The learning objectives and outcomes of the JDKI are:
1. To gain an understanding about the complex dynamics of practical and theoretical learning within an experiential setting.
2. To learn the ten Deweyan Tenets and incorporate them into your teaching.
3. To cook, taste and eat.

Schedule:

Day 1-June 18

Afternoon 1pm-4:30pm
- Introductions to each other
- An overview of John Dewey and his philosophy and JDKI Tenets
- Kitchenroom orientation
- Knife Skills
- Sensorial exercise

Day 2-June 19

Morning 9am-1pm
- Sensorial exercise
- Mise en place
- Demo
- Building your meal
- Lunch provided
- Taste profiling and palate solving

Afternoon 1:30pm-2:30pm
- Network/project time with classmates

Afternoon 3pm-5pm
- Wine tasting
- Debrief of day
- Philosophy in action
Day 3-June 20

Morning 9pm-1pm

- Breakfast & lunch provided
- Food as metaphor exercise
- Mystery Basket
- Presentations

Afternoon 1:30pm-2:30pm

- Network/project time with classmates

Afternoon 3pm-5pm

- Beer tasting
- Class application sharing
- Closure
JDKI Tenets

This list is our effort to “boil down Dewey,” who’s a tough old bird to digest. (You can see we love a good cooking metaphor.) You can think of it as a compact philosophy of kitchenroom teaching and learning.

In the spirit of good Deweyan inquirers, we reshape this list every time we conduct a workshop as a result of what we learn with and from our participants. At present, there are ten tenets. Each tenet is accompanied by a very brief description of one or two primary sources (complete with hyperlink) where you can find the relevant topic discussed.

A note: much of Dewey’s writing on education was focused on the education of children. We believe that his theories work equally well when applied to the learning of college students and adults. So, don’t be put off by his language, or assume that it isn’t relevant to you because it’s written about elementary schoolers.

Tenet 1: Education is a Practice of Democracy: The aim of education is the creation of a thriving democracy; the activity of education is itself an embodiment of democracy. You cannot do this alone. Thus, our teaching and learning actively work to create democratic community.

Sources in Dewey: Schools of To-Morrow, written with his daughter Evelyn Dewey, gives an excellent account of this point. Among the things, he says:

Responsibility for the conduct of society and government rests on every member of society. Therefore, everyone must receive a training that will enable him to meet this responsibility, giving him just ideas of the condition and needs of the people collectively, and developing those qualities, which will insure his doing a fair share of the work of government.

Tenet 2: All inquiry is value-laden: The desire to know emerges in response to human problems and questions. To the degree that our inquiry addresses those problems, it is rooted in human values; aesthetic, ethical, and discipline-specific. There is no such thing as “value free inquiry.”

Sources in Dewey: This idea is so deeply woven throughout all of Dewey’s works that it is difficult to find an excerptable discussion of it. Among the places in which he discusses it are these important ones: Reconstruction in
Tenet 3: Education is Experience: Education is best understood as “intelligently directed development of the possibilities inherent in ordinary experience.” While all experience is educative, some is mis-educative. Instructors must create learning contexts that will foster genuinely educative experiences—those that will promote further intellectual growth. (One definition of democracy for Dewey is, in fact, growth that promotes more growth.)

Sources in Dewey: Experience and Education is a short, approachable book that embodies this tenet well. Chapter 8, from which the quotation above comes, unpacks “the means and goal of education.” Chapter 2 explores the nature of miseducation. Democracy and Education, his hefty textbook on the topic, explores education as growth in Chapter 4.

Tenet 4: Theory is Practice: The relationship between theory and practice is actually a relationship between two modes of practice. When theory and practice operate together effectively, learners act reflectively and inquiringly; act, that is, with a sense of purpose and for the sake of learning.

Sources in Dewey: One of the clearest statements of this concept comes from Dewey’s masterpiece, Experience and Nature. In Chapter 8, he characterizes the difference between practice and theory thus: “There is, then, an empirical truth in the common opposition between the contemplative, reflective type and the executive type, the ‘go-getter,’ the kind that gets things done. It is, however, a contrast between two modes of practice.”

Tenet 5: Education begins where students do, and is focused on learning as an activity, not as a product: Learning emerges from experience, with a question or confusion. It leads to further experience—and new confusions. Thus, we seek to create conditions in the classroom, which enable students to learn how to ask “the next question” rather than to come up with “the next answer.”

Sources in Dewey: This tenet is discussed in various places, including Experience and Education, and Democracy and Education. Another work, “The Child and the Curriculum” includes a helpful explanation of what it means to begin with students’ experience: “Abandon the notion of subject-matter as something fixed and ready-made in itself, outside the child’s experience; cease thinking of the child’s experience as also something hard and fast; see it as something fluent, embryonic, vital; and we realize that the child and the curriculum are simply two limits which define a single process” (p.16).
Tenet 6: Aims and means interact in education: For the student, a “true aim,” as opposed to one externally imposed (by a teacher, for instance), is one that will actually inform how one chooses to act. True aims thus translate themselves into means that a learner can understand, in which they can become engrossed, and which they can see to the end. Thus, in teaching we work to enable students to identify and own their own true aims.

Sources in Dewey: Chapter 8 of Democracy and Education contains a clear summary of the way aims should function for students. It includes this sharp critique of external aims: “In education, the currency of these externally imposed aims is responsible for the emphasis put upon the notion of preparation for a remote future and for rendering the work of both teacher and pupil mechanical and slavish.”

Tenet 7: Play is vital in learning: Play is “interested absorption in activity for the sake of activity itself” ("Growth in Activity"). Defined thus, it is far from trivial; it is the heart of education. Therefore, we treat play with serious respect, and make opportunities for it. Play is also not easy; it requires us to be willing to suspend presuppositions, prescriptions and “known facts” that we carry into inquiry. When we willingly suspend, we free ourselves to experience the familiar as strange and full of surprises.

Sources in Dewey: See The Child and the Curriculum, p.33, for a discussion of play and absorption. Dewey also thinks of play in terms of an “active learner working on real life problems.” For that, see “Play-Based Learning in Early Childhood Education. See also Dewey’s entry on “Play” in Monroe’s Cyclopedia of Education.

Tenet 8: Chance and change are as much features of reality as are certainty and stability: Uncertainty is part of the fabric of our world, the fabric of experience. Our interactions in the world must “live” with that situation. Educators are thus called to create in our students the capacity to function flexibly in a world of chance and change.

Sources in Dewey: In both The Quest for Certainty (the chapter “Escape from Peril”) and Experience and Nature (the chapter “Experience, Nature and Art”), Dewey discusses philosophy’s continual disparagement of all things chancy and changing. He suggests that the scientific revolution, and the rise of the experimental method mark the development of a mode of “directed practical doing” that enables us to deal with chance and change, rather than attempting to pole vault our way out of them to some realm of fixed, absolute truths.
Tenet 9: Mind is a Verb: The human “mind” is not an organ, but a general character or attribute that infuses all of a human being. “Minding” involves our entire, sentient bodily selves. To inquire, to investigate, to “mentally” explore our world always involves bodily engagement with that world.

Sources in Dewey: In Chapter 11 of Art as Experience, Dewey notes, “Mind is primarily a verb. It denotes all the ways in which we deal consciously and expressly with the situations in which we find ourselves.”

Tenet 10: Experience is both instrumental and consummatory: Human experiences are potentially either “instrumental” or “consummatory” or both; they lead us to a further experience, or they are enjoyed for their own sake. Education draws upon and creates both kinds of experience.

Sources in Dewey: Experience and Nature explores these concepts in numerous chapters, including, particularly, Chapter 9, “Experience, Nature and Art.”