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Descriptive Summary

Identifier  ICU.SPCL.SCHWABJJ
Title  Schwab, Joseph J. Papers
Date  1939-1986
Size  6.5 linear feet (13 boxes)
Repository  Special Collections Research Center
           University of Chicago Library
           1100 East 57th Street
           Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract  Joseph J. Schwab (1909-1988), Professor of Natural Sciences and
          Education. The Papers comprise including drafts and notes of published and
          unpublished works, professional and personal correspondence, examinations
          and other teaching materials, and audio tapes. They document Schwab’s
          career at the University of Chicago, and some of his subsequent work at the
          Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara, California.

Information on Use

Access  The collection is open for research. Series IV, Audio Tapes, does not include access copies for all
          or part of the material in the series. Researchers will need to consult with staff before requesting
          material from this series. The remainder of the collection is open for research.

Citation  When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Schwab, Joseph J. Papers,
          [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note

Joseph Jackson Schwab was born on February 2, 1909 in Columbus, Mississippi, where he
attended a private elementary school that served as a practice school for the prospective teachers
of the local women’s college. After the sixth grade, Schwab entered the public schools where
he discovered science. As Schwab was virtually alone among his classmates in his interests in
science, the principal of the high school, who was a former science teacher, encouraged his
creative license by giving him free reign in the school laboratory. Schwab became fascinated
with the poisonous snakes and other animals kept there and delighted in setting off homemade
gunpowder by pounding it with an ax. He finished high school in three years and in 1924, at
the age of fifteen, he set off by train for the University of Chicago where he was to remain for
almost fifty years. Schwab quickly grew dissatisfied with the way undergraduate science was
taught at Chicago. The excitement he had experienced in learning science as an ongoing process
of inquiry, discovery and debate had been reduced to the memorization of dry conclusions as if they were definitive truths. Much of the rest of his career was spent fighting this way of teaching science. He did encounter a few teachers that provided him with positive models of teaching, and among these was James Weber Linn in English. After completing his general requirements in the first five quarters, Schwab spent the rest of his undergraduate time studying the humanities and graduated with a major in English literature in 1930.

The next fall he began graduate study at Chicago using the opportunity to return to his interests in the biological sciences. His attention even then was drawn to the question of how to teach science. Merle Coulter, professor of botany, made a lasting impression on Schwab by having his graduate students read and critique each other’s work in small group discussions. To Schwab this way of teaching offered a great deal of promise.

Schwab’s graduate career coincided with Robert Hutchins’s arrival as president of the University of Chicago and his efforts to revitalize undergraduate education. Schwab quickly became good friends with Hutchins and established a close professional relationship that continued throughout their careers at Chicago and on to Santa Barbara. Through Hutchins, Schwab met two other colleagues who greatly influenced the direction of his thought, Richard McKeon and Ralph Tyler, professors of philosophy and education. McKeon nurtured Schwab’s understanding of Aristotle and introduced him to the writings of John Dewey. Throughout their association during the next fifty years, Tyler encouraged Schwab to turn his thought to the value and practice of the liberal arts as well as to develop his own rationale for curriculum development.

Schwab completed his M.S. in zoology in 1936 and then accepted a fellowship in science education at Teachers College, Columbia University. The following year he returned to Chicago as an instructor in the biological sciences. In 1938 he won his first Quantrell award for excellence in teaching, and he received his doctorate in genetics in 1939.

Schwab had become invaluable to Hutchins’ effort to create an integrated curriculum because of his knowledge of both the humanities and the natural sciences. He represented the natural sciences in the planning sessions for the fourth year course, Observation, Interpretation, and Integration (OII), a capstone of Hutchins’ liberal arts curriculum. Further, he was responsible for developing discussion as a viable alternative to lecture in the core courses and throughout the curriculum. Having found his niche, and a way of maintaining the contact with students which gave him so much satisfaction, Schwab largely abandoned any ambitions of a research career and concentrated on undergraduate teaching.

His value to Hutchins and his associates is reflected in the quick succession of positions Schwab held the next ten years. In 1941, Schwab was hired as an assistant professor in the natural sciences. The following year, Hutchins appointed Schwab to the examiner’s office where he wrote the final comprehensive examinations in the biological sciences while continuing to teach OII and courses in biology. Schwab was named Assistant Dean of Students in charge of Student Civilian Defense in 1943. At that time, Hutchins informed him that he would have to have an
appointment in one of the graduate divisions in order to eventually secure full professorship. With the help of Tyler and Harold Dunkel, Schwab received an additional appointment as Assistant Professor of Education. He became Associate Professor of Natural Sciences in the College in 1945, Associate Professor of Education in 1946, and Chairman of the College Natural Sciences Staff in 1947. The next year he was elected to the University Senate. In 1949 he assumed full professorship in the natural sciences of the college and was a founding member of the Committee on Social Thought. The next year he achieved the same rank in education and then, in 1951, just ten years after beginning the tenure process, Schwab was named to an endowed chair, becoming the William Rainey Harper Professor of Natural Sciences in the College. In 1953, Schwab became the first member of the faculty to win the Quantrell Award twice.

Schwab's professional work pursued three aims. The first was to reconceptualize the teaching of science in all levels of schooling. He served as Chairman of the Committee on Teacher Preparation for the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study from 1959 to 1961. In this role he wrote The Biology Teacher's Handbook, a key part of the committee's efforts to change teaching methods for high school biology. In addition, he edited the first editions of the textbooks. He gave the Inglis Lecture at Harvard in 1960 and served on numerous boards and committees, including the Committee on General Education of the Association of Higher Education, the National Association of Research on Science Teaching, National Science Foundation Curriculum Improvement Section, the Committee of Curriculum and Training in the Medical and Para-medical Sciences at the National Institutes of Health, and Sections on Curriculum Development and Demonstration Programs at the U.S. Office of Education.

A second aim of Schwab's thought was a defense of liberal education, and later its reformulation, when it became apparent in the 1950s that Hutchins' experiment could not be sustained. In this pursuit, Schwab helped to found the Journal of General Education, and served on the editorial boards of other journals, including Curriculum Inquiry and School Review. At the urging of Hutchins, he consulted, along with McKeon, on the Great Books of the Western World project produced under the auspices of Encyclopaedia Britannica.

In a very influential book, College Curriculum and Student Protest, Schwab traced the turmoil on college campuses in the 1960s to the abandonment of the ideals of liberal education. This was a threat Schwab felt very close to home. With the demise of the "Hutchins College" in the 1950s, Schwab largely abandoned undergraduate teaching at Chicago and devoted most of his efforts to the Department of Education. In November of 1963, Schwab proposed a reorganization of the College into a group of separate colleges somewhat similar to the Oxford system. The proposal aroused considerable debate and discussion, but was largely abandoned in favor of the more modest restructuring advocated by the Dean of the College, Wayne Booth, and the University Provost, Edward Levi.

Then in 1969 at an invited address during the annual meeting of the American Educational Researchers Association entitled "The Practical," Schwab presented ideas which revitalized
curriculum research. For a field that his colleague, Decker Walker had declared "moribund" several years earlier, Schwab's vision of curriculum development created a great deal of excitement and controversy. He harshly criticized the current use of objectives and argued for a conception of curriculum development that respected the complexities of teachers and students as human beings. He went on to publish four articles which further explicated his vision.

The third field into which Schwab divided his efforts was the area of Jewish education. In the early 1960s he accepted chairmanship of the Academic Board of the Melton Research Center at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Stimulated by several students who encouraged him to consider seriously his religious background, most notably Seymour Fox and Burton Cohen, he published several tracts and a number of articles on character education and related topics. He served as a consultant for Camp Ramah. Schwab tended to keep this work strictly isolated from the rest of his professional life. Thus few of his publications through the Melton Center appear in bibliographies of his work, and most of his colleagues knew little about his work in this field.

In 1974, Schwab retired from the University of Chicago and joined the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, founded by Robert Hutchins in Santa Barbara, California. At the Center, Schwab participated in numerous conversations with colleagues on a wide range of issues, many of which were published in the Center Magazine. He continued writing, publishing and teaching about curriculum development and character education at the University of California, Santa Barbara, Claremont College, and Stanford University, among other schools. Schwab was hired as a consultant to help the senior faculty think through the conception of a new institute on the campus of Michigan State University. In the autumns of 1976 and 1977, with his former student Lee Shulman, Schwab conducted a series of seminars that led to the founding of the Institute for Research on Teaching.

Schwab remained in Santa Barbara until 1986 when health problems forced him to move in with his daughter in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where he died in 1988.

**Scope Note**

The collection is organized in five series:

Series I: CORRESPONDENCE

Series II: WRITINGS

Series III: TEACHING MATERIALS

Series IV: MISCELLANEOUS
Series V: AUDIO TAPES

Schwab kept pertinent letters with particular manuscripts or notes and this order has been honored. The remaining correspondence is organized alphabetically and the teaching materials are classified by course and then chronologically. Published and unpublished writings have been separated and arranged chronologically as best as can be determined. As Schwab’s research and teaching were so tightly intertwined, the researcher is advised to look for materials under both headings.

The materials in the collection record Schwab’s intellectual activity over the period from the late 1950s through the 1980s. The collection holds a number of unpublished manuscripts for journal articles and the complete unpublished manuscript for a book. Also included are notes and plans from the early 1970s for a book on curriculum to be written jointly with Seymour Fox. The collection’s audio tapes include two sets of cassettes recording the seminars Schwab and Lee Shulman of Stanford conducted with the faculty of Michigan State University, which were part of the process that led to the establishment of the Institute for Research on Teaching. In addition, the papers hold a sizeable number of teaching materials, including several for the final integrative course in the college of the 1940s, "Observation, Interpretation, and Integration." Unfortunately, the collection does not contain much in the way of correspondence, early drafts of Schwab’s published works, research notes from early in his career through the 1950s, or many records of his activity in the promotion of Jewish education.

The unpublished book, Community; A Mission for the Schools, arose out of a series of discussions with thirty colleagues at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara and the Education Department of the University of Chicago in the early 1970s. The participants included Robert Hutchins, Harry Ashmore, Ralph Tyler, Harold Dunkel, Wayne Booth, and Karl Weintraub. They addressed three questions; "what is the public interest, in what ways it falls short in this, our time, and how can the public school contribute to its health."

Many of the manuscripts found here show the development of Schwab’s thinking on the teaching of science as enquiry and the structure of the disciplines. Others elaborate his idea of discussion and its educative function. Still others show Schwab turning to many areas that he never addressed in print, such as emotions, music, and information processing.

The plans for a book entitled Construction of Curriculums are also noteworthy. They follow the direction of Schwab’s thinking in his articles entitled, "The Practical." He planned a sustained critique of then-current formulations of objectives and aimed toward "a new pattern for thinking about investigating curriculum and making decisions about curriculum alternatives."
The few records in the collection that document Schwab’s work on the behalf of Jewish education at the Melton Research Center and elsewhere are notable because he kept this side of his professional life so well guarded that many of his colleagues knew very little about it. Included in the committee work subseries are a letter, memoranda and transcripts of conversations concerning the teaching of education in Israel, and together with teaching materials are notes outlining part of Schwab’s involvement with Camp Ramah.

Related Resources
The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html

Additional materials concerning Joseph J. Schwab and his work can be found in the following collections; Robert M. Hutchins Papers; Robert M. Hutchins and Associates, Oral History Interviews; Richard McKeon Papers; John U. Nef, Jr. Papers; John A. Simpson Papers; Ralph W. Tyler Papers; Committee on Social Thought Records; Dean of the College Records; Dean of Students Records; Harper College Center Rededication Records ("Back Talk from Abroad," November 19, 1973, reel tape); Oral History Collection (Interviews with Joseph Schwab, April 6-8, 1987, and Harold B. Dunkel, November 1987-June 1989); Presidents' Papers; Board of Trustees Minutes

Subject Headings
- Schwab, Joseph Jackson, 1909-
- Curriculum planning
- Science -- Study and teaching
- Educators

INVENTORY

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"On Reviving Liberal Education in the 1970s," draft and notes, 1975

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"Freedom and Scope of Liberal Education," typescript, 1976
• "Freedom and Scope of Liberal Education", Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, discussion paper, March 10, 1976
• "Freedom and Scope of Liberal Education", corrected copy, March 10, 1976
• "Freedom and Scope of Liberal Education", March 31, 1977
• "Schema of Possible Liberal-General Curriculums," first draft, August 1975
• "Liberal Arts for Now," n.d.
• Letter from Decker [Walker?], n.d.
• Untitled speech, ca. 1970s
- "Some Reasons Why Liberal Education is Complex," supplement to "Freedom and Scope of Liberal Education," drafts, ca. 1976

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"Education and the State; Learning Community," Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, paper, corrected copy, December, 1975

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"Education and the State; Learning Community," short form

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"What Drives the Schools?" paper for National Institute of Education curriculum development task force, November 3, 1976
- Letter from Jon Schaffarzick, task force chairman, November 23, 1976

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"Ends and Beginnings," corrected copies, 1979

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Remarks at a Rockefeller Foundation conference, September 28, 1978
- Unpublished manuscripts and research notes

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"A Least-Doctrinal Frame for Cross-Cultural Study of Personal Relations," corrected draft, 1959
- "The Enquiring Curriculum I; Case History," corrected draft, n.d.
- "Examining Knowledge as a Subject or Truth to Be Taught," notes, n.d.

Box 3
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"The Behavioral Sciences and a Philosophy of Education," corrected draft, ca. 1960
- "The Behavioral Sciences and a Christian College," corrected draft, ca. 1960
Concerning possible investigations under the heading of enquiry, extended letter/note, ca. early 1960s

Box 3
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"Education and the Structure of the Disciplines, Part One and Part Two," corrected draft, June and September 1961

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"The Teaching of Science as Enquiry," part II, corrected text and table of contents, ca. 1961

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"Part I. The Revisionary Character of Science," introduction and chapter 1, corrected manuscript, ca. early 1960s

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Notes from talk about the present state of the teaching of English in U.S. high schools, January 30, 1968

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"Six Differences in Search of a Distinction," notes, ca. early 1970s

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Community; A Mission for the Schools, unpublished book typescript, August 20, 1975

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- "Considered Dialogue," drafts of paper for Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, ca. mid 1970s
- Copy of letter from Robert Hutchins, June 4, 1953

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- "On Loss, Grief and Melancholia," notes, ca. late 1970s
- Letter to Knox [Hill?], July 2, ca. late 1970s
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- Proposed curriculum book with Seymour Fox

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- "First Draft of Book Proposal," ca. early 1970s
- "Proposed Research," ca. early 1970s
- "Projected Outline of Curriculum Book," corrected copy, ca. early 1970s
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- "Background Work to the Project Planned," ca. 1971
- "A Brief (and Confidential) Statement of My Interests," February 1972

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- "Fox 7/24," notes
- "Schwab Notes," n.d.
- Transcripts of conversations with Seymour Fox, August 1970
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- "Practical 3; Common Places," note, ca. 1971-1972
- "Commonplaces," notes, ca. 1971-1972
- "Practical Legitimation of Curriculums," corrected copy, June 9, 1971
- "Definition of the Problem," proposal, pages 1-2, author unidentified, ca. 1971
- "An Excerpt from Practical 2," corrected copy, ca. 1971
- "The Field of Curriculum and Instruction; A Proposal," ca. 1971

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Notes, ca. 1971

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- Memo to Mr. Bormuth, July 23, 1969
- Proposal to Arthur Wise, October 7, 1970
- Letter to Michael Connelly from David C. Thomas, May 11, 1971, copied to Schwab
- Letter from John Gallum, May 19, 1971
- Letter from Edwin M. Bridges, October 29, 1970
- Letter to Elliot Eisner, May 7, 1973
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- Articles and background materials
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- "Dictation by Professor Schwab," corrected copy, August 14, 1967
- Letter to Israel Sheffler from Seymour Fox, April 9, 1970
- "Memorandum; The Establishment of an Educational Policy Center," ca. 1970
- "Memorandum for the Establishment of an Experimental College," ca. 1970
- "Tape No. 19 (5458-35)," transcription of conversation between Schwab and Fox, ca. early 1970s

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- "Memorandum; Summary of October 13 Meeting," Department of Education committee minutes, n.d.
- "Introduction," regarding conceptions of general curriculum and instruction, notes/summary, n.d.
• Schwab-McKeon Committee Proposal for the Establishment of a New College of General Education at the University of California, Berkeley, preliminary draft, April 24, 1972
• "Proposal for a New College," by Marc Cogan, copy, ca. 1972
• Writings by colleagues

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• Thomas W. Roby, "A Rhetoric of Questions for Teaching Philosophy," October 6, 1979
• Letters from Richard G. Townsend, June 23, 1980, March 18, 1981
• Richard G. Townsend, "One Way to Train for the Problems of Administrators," 1981
• Joel Lehrfield, "The Liberal Education of Teachers; Four Models and a Deweyan Synthesis," dissertation abstract, n.d.

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• Lawrence Kohlberg, "The Development of Children's Orientations Toward a Moral Order," 1963

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• "The Schools' Responsibility for Moral Education," Phi Delta Kappan, October 1964
• R.S. Peters, "The Concept of Character," 1967
• "Chapter 1; A Preliminary Concept of Morality and the Purpose of the Research," n.d.
• Harvey Wheeler, "Innovation in Higher Education," n.d.
• Edward W. Weidner, "Environmental Education; Implications for Institutional Structure," April 1971

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Human Organization, 34 (Summer 1975), annotated copy

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   • Annotations of texts; Galen, On the Natural Faculties; Hippocrates, Selected Works; Huygens, Treatise on Light
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   Observation, Interpretation, and Integration, quarterly exams, readings, Steering Committee reports, 1942-1951
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   Observation, Interpretation, and Integration, quarterly exams, readings, Steering Committee reports, History of the Organization of Sciences, Part I, readings, September 1943
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Observation, Interpretation, and Integration, quarterly exams, readings, Steering Committee reports, notes, ca. 1940s

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Observation, Interpretation, and Integration, quarterly exams, readings, Steering Committee reports, comprehensive exams, syllabi, 1944-1946

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Organization, Methods, and Principles of Knowledge, syllabi, quarter and final exams, 1952-1956

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"Philosophy of Science," manuscript, n.d.

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Camp Ramah papers, notes, discussion transcripts, manuscripts, 1961-1962

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• Social Foundations of Education, Artificial Intelligence, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1974
• Remarks to prospective teachers, n.d.

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Seminar on Information Processing, Institute for Research in Teaching, Michigan State University, notes, readings, 1976-1977

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Series IV: Miscellaneous

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Address lists, ca. 1970-1980s

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"Distinguished Contribution to Curriculum Award," American Education Research Association, 1982
Name plate, Center for the Advanced Study of Behavioral Sciences, 1958-1959

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Photographs of unidentified colleagues (23)

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"Synod staff training," psychoanalysis therapy session, patient and therapist unidentified, November 29, 1983
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Unidentified "Stenorette" dictation reel tapes

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Tape 8
"Jencks, Schools and What They Ought To Do," lecture by Joseph Schwab, 29 July 1977

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Tape 9