

Back to school, with New Politics

September 4, 2013

Starting this week, I'll be blogging at NP every Wednesday, expanding the range of topics on which I write to include issues of teaching and learning, as well as sticking with topics that seem more "political," like teachers unions, school reform, and labor.

This shift comes from my conclusion that we on the Left, especially those of us who are academics, need to articulate what's wrong with the changes being made to schools with language that speaks to the deepest human needs and desires. While we can't be afraid to speak truth to power- in fact, we have to be much more outspoken about the destruction of public education and the colonization of communities of color- we have to cast our arguments in more understandable language.

Teachers as a group have not traditionally been very political, though there's always been an activist core. Generally people choose teaching as a career because they love working with kids or their subject matter. However, this year many teachers are feeling as if the ground has fallen underneath them because of the imposition of a national curriculum (Common Core) and new evaluation procedures linking teacher pay to student test scores.

In my blog I'll discuss topics that are often not considered the domain of a Left general interest publication, in particular aspects of teaching, to prompt discussion about ways teachers' work differs from that of other public employees and what we should do about that as union members, education activists, parents, and socialists. Look in the coming weeks for my letter to TFA recruits who are stunned at being in over their heads; liberal rapture with school reform in Union City, NJ; and analysis of what's happening with US teachers unions (lots!).

I invite reader comments, either on this website or to me directly at drweinerlo@gmail.com. Is there a subject you want me to tackle? Let me know. And you can follow my thoughts on teaching, schools, and education on twitter , Facebook, as well as my blog here at New Politics.