In this, our 100th year, it's inspiring to see that, while celebrating the achievements of our past, we can just as equally celebrate our future—and the future of our students.

Two key moments in the Centennial celebrations this year are the republication of Caroline Pratt's groundbreaking 1948 book, *I Learn from Children*, as well as a Symposium, “The Power of Progressive Education: Can Creative Thinking Be Taught?” The Symposium, which took place in January, explored, from both business and educational vantage points, how progressive education lays a strong foundation for success in today's current work world.

In recognition of our 100th year, I have the honor of writing an additional chapter for the new edition of *I Learn from Children*, which will be available in June. Entitled “City and Country at One Hundred,” this chapter looks at the continued relevance of a City and Country education. As the title suggests, it is a holistic portrait of C&C at 100, but both this chapter and the Symposium (more on that evening can be found on page 3) share one common thread: City and Country students acquire the skills, characteristics, and values necessary to navigate adulthood and find professional success in today’s—and tomorrow’s—work world.

The shift from an industrial to a digital and global economy has generated numerous books and articles identifying the skills needed for success in the twenty-first century work world. Among the skills most often cited are creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication (along with curiosity, experimentation, innovation, and problem solving). These characteristics are embedded in a City and Country education, starting in the IIs.

The C&C classroom serves as an ideal place for children to explore, experiment, fail, learn and grow, both as individuals and as a group, as they build these important skills. Our

READ MORE
Here is a select bibliography, culled from the 22 found in *I Learn from Children*:
- *Now You See It* by Cathy N. Davidson
- *A Whole New Mind* by Daniel H. Pink
- *Out of Our Minds* by Ken Robinson
- *The Global Achievement Gap* by Tony Wagner
- *Tough Choices or Tough Times: The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce*
program places social studies, the study of one's world—the interconnections among people, institutions, and society at large—at the core.

We live in communities and societies, and learning is a social process. Through social studies, the children come to understand the role of the individual—his allegiance to himself and to the greater community, in school and in the nation. With time, children's lives expand outward from self and family to group and school, borough and city, nation and world. You'll read more about how that process starts in the Lower School on page 5.

“My time at C&C has had more influence on my current work than just about any formal education I’ve had in between then and now.” —Lukas Fauset ’04, Web Developer

Moving into the Middle/Upper School, the Jobs Program is a cornerstone of the City and Country experience. The concept of “learning by doing” was a key point raised at the Symposium. Our students gain a level of expertise from their long-term relationship with each Job. The children are able to perform the ‘whole job,’ not just a part of it. The IXs design and operate a whole store; they don’t just put items on the shelves, for example. (More on the IXs Store and the deep learning inherent in it—and other Jobs—can be found on page 6.)

Along with the Jobs Program in the Middle/Upper School, students undertake in-depth social studies. Students study history not with a textbook, but through the daily lives of a people and their social and cultural contexts. In some Groups, students research a profession and “take on” a character, such as a soldier or carpenter from Ancient Egyptian times, or an artist from the Renaissance, to build a deeper understanding of not only history, but also the day to day lives of people in a specific place and time.

The people and events of history inform students’ understanding of who they are and the diverse world in which they live. That's one of the reasons C&C graduates are so successful at whatever they decide to pursue—they have years of practice putting themselves in others' shoes. They are able to make sense of new situations and appreciate various perspectives, a core competency in today's fast-changing world.

This edition of Currents focuses on concepts that have been important for a C&C education since 1914, when Caroline Pratt founded the “Play School” in a small Greenwich Village apartment. Caroline's pioneering vision continues to guide City and Country—and continues to prepare students for their bold futures.

“You can draw a very clear line between my experiences at C&C and my motivation to pursue journalism.”

—Lily Newman ’04, Technology Blogger/Reporter for Slate Magazine
The Power of Progressive Education Symposium Examines How Creativity and Innovation Can Be Taught

CITY AND COUNTRY SCHOOL PARTNERS WITH THE NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH TO EXPLORE THE SKILLS NEEDED TO SUCCEED IN THE 21ST CENTURY ECONOMY

On the evening of Friday, January 10, 2014, a standing-room-only crowd of parents, teachers, students, and professionals gathered in the 460-seat Tishman Auditorium at Greenwich Village’s The New School for City and Country’s Centennial Symposium entitled “The Power of Progressive Education: Can Creative Thinking be Taught?” The two-and-half-hour program featured a panel of renowned industrial designers, entrepreneurs, architects, and educators who shared their experiences and expertise while underscoring the relevance of a City and Country education in relation to innovation, entrepreneurship, and the types of skills increasingly needed for success in today’s business world.

Opening remarks by New School President David E. Van Zandt and City and Country Principal Kate Turley highlighted the shared paths and similarities of the two institutions. Both were founded in the early 20th century by progressive educators, and both continue to rely on the hallmarks of progressive education: collaboration, interdisciplinary learning, critical thinking, and gaining knowledge through trial and error.

Keynote speaker Bruce Nussbaum, Parsons The New School for Design Professor of Innovation and Design and author of Creative Intelligence: Harnessing the Power to Create, Connect and Inspire, set the stage for connecting those skills to the needs of the 21st century workplace. Nussbaum cited a survey fielded by IBM several years ago in which 1,500 chief executives were asked to name the single most important leadership

“What goes on in City and Country classrooms is very similar to what happens in the best high-tech labs or the smartest startups or the hottest business development teams. These are all magic circles of creativity. For example, the era of wearable technology wasn’t born with glasses on the West Coast, but just a few blocks from here at RG/A which developed Nike Plus in a creative process that mirrors what happens at City and Country.”

—David Nussbaum
The Diversity Perspective

Diversity and inclusion are integral parts of progressive education and together are a key focus of City and Country School. In order for our children to be successful in the ever-changing and diverse workforce, we seek to help them understand the importance of diversity within (and especially outside of) our community. We provide a forum where students respect and learn from each other, which in turn cultivates respect for differences and commonality. When our students leave our School, they do so as culturally-aware individuals.

As students do increasingly more sophisticated collaborative work, they are developing an appreciation for different backgrounds, skills, and experiences. This fosters the type of openness of mind that leads to the innovative and creative critical thinking needed to succeed in a competitive world. Providing different perspectives allows our students to see things through different lenses, another needed skill in the twenty-first century, where working with individuals of differing backgrounds—and viewpoints—is the norm.

Our students learn to be responsible to themselves and to their community. This is a lesson that is carried with them throughout their lives.

—Millie Cartagena, Director of Student Services and Diversity Coordinator

For a video—as well as a transcript—of the entire two-and-a-half-hour program of “The Power of Progressive Education: Can Creative Thinking Be Taught?” go to http://www.cityandcountry.org/100.

“The instinct to play and the instinct to learn and create are the same.”

—David Rockwell

trait. “And the majority answered creativity,” said Nussbaum. According to Nussbaum, we are in a historical moment in which problems in business, technology, and the economy are changing rapidly and constantly. And, he emphasized, the people who will come out ahead will “have the unique abilities to identify the right problem at the right time and then select the best out of many possible answers.”

Nussbaum pointed to City and Country’s Jobs Program, specifically the running of the School Store by the IXs, to illustrate how children can learn critical thinking and problem solving abilities at an early age. He noted, “There you see fourth graders not only learning basic mathematics by pricing their inventory, selling their goods, and making change, but also developing a real business know-how by creating an appealing environment that services the needs of its particular customer base.”

The evening’s impressive group of speakers further forged the link between the kind of play that might go on in a progressive classroom and problem-solving skills needed in a “grown up” world. David Rockwell, a cross-disciplinary architect and Founder and President of Rockwell Group, provided this example: “Our studio encourages a culture of curiosity and collaboration to produce the highest levels of innovative design for restaurants, theatrical productions, hotels, and more,” he stated. “Given the importance of play in our studio, we conceived Imagination Playground to allow kids to start developing their creative instinct.” Imagination Playground is a progressive and portable concept in children’s play.

The other presenters included Lori Breslow, Ph.D., Director of MIT’s Teaching and Learning Laboratory, Kickstarter Co-Founder Charles Adler, and Vimeo CFO (and father of three C&C alums) Mark Pinney. Additional comments were made by C&C fathers Eric Freitag, RG/A Director of Product Innovation, and Tucker Viemeister, an award-winning industrial designer and entrepreneur.

“The instinct to play and the instinct to learn and create are the same.”

—David Rockwell
The seeds of creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication that serve our grads so well in the work world are sown in the Lower School. With open-ended materials at the core, children begin to create art and structures that connect them with the community—and to a greater responsibility.

BUILDING RESPONSIBILITY AND CRITICAL THINKING
A sense of personal and collective responsibility is woven into the Lower School experience and lays the foundation for later, community-wide responsibilities. Children as young as two are encouraged in age-appropriate ways to assume responsibility for things that will be both helpful and enjoyable for everyone in the Group: taking care of the materials everyone uses, cleaning the painting easels, or collecting a basket of muffins from the Kitchen in order for everyone to enjoy snack together, for example. As children grow older they also become more able to identify the work that needs to be done in order for a community to function smoothly and respectfully.

BUILDING COMMUNITY
Understanding what jobs and responsibilities people assume within the larger community of the school and outside the school also offers a deeper level of connectedness for students in the younger years. Being more aware of what's happening in their classrooms offers a pathway into learning. This awareness also leads our students out into the larger community and offers a passage into multiple layers of our expanding Social Studies curriculum. As children move through the Lower School they go out into the world seeking the answers to their own questions about things that are important to them. When my family needs to buy food to eat, where do we go to get it and how did that food get onto the shelves in the store or onto the plate in the restaurant? Who are the people who serve us? Do they have families and lives outside the workplace? Do they have pets? As children are guided by their teachers to make these connections they begin to have an expanded experience of authentic community.

BUILDING SOCIAL BRIDGES: COLLABORATION AND TRUST
The bridge into the Middle and Upper School, and into a new world of assuming responsibilities for everyone in the school community, happens in the VIIIs. Through firsthand experience and discussion, they begin to make important decisions that involve literally building their own city (known as the "permanent city") throughout the VIIIs year. As they peel away the essential elements of a functioning community that provides for all its inhabitants, students begin to make important decisions together. How does a city care for everyone and insure that there are services that will help its citizens to live peaceful, enjoyable, healthy, safe, and productive lives? These are the essential questions to which students seek the answers as they begin to construct their own city. Once important planning decisions are made by the Group as a whole, each child takes on the responsibility of researching and constructing their own building within that city. And this time permanent materials are used (no longer unit block constructions): wood, nails, glue, cardboard, fabrics, and various other recycled materials.

The culmination of this experience is that children complete their time in the Lower School with a tremendous sense of knowledge and empowerment. They know how things work, they trust each other, they have built a city together! They move into the Middle School ready to take on the creative and collaborative work required in the Jobs, starting with the Post Office.

—Jane Clarke, Director of Lower School

“Our curriculum, using these open-ended materials, fosters independence, motivation, and interest, essential components of learning. The blocks speak, too, to the essential role of play in children’s development and the social nature of learning.” —Kate Turley
The above scene takes place in the IXs Store at City and Country. The employees are nine- and ten-year-olds, and the customers can be as young as two-year-olds shopping with their teachers. Each week, C&C IXs work a shift in the School Store with their team. They rotate through the different jobs in the Store, taking on new challenges, improving at each job, and discovering their personal strengths. This requires creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication: The students must work together to develop their own skills and the skills of their Groupmates in order to better the experience of their customers.

The responsibility IXs feel for their Job is a critical part of having a successful Store. This culture of the Group is defined as they set up the Store early in the year. This past fall, our IXs spent a day working to design their Store’s purpose and brainstorming their Store’s name and motto. After that, they refined their work as a Group, collaborating to more clearly define their purpose, name, and motto.

By defining the purpose of the Store first, our students create a bigger meaning for their work. By defining different jobs and rotating through them, they learn their strengths and have a chance to practice jobs toward mastery. Through collaboration and mastery of independent work, students find and solve problems. These experiences are key to developing creative thinking and self-motivated learning.

It is critical that the Job is built over the school year so that students come to understand the responsibility to their community and refine their skills. Many schools have jobs that last for 2-3 weeks and are defined as projects. Students learn a lot about designing and creating a post office.
or a store. But having a job for an entire school year offers a long-term meaningful experience. By analyzing each task and constantly working to make it better, children internalize the patterns of work and learn all of the different jobs (i.e. Cashier, Manager, Product Owner, etc.) within the Store. This is similar to the education and training programs that medical schools and investment banks use for their students/employees where they work three month stints at each of a number of rotations/jobs and then decide in which area they would like to work upon completion of the rotation. Each time our students come back to a job, they improve and grow.

Students at City and Country are encouraged to take risks, fail, and find their voice. C&C students know that they are engaged in learning with their community, and each child’s questions and ideas add to the understanding of the Group. Plus, the rewards that come from the freedom to take risks at every level are even greater when the Group is there to support students. Students are working for knowledge instead of a grade, allowing individuals to fulfill their curiosity in imaginative and exciting ways. Not every idea will work, but with teachers and Groupmates as supports, students navigate these hurdles to build their knowledge, finding success and building resilience in the process.

**LONG-TERM, AUTHENTIC LEARNING AND SOCIAL OWNERSHIP**

This long-term learning steeped in social ownership is what makes the Jobs Program authentic. The jobs our children have are important roles in the Store, and the Store is an important part of our community. When children make mistakes, they have to correct those mistakes. They learn to communicate about conflict and provide customer service.

This past fall, I bought some pens from our traveling School Store. I had to leave for a meeting, but I left the IXs with $10. They agreed to give me change and leave it on my desk. When I realized that they had made the incorrect change, I let the IXs know, and I received my change with a note of apology. These kinds of genuine interactions have real world relevancy—they are not just for show. In these ways, the Jobs Program provides each child a sense of purpose beyond her or his own experiences.

Caroline Pratt understood education as preparation for living. Creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication are not only part of the educational process, but core skills for success in life. Her Jobs Program has stood the test of time as an essential learning experience that builds these skills and deep social connections in the process. Our graduates carry forward and apply the lessons they learn in these jobs throughout their educational and professional lives.

—Alex Ragone, Director of Middle/Upper School

“...I was determined that our Eights should have a whole job, with the adventure of planning and the glamour of accomplishment, no less than the necessary drudgery which is a part of all work. And the job must be real. It must be of actual service or the essence of it is lost.”

—Caroline Pratt
“In an architecture firm, every project you work on happens in a team. The C&C Group dynamic has helped me appreciate the merit of working on a project with other people and how to best approach the complicated dynamics that occur when working in a team.”

—Victoria Bryant ’01, Junior Architect at Platt Byard Dovell White Architects

FROM THE ARCHIVES…

“And so to high school, equipped with the necessary academic background and a live interest in work—ready to meet new situations, to explore with continuing curiosity ever-widening fields of knowledge and to function as an active member in a new and more challenging world.”

—City and Country School Prospectus, 1939

I think something I acquired at C&C and carried through HS and college, and into my work, is the ability to think critically about problems. It’s really important to understand the larger context of problems in order to identify the context and evaluate the best solution. This is especially helpful in my job as a software engineer, as often the symptom doesn’t make its cause obvious. It’s also really important to see the big picture and understand how different systems will interact with each other when designing new features.

—Max Kostow ’02, Software Engineer at tech startup, Percolate