited value as pure disciplinary knowledge and understanding. That is why in this place we try to educate teachers, a matter I will return to later.

**C. What is it about the world that requires educated people**

The World, for Hannah Arendt, was a human place, an adult space – a political space, a public place, a place where we could show who we are instead of what we are, a place for where individual excellence, goodness, beauty and justice could be demonstrated for all to see and without which we have no place to show what we are capable of. It was a space like the familiar one we know where the ritual, when you meet a child for the first time, is to have everyone hold her – literally pass him around the room of adults inviting this new being to become an important part of our world.

The ideal World, the ones we humans should strive to create and endlessly re-create, is a human space, occupied by a plurality, all the diverse people who make up our collective humanity. It is an ethical space where all peoples have a place, where honest moral disagreement leads to greater human solidarity through never ending dialogue, and an inclusive space where there are no outsiders, no people at the margins and no outliers. It was a space of appearances, recognition, acknowledgement of the uniqueness of all others, and the common bond of our humanity.

In Arendt’s World, a political and public space, people brought their own best selves and best ideas into the light, engaging each other for the sake of all others as well as their own sense of meaning and worth – a space to be revered, treasured and constantly renewed through dialogue and interaction. Indeed, people have no way of showing who they are unless there is such a space – excellence of every kind requires recognition from respected others – excellence with no audience, in a sense, has no earthly reality. Tom Green tells us that the creation of a respected, thoughtful and helpful public is one of the two main purpose of education – a public made up of good individuals who have learned what passes for good, the other main purpose of education, something which ironically cannot be achieved except through education.

**SLIDE 14 – Education creating Public**

Summing up, those are the main reasons we invented public schools – a somewhat private place where children are slowly introduced, initiated and invited into the public world – this is why we’re rightfully concerned with the potential exclusivity of arrangements like home schooling, private and religious schools, charter schools, magnet schools, corporate schools, sports academies and the like. School is where we help our young learn how to behave in a public that is not just their family and their neighbours – to begin their development as individuals with unique and special abilities – and to understand their responsibilities to others and the societies in which they live.

In public schools, as in a truly democratic world, there are no children or young people who do not belong, no children who aren’t missed if they’re not present, no young people who belong more than others, and no children who are not welcome because they might compromise the school’s reputation. In other words, there are no stateless children, no worthless young people, no unequal children and no superfluous human beings – one of our great deceptions and temptations, according to Arendt, is that we can get away with thinking that there are people – and children and young people we’d be better off without.

Finally, Arendt’s ideal world was a democratic world, and I believe it must be ours as well if we wish to live as worthwhile humans among other worthwhile humans. Only in democracies is there room for each one of us, only in democracies is everyone implicated in what everyone else does, only in democracies can we imagine that some of our thoughts and actions can and will effect human outcomes in a way that people themselves had a real say in their destinies – this is the practical everyday meaning of human freedom. Our hopes are always that, in spite of our world’s failings and shortcomings, we can recall, remember, retrieve and bring to new life the democratic yearnings of equality and justice and inclusion. Our hopes are always that our children will do a better job of those than we did, and our education must include constant reminders that this is the type of world we want. Two favourite passages capture this for me, I will read one – the other will appear on the Power Point. The first from Family Matters, a wonderful book by Rohinton Mistry,

From now on, said Mr. Kapur, in this shop we will celebrate all festivals: Divali, Christmas, Id, your Parsi Narvose, Baiskhi, Buddha Jayanti, Ganesh Chaturthi, everything. We’ll decorate the windows, put up appropriate greetings with lights and all. We’re going to be a mini-Bombay, an example to our neighbourhood. I made this decision after an amazing thing I saw last week.

He drank what he had accepted from Yezad’s glass. Last week, I parked my car near Grant Road station and bought a platform ticket. To watch the trains and passengers. Just felt like it.

He paused for another swallow, and continued, I never travel by train, I see how crowded they are when I drive past the tracks. But from the platform that day I saw something new. A train was leaving, completely packed, and the men running alongside gave up. All except one. I kept my eyes on him, because the platform was coming to an end.

Suddenly, he raised his arms. And people on the train reached out and grabbed them. What were they doing, he would be dragged and killed, I thought! A moment later they had lifted him off the platform. Now his feet were dangling outside the compartment, and I almost screamed to stop the train. His feet pedaled the air. They found a tiny spot on the edge, slipped off, found it again.

There he was, hanging, his life literally in the hands of strangers. And he had put it there. He had trusted them. More arms reached out and held him tight in their embrace. It was a miracle – suddenly he was completely safe. So safe, I wondered if I had overreacted to the earlier danger. But no, his position had been truly perilous for a few seconds.

I waited on the platform to see more trains. It was then I realized that what I had witnessed was not a miracle. It happened over and over: hands reaching out to help, as though it was perfectly normal, a routine commuter procedure.

Whose hands were they, and whose hands were they grasping? Hindu, Muslim, Dalit, Parsi, Christian? No one knew and no one cared. Fellow passengers, that’s all they were. And I stood there on the platform for a long time, Yezad, my eyes filled with tears of joy, because what I saw told me there was still hope for this great city. (145-146)

The second from Nelson Mandela – democracy at its best – just like an Anishinabe sharing circle!

**SLIDE 15 – Democracy in Action**

**D. What will we teach our young and who will teach them?**

We will teach them what the world is like – it’s our responsibility – we are not only implicated in a democracy we’re also somewhat responsible for its maintenance and sustainability and for every loss of freedom we permit. If you don’t use it you lose it – it’s not an object to be locked away in a safe place, it’s an ideal that’s meant to be practised every waking moment with everyone we meet –either in person or in cyberspace!

We will teach them that it is true that democracy is an unrealized ideal but it’s still the best way yet that people have figured out for living together because there’s room and need in the democratic world for everyone – but true democracy has yet to be realized and it’s up to them to work toward it.

We will teach them that a democracy means and needs everybody including them – otherwise it’s an empty promise and somewhat of a coercive lie. If they’re not there we miss them and they deny us their contribution.

We will teach them that the real good is democratic participation for their own benefit as well as everyone else – this is what it means to be free in practical terms.

We will teach them that freedom is a human gift but also a human good and, in practical terms, it means that to be free they must act freely for the good of democracy.

We will teach them that all adults have the responsibility to teach all children and young people through our words and our actions

In the Western world teaching has been constituted as a profession, albeit one governed by very different means than most other professions. This is, at least in part, and I say thankfully and of course, because we have been unable to agree on standards for practice or a body of knowledge explicit to the role of teacher. What we have is a variety of sociological, psychological and philosophical biases which defy unification just like children defy standardization. All attempts at uniformity beyond medium abstraction, even true in all our subjects, have been found deficient and/or incomplete – we always, like T. S. Eliot, end up in the place we started from – that teaching is a human activity which must take into account that each child comes into the world as a unique being defying generalization and prediction, and that children and young people, as suggested by Walt Whitman, take on what they experience to varying degrees, seemingly sometimes in utter defiance of what we intended for them to learn and sometimes in ways that are impossible for us to connect using reason.

What we are left with is a need to engage each other continuously and relentlessly around the questions of what it means to flourish as human or, in other words, what it means to live a good life in the world with the people who are alive the same time as we are. It is highly unlikely, and probably even less desirable, that we will ever completely agree – if we did the human conversation and the democratic adventure would grind to a halt.

Education and teaching, like humanity, simply defies all attempts to hem it in – whether through tests or curricula, art or science, technology or technique – and I wouldn’t have it any other way. On the other hand, the irony is that if we don’t understand ourselves what we want them to learn, something that always remains in the realm of ideals, then it either doesn’t matter what they learn as long as they learn, or we have even less an idea of how to teach.

**SLIDE 16 – Sense of Community**

**SLIDE 17 – Protection of Norms**

So we end up attempting to exact a promise from people who wish to be teachers—do you promise to love children and do you promise to love democracy? And do you promise to teach our children in turn to do the same – learn how to be good people and learn how you can help make the world a better place respectfully, mutually and reciprocally alongside other who have learned to do so via their educational journeys? And my greatest fears – do you promise that you will not deterred from being human and acting humanely by some stubborn allegiance and unbending adherence to totalizing ideologies, systems, laws, curricula, technologies, practices and other prejudices – in other words a selective but uncritical (unthinking) forgetfulness about what’s really the best of our humanity ? And will you keep the educational spirit and democratic imagination alive by continuously reminding yourself and others that if we don’t perseverate on their human essence we could easily lose both, and in the process our very freedom. Education and democracy are adventures fueled by that amazing human gift called the imagination which can envision the world I have described – all of us have it and all of us have a different one which has its own mind.

Grandma, am I ever glad you came over. I’ve lost my imagination and I need your help to find it – come on.

Anais, our granddaughter, takes her Grandma on a whirlwind tour of the house. Let’s start here –her parents’ bedroom – they open all the closet doors, check under the bed, look in all the drawers – the result is the same.

“No, it’s not here.”

Next her bedroom – same routine, same result.

“Let’s check this drawer, oh, maybe under the bed, behind the curtains, in my toybox.” I’m really getting worried!

Anais and grandma visit the basement, the furnace room, look behind the hot water heater, where haven’t they looked?

“I know, we went right by the hall closet, let’s go see.”

“Hey look grandma – there it is – that tricky tiger has it again, I should have known. Thanks for helping me.”

**SLIDE 18 – Democratic Imagination**

Our four grandchildren, like all children, indeed all people, are on their own educational journeys fueled by their imaginations about who they are and who they can become and how they will help shape the world to make it better – the journey to goodness which never ends and is never completely understood and grasped – and they need our help – we all need each other’s help – the help of people who love us.

And … that’s the way I understand this joyful idea and ideal we call education.

**SLIDE 20 – Thank you**

**SLIDE 19 – Love Defined Select References**

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