

Final Exam
Intro to Curriculum, Methods, and Assessment
by John Berner

The democracy of education means that the educational system will always be in crisis, and will always be debated to best suit the needs of the American people. Different people have different opinions of how the educational system ought to be run. We look back at the contributions of our intellectual elite to forecast the outcomes of some of our present day decisions, because some of our present day issues are just revisits of educational eras in the past. Diane Ravitch analyzes the last 100 years of educational history, pointing out how we have failed in education. Regardless of Ravitch's purpose, teachers and school boards can use her study to make our future education better. John Dewey was a progressive psychologist who felt that students were not educated properly, and that science experimentation was the key to knowing what the proper methods were. His rival would have been William T. Harris, a conservative who believed that traditional academic subjects were the foundation of a liberal education.

John Dewey states that every generation of human beings starts out as primitive as all the generations before, but having more knowledge to acquire and carry in the same life span. The amounts of knowledge we possess keeps building up. Throughout history different knowledge is passed on through different people, making us all different individuals with different characteristics.

Our following generations need to understand how knowledge has been obtained, and must know how to gain knowledge for itself. The more evolved we become, the greater the loss of knowledge there will be, should there ever be a disruption in the existence of those that have carried knowledge, but not yet passed it on.

Training is the changing of habits by controlling natural stimuli. Education is the changing of emotional dispositions of behavior. Training could be viewed as responses to pain or pleasure. Education could be viewed as failure or success.

We as teachers need to control learning environment to fit the needs of our students, because the environment is where students gain education.

Environment, people, and experiences affect the direction of a student. As teachers, we have the power to make serious changes in the dispositions of students, changing the direction of their life forever. The way we control students can either have positive and negative results, so we have to be aware of conscious and unconscious control techniques so that we most effectively encourage and challenge our students to succeed. We will always be changing our methods of control, because different students will come from different backgrounds, with different life experiences.

We as teachers need to be creative and constructive in a learning environment. We need to find ways to use students' wants and needs to guide them rather than by brute force. Force should only be used in order to keep a student from hurting his/herself and/or others, because in a situation such as that, students are most likely engaged in activity they are not fully capable of understanding. Use of control is something that we believe takes practice and constant awareness as we learn ourselves.

Students need to find a drive within themselves or personal goals that shape their behavior. Education is the attachment of meaning of an idea or concept to the students' lives. They need to own the knowledge that they can find useful some day.

Attitude, attention, belonging are other factors that reinforce a student's willingness to learn. Some students imitate the actions of another, because they see a quality or value in another person that really inspires them to be the same. This is an advantage to a teacher. Within reason, a teacher can encourage students to be just like him/her by doing something interesting that they have never done before. A teacher should be careful as to how he/she approaches students who copy too much because the students will get turned away by the loss of connection they found to have positive energy. A teacher should encourage them to become better and take the risk to venture off a little. Immaturity is taken in a negative way to a student, but is actually a positive word because it means that one has promise and capabilities.

Training is the physical reactions to the environment that don't involve reasoning. Education is the processing, reasoning, and decision making associated to the outcome of one's actions or a series of events; in other words, making use of a situation so that it can be applied at a later time. Bad habits form from the lack of reasoning involved with an action.

If students were completely dependent and helpless, they will never grow. Students have the capabilities of learning and discovering themselves. Our job is guidance and support. We are there to take control of unforeseen consequences. We are there to show students how to learn for themselves, to show them tricks, and introduce activities that are meaningful and useful.

We are all born with unique natural abilities, personal strengths that show their true colors spontaneously at a young age. It would not be an affective contribution to society to educate a student in an environment where he/she can't develop their own natural abilities. It's not worth cutting a nation's strengths in order to bring everyone to an equal intelligence. Parents often make the mistake of trying to redirect their child to an end in which serves their purpose, possibly cutting the chances of that child becoming famous for what he/she does best.

Interest symbolizes the attitude of a student. A teacher is put in a position that will either cause a student to lose or gain interest of subject material based on how a teacher presents it. If a student is interested in the material being taught, he/she will discipline themselves so that a desirable goal is met. Punishment is not an affective way to discipline a student, because he/she will view themselves as an attempted failure, never making connections between the content material and the benefits it offers later down the line.

As we come together to discuss the theories and philosophies of education, we are able to share and build on perceptions based off of our own different background experiences and histories told. Social sympathies develop our thinking beyond our direct interests. We agree that we wouldn't have any strength to our theories unless we have experiences to draw from. The value of our group experience is a result of connections or continuities that we generate from the past experiences we and the authors of these books have had. We wouldn't be in school aspiring to be teachers if we spent most of our lives in repetitive disciplinary transmission of knowledge, because it is the experiences, connections, and creative possible strategies that drive us to learn and teach.

Experiences involve the connection between doing and trying something which results in consequence. Thinking is the accurate and deliberate instituting of connections between what is done and its consequences. Thinking is organized into several parts: the

stimulus to thinking is found when we determine the situation, anticipation of consequences is deciding if a situation could be fact or indeterminate, the projection of consequences is the proposed or tentative solution, reasoning is existing conditions that have to be carefully scrutinized and the implications of the hypothesis developed, suggested solutions are ideas or theories which have to be tested, and determinate changes are accepted as valid.

Thinking includes all these steps: sensing the problem, observing the conditions, forming and elaborating a suggested conclusion, and active experimental testing. Experience and thinking are intertwined. We think about experiences, and experiences occur because of reflections we do on resulting consequences.

As related to other courses, experience is a hands-on learning that expedites minds-on learning. Kinesthetic and special learning is the result of making physical connections to the senses. Without bodily interaction to soak up information, very few relations put meaning to words that are learned. What can be noticed is that children are constantly learning through their actions. We see uncontrollable bodily action among students, especially when curiosity and excitement well up. As teachers, we should channel their energies toward guiding active bodily behavior into constructive planning and execution rather than unproductive negative suppression. Children act out when they are not so engaged with what is going on. If teachers spend all their time and energy suppressing bodily activities which take the mind away from its focus, it will cause a loss of meaning to any intellectual material presented.

Although we talked about turning bodily behavior into learning experiences, we are also implying the use of methods to control an environment. Students need a challenging environment, but they also don't need to be overwhelmed. As Dewey says, "a large part of the art of instruction lies in making difficulty of new problems large enough to challenge thought, and small enough so that there be familiar spots from which helpful suggestions may spring."

We have found that teachers are not only needed to provide information but to help make connections through experiences and other applications. Relating students to facts, data, knowledge already acquired, suggestions, inferences, conjectured meanings, suppositions, and tentative explanations will help them understand new concepts and

make new connections. The more connections a student makes, the higher the ability he/she will be able to solve their own problems in the future. From other courses it is determined that this is the practice of constructivism vs. transmission.

Students need to know that they have unique abilities that have a use in a world that can't begin to fit in a classroom. Value of experience is knowledge. The making of connections to other applications allows one's ideas to grow. They need to know that they are capable of taking their knowledge and talents with them when they leave school so that they can better themselves in a work, home, study, lab, or play environment. The best way for students to learn is for teachers to develop constructive methods that open up a student's needs for experience and connection.

Method is the way a teacher develops the subject matter most effectively. It takes observation of experiences where there is no distinction of personal attitude and manner from material dealt with. Good method is straightforwardness, flexible intellectual interest or open-minded will to learn, integrity of purpose, and acceptance of responsibility for the consequences of one's activity including thought.

The problems that can occur by isolating method from subject matter in education are the neglect of concrete situations of experience, the notion of methods isolated from subject matter is responsible for the false conceptions of discipline and interest, the act of learning is made a direct and conscious end in itself, and that method tends to be reduced to a cut and dried routine, to following mechanically prescribed steps.

There can be no discovery of a method without cases to be studied, because the method is derived from observation of what actually happens, with a view to seeing that it happen better next time. Methods that are authoritatively recommended to teachers have a mechanical uniformity where flexible personal experiences are promoted by providing an environment which calls out directed occupations in work and play, the methods ascertained will vary with individuals- for it is certain that each individual has something characteristic in his way of going at things. When the effective way of managing material is treated as something ready-made apart from material, there are just three possible ways in which to establish a relationship lacking by assumption. Utilize excitement, shock of pleasure, tickling the palate. Make the consequences of not attending painful; use the menace of harm to motivate concern with the alien subject

matter. Under normal conditions, learning is a product and reward occupation with subject matter. Learning comes from the process of engagement in activity. Students are not to be seduced unaware, rather occupied with lessons for real reasons or ends, and not just as something to be learned- this is accomplished whenever the pupil perceives the place occupied by the subject matter in the fulfilling of some experience. There is also not one fixed method to follow

Subject matter consists of the facts observed, recalled, read, and talked about, and the ideas suggested, in course of a development of a situation having a purpose. Informal education is social intercourse; necessity of a social environment to give meaning to the habits formed. When engaged in the direct act of teaching, the teacher's attention should be on the attitude and response of the pupil or the teacher should be occupied not with the subject matter in itself but in its interaction with the pupils' present needs and capacities. Social life is past collective experience.

We as teachers need to carefully select, formulate, and organize subject matter that is to be transmitted to the next generation. A point we need to keep in mind is that the more primitive stages of our life require less adaptation to generation changes as do later stages. Adaptation and communication with others of larger experience is maintained when the young begin with active occupations having a social origin and use, and proceed to a scientific insight in the materials and laws involved.

It is the purpose of the school to set up an environment in which play, work, and the facilitation of mental and moral growth are conducted, because an educational result is the by-product of play and work in out-of-school conditions. The educator needs to engage students so that manual skill, technical efficiency, satisfaction, and preparation for later usefulness are subordinated to education. Only by starting with crude material and subjecting it to purposeful handling will a student gain the intelligence embodied in finished material. Students need human purpose and real the knowledge. Skill and information about materials, tools, and laws of energy are acquired while activities are carried on for their own means. The fact that they are socially representative gives a quality to the skill and knowledge gained, which makes them transferable to out-of-school situations. The defining characteristic of play is not amusement nor aimlessness, but the fact that the aim is thought of as more activity in the same line. Activities as they

grow more complicated gain added meaning by greater attention to specific results achieved, and then they pass gradually into work. Both are equally free and intrinsically motivated, apart from false economic conditions which tend to make play into idle excitement for the well to do, and work into uncongenial labor for the poor. Work becomes constrained labor when the consequences are outside of the activity as an end to which activity is merely a means. Work which remains permeated with the play attitude is art.

The development of curriculum throughout history has been an ongoing struggle of what subjects to include and how the subjects have any importance in the development of a pupil.

Dewey's most important subjects were psychology and science, especially because he was a psychologist who used science to explain and identify the behaviors of human development. Science represents the development of the cognitive factors in experience. It focuses on the revealing of sources, grounds, and consequences of a belief when not just stated in a series of factual terms. Science is the heart of general social progress.

Americans and immigrants were worried about the quality of their schools in the early 20th century and had put their trust in the hands of a few intellectual elite who were so obsessed with their own intellectual theories that it actually did the American schools an injustice. Our history in education has consisted of generations of reformers engaged in social change of innovation, industrial education, intelligence testing, curricular change, and life-adjustments.

The injustices of our schools have been a result of three misconceptions. The first is the belief that the schools can solve any social or political problem. The second is the belief that only a portion of youngsters are capable of benefiting from a high-quality education. The third is that imparting knowledge is relatively unimportant, compared to engaging students in activities and experiences.

G. Stanley Hall declared before the National Education Association that teachers should strive to keep out of nature's way. Students should be free of stress and strain. Every student deserves an equal opportunity to learn every subject the same way. Students need to get past the alphabet, multiplication tables, and grammar. All students

have the capacity to learn and they all are equally deserving of a solid liberal arts education.

Eliot opposed uniformity in education, and realized that children are different. He stated that subject matter was not important; rather, it was mental power, the power to think, reason, observe, and describe.

Thorndike began the mental testing movement, which facilitated children into academic and vocational curriculum tracks. The problem with his methods was that children were separated in social classes.

The elitist-progressive hostility to such core academic subjects as history, literature, algebra, and chemistry clashed with the desire of immigrant parents for their children to have a solid grounding in English and the American heritage. The intellectual heirs of Rousseau sought instead to impose a system of social efficiency whereby children would be sorted at an early age into useful occupations. They created industrial schools for children as young as 12 and junior high schools for the specific purpose of tracking children toward predetermined vocations.

Progressives seek to push aside classical disciplines in favor of attitudes, real-world concerns, and a niche in a government-managed workforce. Rousseau and John Dewey influenced the development of education on the goals that education might become a science and that the methods and ends of education could be measured with precision and determined scientifically (the basis of the mental testing movement,) that the methods and ends of education could be derived from the innate needs and nature of the child (the basis of the child-centered movement,) that the methods and ends of education could be determined by assessing the needs of society and then fitting children for their role in society (the basis of the social efficiency movement,) and that the methods and ends of education could be changed in ways that would reform society. Proponents of this idea expected that the schools could change the social order, either by freeing children's creative spirit or conversely by indoctrinating them for life in a planned society (the first part was the faith of the child-centered movement and the second was the basis of the social reconstruction movement).

Progressive educators did not believe that the study of subjects such as algebra, chemistry, literature, and foreign languages was appropriate except for a small few. They

valued training in how to teach subject matter. They believed that the role of teachers was not to make rigorous academic demands of students.

John Dewey and his followers disdained subject matter and focused instead on the process of learning, emphasizing the child's own interests, experiences, activities, and adjustment to society. Many progressives were also elitists, as the word is pejoratively used nowadays; it is they who felt that only college-bound students should receive academic preparation, while the rest should be tracked into commercial and vocational curriculum. This haunts education in times of racism, because society rigs the system to categorize students into groups of college bound and working class.

Readings

- Week 1- Democracy of Education- Chapters 1 and 2
- Week 2- Democracy of Education- Chapters 3 and 4
- Week 3- Democracy of Education- Chapters 5 and 6
- Week 4- Democracy of Education- Chapters 7 and 8
 - Left Back- Chapters 1, 2, 3
- Week 5- Democracy of Education- Chapters 9 and 10
 - Left Back- Chapters 4
- Week 6- Democracy of Education- Chapters 11 and 12
- Week 7- Democracy of Education- Chapters 13 and 14
- Week 8- Democracy of Education- Chapters 15 and 16
- Week 9- Democracy of Education- Chapters 17, 18, 19, 20
- Week 10- Left Back- 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
- Week 11- Democracy of Education- Chapters 21 and 22
- Week 12- Democracy of Education- Chapters 23, 24,
- Week 13-
- Week 14- Democracy of Education- Chapters 25, 26