



# Letters from John Dewey/Letters from Huck Finn: A look at math education from the inside

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"Few refuges exist from the multicolored tomes posing as math textbooks. No one is safe from this modern day invasion of the body snatchers. And just like in the movie, those with the power to do something have already been taken over by the seed pods of education school dogma." So writes Barry Garelick, using the name John Dewey in a set of letters that chronicles his journey through ed school as he pursues a second career as math teacher after retirement. A few years later, he wrote a second set of letters using the name Huck Finn, this time describing his experiences as a student teacher and then a substitute teacher. As Huck Finn he grapples with the "ideological, political and cultural divide in math education". In both sets of letters, John Dewey and Huck Finn learn more than they bargained for in ways that are both humorous and, ultimately, very human.

The book presents not only the process by which one becomes a math teacher, but also the "groupthink" that pervades education schools and other forms of the education establishment. The prevailing mode of thought views drills, practice and the learning of procedures as "rote learning" and prevents true "understanding". If students "understand", then everything else follows, according to the so-called experts that both John Dewey and Huck Finn rebel against. The letters from John Dewey originally appeared in the blog Edspresso. The letters from Huck Finn (with the exception of Chapter 10) originally appeared in the blog Out in Left Field, also in slightly different form. The letters achieved a following of readers who expressed their agreements and disagreements quite candidly in comments on the respective blogs. It became evident to many that the great divide in math education is quite real and discussed in detail in the book.

"Beautifully observed, these letters are a priceless multilayered collection—on one level, a passionate debate on math education—on another, a poignant and human look at the struggle to teach—and learn. Bursting with humor and heart, this book is a treasure and a pleasure to read."

Dennis Foon, author of *The Longlight Legacy*

"Garelick's book gives a gripping insider account of the world of K12 math education. Its refreshingly independent perspective validates key questions and concerns that aspiring math teachers might otherwise be uncomfortable pursuing."

Katharine Beals, author of *Raising a Left Brain Child in a Right Brain World*

"Part helmet-cam view, and part soapbox polemic, this piquant potpourri invites readers aboard the author's post-retirement adventure into math education. With humor and candor Barry Garelick offers a valuable primer for novice teachers and a hearty campfire retelling for hardened veterans -- friends and foes alike." Dr. Robert Craigen, Associate Professor of Mathematics at the University of Manitoba, and co-founder of the Western Initiative for Strengthening Education in Mathematics

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#### **Jose Johnson:**

On this era which is the greater man or who has ability to do something more are more precious than other. Do you want to become certainly one of it? It is just simple solution to have that. What you must do is just spending your time very little but quite enough to possess a look at some books. One of many books in the top listing in your reading list is actually Letters from John Dewey/Letters from Huck Finn: A look at math education from the inside. This book that is certainly qualified as The Hungry Slopes can get you closer in turning out to be precious person. By looking upwards and review this e-book you can get many advantages.

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