



Dewey, Existential Uncertainty and Non-affirmative Teaching

Andrea English, University of Edinburgh
24 June 2025 at 14:00, ZLB, Porzellangasse 4, SR 4

The talk by Andrea English explores John Dewey's notion of the teacher in democratic education. It focuses particularly on the teacher's role in supporting productive uncertainty in learning. A real case of teacher listening in a classroom is used to illustrate what such teaching looks like in practice. In this context, Dewey's thinking about the nature of teaching is connected to a long-standing tradition of non-affirmative educational theory. The talk concludes by looking to the future of education, suggesting that maintaining a strong conception of the teacher as a listener is essential for sustaining democratic education.

(The talk builds on the following paper: [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-30551-1_6#:~:text=Uncertainty%20Thinking%20and%20Freedom,193\).](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-30551-1_6#:~:text=Uncertainty%20Thinking%20and%20Freedom,193).))

Andrea English is Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) in Philosophy of Education at the University of Edinburgh, and incoming President of the John Dewey Society. Her research focuses on theories of dialogic teaching and transformative learning as part of democratic education. Her scholarship is particularly concerned with understanding the role of teacher listening in building dialogic communities that support learner productive struggle, interthinking and co-agency. She has led teams in STEM education, AI and Humanities to advance the theory and practice of dialogic education, and serves as expert advisor for international projects on educational dialogue, most recently on the project 'Deliberate' (Finland). She is Executive Board member and Teacher Education Coordinator of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, Editor of IMPACT for the Journal of Philosophy of Education, and Associate Editor of Dewey Studies.

