



## Crucial Topics in Foundations of Education: International Perspectives

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# Historical Consciousness, Democracy, and a Morally Ambiguous Education

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The idea that learning from the past has embedded in it a moral component that will lead to a better future is by no means new, and is one of the pillars of progressive history education. In this essay, I challenge the idea that *learning* from history leads necessarily to the openings required for particular conceptions of democracy. In consonance with the critiques leveraged by Biesta, Lewis, and others towards the learning paradigm, I suggest that the anxieties generated by the political catastrophe that is the turn to fascism and far-right governments in much of the world cannot lead to a narrowing of our views on the purpose of teaching history to merely developing a specific kind of historical consciousness in our students, so that they can learn the right lessons for the past. No matter what is done by educators, there are no guarantees towards a better future. A turn towards *studying* in history might, however, provide the conditions for dissensus to take place, and in the process, for a different kind of democracy to be experienced.