

# Modern Educational Philosophies

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## Abstract

A Christian school, to be truly Christian, must be established on the foundation of God Himself, the Creator, who has made Himself known through an authoritative and trustworthy Bible, and of Jesus Christ, His Son, the Savior of the world. Within this framework, how-ever, Christian schools differ from one another, and even from course to course or teacher to teacher which often reflects denominational distinctive, and in educational methodology. Education is a blending of ideas, a balanced tension between academic content, the student as a person, and social behavior; between stress on the mind and ideas, on nature, and on personal relationships. Each school and class has a slightly different blend. Everything we do in schools, and the way we do it, reflects an educational point of view, and Christian can disagree on these.

*Keywords: modern, educational philosophies, Christian school*

## Introduction

Dramatic change came to the academic world with the emergence of the social and behavioral sciences in the nineteenth century. Auguste Comte (1798-1857) argued that the study of human beings as social creatures must reject the influences of religion and metaphysics and become a division of science. Social Behavior, he emphasized, is not determined by mystical forces or philosophical theories but by the laws of nature and should be observed and brought under control through the scientific method.

Comte's naturalistic approach was well received. What had once been social studies, with little formal academic status, became the social sciences, with the task of improving the human species. As a result, among 1890 and 1940, many new scientific disciplines were established in American colleges and the departments of sociology, anthropology, political science, and, interestingly for us, education (Kaminsky 1993).

At the end of the nineteenth century naturalism the belief that the natural world is the only and ultimate reality dominated the intellectual world and was moving from academia into every day life. Christianity, for example, was infiltrated by modernism, a naturalistic theology that denied supernatural elements such as the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, and took control of denominational colleges and seminaries.

During the same period, the common or public school movement came into existence. Ostensibly Christian and Protestant, public education was deliberately constructed with an antisupernatural bias. Grace Mann and its other architects, many with ties to Unitarian and universalist traditions, excluded miraculous elements of the Bible from the schools and in the guise of unity substituted a homogeneous and secularized liberal Christianity. Selected Bible readings and the Lord's Prayer started the day but the divinity of Christ, His incarnation, atoning work, and resurrection were excluded as "sectarian" (then 1988). This process of secularization gradually replaced the basis of Christian truth that had been a traditional part of the schools, so that when prayer and the Bible were banished in 1963, the last leaves fell from a barren tree.

## Discussion

Progressive reformers, concerned about the impact of industrialization, and massive immigration, looked to the social sciences to solve societal problems. One of these reformers is John Dewey, a professor of philosophy at the University of Chicago. Born the year Charles Darwin published his *Origin of the Species* (1859), Dewey was a child of his times. He believed in reliance on the "experiential method in the sciences [and] evolutionary ideas in the biological sciences" (Dewey 1944) and was an advocate of pragmatism (although he preferred the more scholarly term instrumentalism), naturalistic philosophy with a distinctly American flavor. Pragmatism accepts "what works" (pragmatic is the Greek word for "what is practical"), and nothing else, as a definition of truth.

Dewey, who became involved in education at the close of the nineteenth century when naturalism and social reform were at their height and public education was approaching maturity, brought the three ideas together. He was committed to

naturalism supported the progressive agenda, and believed that public education offered an open door to social progress and reform.

Dewey's obvious immediate influence was on classroom methods, but his philosophical base was more significant. He rejects religion based on revelation, and he is stern in his rejection of God, the Bible, or anything that goes beyond the natural world. Religious values which he thinks are useful only if they arise from nature and are not attached to the existence of God or divine revelation; "Supernaturalism hinders" human progress (Dewey 1964, 80).

## **Pragmatism's Methodology**

To determine "what works" at school, Dewey established the School Laboratory at the University of Chicago, where the aim was to transform students from theory goers into participants in the learning process (Dewey 1944, 124-25). Teaching in School Laboratories began with interest students, provide projects that integrate skills and academic content into cooperative experience. Students worked together to make decisions and solve problems in situations comparable to life outside the classroom. Although Dewey was committed to the scientific method, in practice he was intuitive, basing his "educational programmed upon personal inspiration and shrewd hunches rather than upon rigorous scientific analysis of the evidence" (Mc Clellan 1983, 180). His ideas are not new, The point is that he rediscovered and revived the methods used by Jesus Christ, Old Testament prophets Martin Luther, John Amos Comenius, and other teachers who started out intimate; captured interests using verbal and visual images, and provide interactive experiences.

Dewey's Laboratory School is successful, but it has many advantages: small class of student body of choice, highly motivated teacher, low teacher-student ratio, abundant resources, and the joy of being part of something special. It is not surprising that the success of the Laboratory School proved difficult to duplicate in the broader arena of public education. This difficulty was partly due to the conservative nature of educators, school boards, and publishers but also crowded classrooms and heavy teaching loads. Most teachers lacked the time, energy, and ability to prepare and apply life experiences that integrate academic skills and subject matter in a satisfactory way

## **Dewey and Progressive Education**

John Dewey's idea invigorated public education, but they evolved into and became associated with "progressive education. " The term "progressive" captured the excitement and adventure of social reform and became banked to the romantic naturalism idealize by Jean Jacques Rousseau in his educational novel *Emile*. Belief in children's natural kindness and wisdom results in reduced adult restraint and discipline in the classroom. Eventually, progressive education became a pejorative synonym for schooling that catered to the whims of students, majored on trivial life adjustment themes and left students deprived of the basics.

## **Existentialism and the Humanistic Curriculum**

The countercultural revolution of the 1960s was marked by Vietnam war protest **hippies** and beatniks neo-Marxism, marijuana and LSD, and an epidemic of rebellion against authority. Christian Defender Francis Schaeffer believes that the revolution is partly a reaction of the new generation to the two materialistic values of the prosperity of parents and their personal security and the emptiness and despair produced by inevitable values. Schaeffer thought their analysis of the problem was accurate but not their solutions: individual autonomy, New Left politics drugs and truth determined existentially by "how I see it" (1976,105-110).

Existentialism teaches that truth is subjective, originates ("exists") in individual experiences. There are seeds of this idea in Plato's doctrine of reminiscence (see chapter 2) that the meaning of things is somehow within us and can be retrieved intuitively. Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), a Danish Christian and philosopher, had a similar emphasis on the inner person. He attacked "dead" Christianity for limiting faith to mental assent to beliefs and conformity to prescribed practices. He believed that the only way to get to know God is through intense inner experience, a personal "leap of faith"

A secularized and pessimistic existentialism became popular after World War I. The mood in Europe had turned from confidence in human kind to a pessimism born in the senseless slaughter of the war (10 million dead) and nurtured by a growing sense of the hopelessness inherent in a naturalistic philosophy Jean Paul Sartre argues persuasively that if there is no God, humans are meaningless. The only suggestion is to live as if life has meaning. Karl Barth, the Swiss theologian, was more optimistic. He believed that the Christian faith and the Bible, while not true in themselves, could become true through our receiving and perceiving them.

## Reconstructionists

Long before the post-World War II protests against progressive education, the rebellion boiled over in the ranks of professional educators, not because the movement had gone too far but because it wasn't far enough yet. Critics have become impatient with the tendency of progressive education to support and maintain the status quo, especially in terms of social and economic injustice.

A Christian school, to be truly Christian, must be established on the basis of God himself, the Creator, who has made himself known through the authoritative and trustworthy Bible, and Jesus Christ, his Son, the Savior of the world. Within this framework, however, Christian schools differ from one another, and even from course to course or teacher within a school. There is room for differences, both in our understanding of biblical teachings, which often reflect denominational distinctive, and in educational methodology, where differences between the schools are similar to those in the systems we have discussed.

Some schools emphasize classical academics, while others stress nurturing children or reaching a lost world for Christ. Some concentrate on science and mathematics, others on the development of the mind, the arts, or communal body life. In some the teacher has little input, relying primarily on the curriculum, while in others the teacher is central, both as a model and as an organizer and presenter of material. Within the schools there are also differences, depending on the subject and the personality and gifts of the teacher. Biology focuses on nature, literature on the mind and the imagination, and history on social and political issues; but biology, literature, and history will be taught differently depending on the teacher and the curriculum ( Pazminp 1988, 111-13)

Education is a blending of ideas, balanced tension between academic content, students as a person, and social behavior, between stress on thoughts and ideas, on nature, and on personal relationships

## Conclusions

Humanistic curriculum is an extreme form of progressive emphasis on child-centered education. The focus was on the individual child and how she or he saw things; on “getting in touch with your feelings,” “finding yourself,” and “doing your own thing. “the humanistic curriculum did not last long, partly because of general alarm set falling test scores, but it left a generation of students with a poor foundation in reading, grammar, and mathematics. A less obvious but more lasting result is the reinforcement it gave to subjectivism, an existential methodology that bases truth and morality on personal preference.

Even though the humanistic curriculum does a lot of damage, it reminds educators that students must be treated as individuals and not as objects.

In this paper, the writer would like to emphasize that based on the observation he did, and comparing to educational above, it is very important to improve and design the curriculum of Indonesia for the purpose of improving the quality of national education.

Based on the writer's observation that every curriculum changing was certainly had reasonable purpose and the termination of all was improvable content.

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