In the preceding six chapters, we sought to trace in an illuminating way a series of common issues and interests that suffuse Dewey’s and Pirsig’s metaphysics, aesthetics, and individual outlooks with respect to personal and cultural renewal. We saw among these issues and interests many areas of substantive agreement, and several of disagreement as well. In the latter areas, where the value of the social and bodily dimensions of experience (or Quality) was foremost in question, I spoke at length about what I take to be the merits of Dewey’s respective positions. We likewise identified through Pirsig a number of Dewey’s apparent shortcomings as a thinker and as a writer. In addition, Dewey’s and Pirsig’s recurring motifs of a poetics of the everyday mediated this inquiry: meaning that the discussion centered on the various ways in which an appreciation for the generic traits qualitative immediacy, the stable and precarious (or the static and Dynamic), continuity (or association), novelty, pluralism, potentiality, contingency, and temporality is required of environments that support the cultivation of art as experience. This final chapter investigates some of the questions and issues involved in creating such an environment in a formal classroom setting. Before we begin, here is a last look at the focal questions that have guided us to this point:

(1) What sort of world is it that makes art as experience possible?
(2) What is the general nature of aesthetic experience and how might it serve to nurture the human \( \text{erōs} \)?
(3) How might art as experience contribute to an everyday poetics of living?
(4) What kinds of learning environments—formal and informal—help to foster art as experience?

The first three questions have been addressed in considerable detail and from several different philosophical and literary perspectives in prior chapters. We have also explored the fourth question with respect to informal learning environments that assist in the cultivation of art as experience. The matter of formal learning environments thus receives the greater part of our attentions here. As we examine it with the earlier, more “solid and pragmatic” “Phaedrus” as our guide, I hope to demonstrate that all manner of Dewey’s

writings—from his formative work in psychology on through the various branches of philosophy—can be seen to converge and coalesce around his views on education (ZMM 170). Education, for Dewey, is the supreme human interest.

That being said, we noted in the Introduction that educational theorists have until recently paid rather scant attention to Dewey’s aesthetics and the prominent role it plays in his mature philosophy. This is in significant part because most educators are familiar with Dewey’s more explicitly educational writings only, most of which came earlier in his career and tend to speak more of the merits of science than of art. And as we likewise observed, Dewey did not, for reasons never made explicit, take the time with the publication of Art as Experience to flesh out the educational implications of his aesthetics. As a result, writers in education are often unaware of the apparent “aesthetic turn” in Dewey’s later works and its potential significance for our thinking about education.1

At the same time, however, there are currently a number of writers very much committed to furthering the cause of art and aesthetic education as an indispensable part of the schooling experience. Most of this work entails efforts to secure the place of art in the K-12 curriculum using one or more of the following alleged desiderata: enhanced cognitive development, increased cultural or aesthetic literacy, access to “different ways of knowing,” and growth of latent “multiple intelligences.”2 Though the place of the arts in today’s schools remains rather precarious, these efforts are far from going unnoticed. A substantial amount of research and lively debate has emerged around these desiderata and the proposed rationales for the arts in education they suggest.

A thorough Deweyan evaluation of this scholarship would presumably be a valuable contribution to the field. Such an endeavor is, nonetheless, beyond the scope of this book. Still, I want to point out here that all of the desiderata mentioned above reflect at some basic level the contemporary artworld practice of situating art and the aesthetic squarely within the cognitive domain of experience, even if they ultimately look to expand its purview. That is, they speak principally of the cognitive benefits of art and aesthetic education. In adhering to what Stanley Cavell might call the “skeptic’s choreography,” issues concerning knowledge acquisition and its agencies take center stage, while the value and import of immediate qualitative experience is hardly seen or heard from, if at all. Moreover, and once again reflecting the interests of the artworld, art education has of late become increasingly discipline-based, making it look more intellectual and hence academic.3 This disciplinary orientation tends to further circumscribe its horizons of meaning over concerns as to what constitutes a bona fide art product or activity.4 Thus even a brief overview reveals that much of the popular literature in art and aesthetic education is significantly at odds with Dewey’s and Pirsig’s more wholistic and phenomenological aesthetics.

With an eye to remedying this situation, we have been critiquing and revising popular conventions as to what constitutes art and artistic engagement