

EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL THEORISTS: *Implications of their ideas for American education*

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European Educational Theorists: Implications of Their Ideas for American Education

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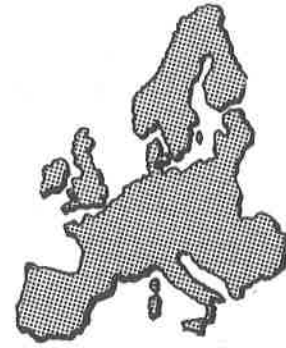
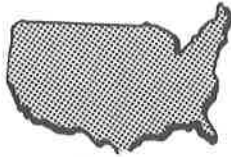
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Editorial

By Byron F. Radebaugh

American educators and citizens are on the threshold of thinking through anew the definition of education, its purposes, its standards of excellence, the role of lifelong learning, teachers and teaching, community involvement, its role in changing or transforming society, and the organizational and leadership dimensions of the system. American education, like other institutions, is facing major change. Some call it a "crisis." Toffler has called it the "Third Wave"; Naisbitt refers to it as a transformation from an "Industrial Society" to an "Information Society." Externally, the schools are a focal point in the political arena; internally, educators are proposing reforms of curriculum methodology, content, and evaluation. Increasing class size, decreasing governmental funding, a seeming dissatisfaction toward the nation's school systems in general by some critics, all serve to perplex and challenge the modern educator and thoughtful citizen. Several blue-ribbon commissions on education have issued reports on what can be done about these issues and problems, creating turbulent debate and controversy.

The editor of this issue of *THRESHOLDS* is convinced that some of the ideas of Plato, Locke, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Montessori, Heidegger, Russell, and other major European educational theorists, may be helpful to us in this undertaking. To this end, the contributors to this issue were invited to share with our readers their answers/insights to the following questions:

According to your understanding of the thought of --- (European Theorist)

1. What should be the major purposes and goals for public democratic education in the United States at this time in history? How do we decide? Who decides?
2. Should public schools have minimum standards? If so, what should they be? Who decides?
3. Whose values are or should be promoted in the public schools either explicitly or implicitly through curricula, written materials, structure, etc.? Are these values conducive to meeting the challenges of a democratic society in a global context?

In essence, our contributors were asked to share with us their knowledge of the educational thought of seven European educational theorists and speculate on how that theorist would answer the questions posed above. We think you will find their ideas stimulating, insightful, and reflective.

In the first essay, E.W. Van Steenburgh takes us back to the beginnings of democracy in "Plato on the Goals of 'Democratic' Education."

The essays by Gay E. Bruhn, David E. Holt, Theresa Wilkie, Richard W. Smelter, William H. Bruening and Mickey R. Hellyer provide the insights and answers of John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Johan Heinrich Pestalozzi, Marie Montessori, Martin Heidegger, and Bertrand Russell, respectively.

The final essay by Byron F. Radebaugh summarizes the answers and insights provided by the contributors and adds some of his own.



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Plato on the Goals of "Democratic" Education

By E.W. Van Steenburgh

The concept of public democratic education is often thought to be foreign to Plato's philosophy of education, because democracy in education, or in anything else, in Plato's view, substitutes the opinions of the many for knowledge by the few. Knowledge is a difficult achievement, reserved for the few who persevere in the development of their talent. It is beyond the powers of the many to achieve, because talent and/or perseverance are statistically exceptional.

Is Plato right? If we think of knowledge as being well-informed, then, of course, he is not right. For Americans are knowledgeable, in the sense of being well-informed, by any standard, including a standard Plato, himself, would acknowledge. He does not think being knowledgeable about matters of fact, even technical matters of fact confined to a few scientists, counts as knowledge. Why not? Nature, he holds, is continuously moving on. Nothing natural stands fast long enough to be bagged by a truth-hunting technician or fact-hungry layman. Information about the heavens and the earth, although more or less reliable, is not absolutely reliable. The best we can hope for is the degree of reliability found in Weather Bureau predictions, or in Treasury Department economic forecasts. They are off the mark, sometimes by a wide margin, not because technicians still have much to find out, but because nature is moving on while they are reporting their information. "You cannot step into the same river twice."

Knowledge for Plato is knowledge of standards. One can know, e.g., the Pythagorean theorem as a truth of pure geometry. On an engineering project, say, building a bridge, the theorem is only approximated to. The area of the square on the hypotenuse of a triangle cannot be exactly equal to the sum of the areas of the squares on the other two sides. No matter how carefully one measures, equality never is achieved. This is not necessarily due to carelessness. Rather, all but norms are in flux. Applied geometric knowledge is a contradiction in terms. Knowledge is of the unchanging, absolutely reliable norm or standard--in this case, the Pythagorean theorem. Given this knowledge, one can, of course, appraise the bridge builder's workmanship. But the point here is that the best workman cannot achieve 'the truth'--exact equality. Nature is building up and breaking down. Knowledge--'the truth'--is impossible. Curiously, the very thing Plato calls knowledge--knowing mathematical norms--some people today do not think amounts to knowledge, because pure mathematics is non-informative. It tells us nothing of nature. The modern mind downgrades the norm or standard--it is not an object of



PLATO (428-348 B.C.)

knowledge--and upgrades matter of fact information to the privileged status of knowledge.

What about non-mathematical norms, specifically, moral and political norms? Here, too, Plato thinks there are norms. In contrast, people today think there are no such norms, and, hence, moral and political knowledge of them is impossible. The most one can have, in the modern view, is information about people's changing desires, feelings, preferences. Again, in the moral and political spheres, psychological information--changing fact--is upgraded to the status of knowledge.

Thus, people today opt for a philosophy of de facto changing tastes. Sentiment prevails and the prevailing sentiment is that tastes are relative and subjective. "Anything goes," provided one can pull it off with impunity. In education, curriculum is student-centered, and, where students do not perform, even on a curriculum catering to their tastes, their performances are not comparatively better or worse. They merely de facto 'differ.' All are 'passed,' or, more accurately, 'passed on.'

To the modern mind, preferences cannot be rationally assessed, such that one preference can be said to be truly better than another. Preferences just are, and, sometimes they clash. Mediators--in education, mentors--have the duty of resolving conflicts, not by appeal to standards,

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relative to which one is 'truly' better than another, but by trying, as best they can, to satisfy everyone. For there are no standards, by reference to which truth or falsity can obtain.

The assumption underlying mediation in education is that preferences, even conflicting preferences, merely de facto differ. One is not better than another. Plato thinks this underlying assumption is false. Why? Preferring something does not make that thing good, because preference is not itself good, or, for that matter, bad. Preferences are denizens in a world of flux. Rather, a preference is made good by the addition of knowledge, just as a workman's bridge is made good by his knowledge of (among other things) the Pythagorean theorem. Knowledge of what? Of moral and political standards.

Is Plato right in rejecting the dictum, "In matters of taste there is no dispute?" Are there standards, knowledge of which, in turn yields knowledge of better and worse in respect to preferences and conduct?

We can begin answering this question by asking whether or not the modern mind gets along without standards? Obviously not. For certain kinds of standards are ubiquitous. 'Grade A Fancy' denotes a standard familiar to orchardists. Exhaust emission standards are as well known in the auto industry as the catalytic converter. To say that these and other standards do not exist flies in the face of everyday experience and practice. The standards in question, however, are standards 'set' by people empowered to exercise their preferences. They just are de facto preferences, backed by power, and subject to change as power and/or preferences change. This is conventional wisdom.

It is difficult to dislodge conventional wisdom, to show that standards are not 'set,' that they are not 'personal,' that 'better' and 'worse' do not connote change from exercising a preference to following the preference of another. Inevitably, then, Plato, when he is read, is misread. In emphasizing standards he is read as requiring one to substitute someone else's preferences for one's own and no one is about to do that! For this reason, the sentiment of 'Everything goes,' although adjusted by practical consequences--the need to get a job, to be promoted, to please a teacher--is still with us. Plato is indignantly pilloried for his lack of 'democracy.' And justifiably so, if the existence of a standard depends on its being 'set,' on someone's de facto preference backed by power.

The standards, of which Plato thinks we can have knowledge, are not 'set.' Not being preferences, they do not change as, say, one's employer changes. Standards are discovered, not 'set.' Let us see why by considering an everyday example of a Platonic standard. In the *Republic* we are told that bedmakers make beds 'looking' to the ideal bed. The ideal bed is a standard, by reference to which the bedmaker selects and assembles materials for making physical beds. Undoubtedly, human interest in the ideal bed is a function of need. To sleep is human, and beds are better or worse to the extent to which, as we say, they sleep well or poorly. Thus, the interest taken in a standard for making beds relates to human nature. If humans did not sleep, no one would bother to raise the question, "What makes a bed sleep well?" In the absence of interest, the ideal bed might go undiscovered.

We must not fall into the opposite mistake. Given interest, the ideal bed still might go

undiscovered, because the bedmaker might be too easily satisfied. Among beds, some sleep better than others, depending on design, materials and workmanship. It is easy to imagine someone saying: "Whoever made this bed should be required to sleep in it." The implication is that the bedmaker fell short of the mark. And the assumption underlying 'fell short' is (a) there is a mark for him to miss, and (b) he missed it. The bedmaker thinks he has made a good bed, else he would not have produced it. However, the bedmaker's preference for this bed, evidenced by his production of it, is mistaken. It does not sleep well, or as well as it could. Here preference is present, but the ideal bed has yet to be discovered. The bedmaker is too easily satisfied. His satisfaction is a form of ignorance. He does not know the relevant standard.

"The design is terrible" does more than express a negative preference. It implies that there is a standard, whether or not known, and, compared to that standard, this design flunks. Flunking a design test, in blueprinting a bed, is no more subjective--a matter of likes and dislikes--than one circle being rounder than another. One circle is rounder than a second, if and only if something--a third circle--really is round. 'Is' here signifies a standard, a Platonic standard, without which 'rounder than' has no sense. Blueprints are not comparatively better and worse, unless something is 'the blueprint' for a bed. "This design flunks" expresses a negative preference. To the modern mind, that is all it expresses. To Plato's mind, it also expresses a truth or falsehood, depending on the nearness of the physical bed to the relevant standard.

Being ignorant of the standard for comparing the worth of beds, one is ignorantly satisfied with less than the best. "It is all a matter of taste" is the self-serving slogan of the ignorant. "Too easily satisfied" is Plato's reply.

Educational policy makers...should give top priority to the aim of self-development, where the latter is not dedication to the vague idea of each doing his or her own 'thing.' On the contrary, dedication should be to the development of talent, whether musical or mechanical, in accordance with standards that are imposed by the knowledgeable, but eventually validated by the student's own recognition of progress toward excellence.

If knowledge is impossible, because standards do not exist, then the only democratic thing to do is to implement preferences of the many, to the extent of resources, and, if they cannot be implemented all at once, then implement them serially, as resources permit. The upshot is 'headless' education--sometimes referred to as 'cafeteria' or 'smorgasbord' education. Or it is education condemned to an endless cycle of emphases, first on 'the basics,' then on 'socialization,' and then 'back to the basics.'

What, then, should be the goals or purposes of democratic public education a la Plato? First educational policy makers, whether elected or appointed, should give top priority to the aim of

self-development, where the latter is not dedication to the vague idea of each doing his or her own 'thing.' On the contrary, dedication should be to the development of talent, whether musical or mechanical, in accordance with standards that are imposed by the knowledgeable, but eventually validated by the student's own recognition of progress toward excellence. Second, top priority should be given to a system of rewards for excellence. For if talent exists primarily, even if not exclusively, by reason of an objective reward system, then to reward unobjectively--that is, without regard to the comparative 'place' of a performance in an order dictated by standards--is a freefall toward mediocrity. "Anything goes." The very idea of self-development invites a lusty guffaw.

Given an objective system of rewards, and the assumption that such a system is casually efficacious in the production of each person's talents, then, there cannot be any 'losers.' Why, then, is there currently an increasing number of 'losers' clogging the educational pipeline? The system of rewards is unobjective. It fails to bring talents into existence. Consequently, the student cannot be brought within the circle of self-development, in order that he or she can experience objective progress--which, according to Plato, is what "life is all about."

The teacher actually must exhibit the standards defining excellence in teaching, as well as in his or her speciality, and, in respect to the latter, conform student performance to them.

These two main goals cannot be achieved without someone putting them in action. In the end, they are embodied by the classroom teacher. The teacher actually must exhibit the standards defining excellence in teaching, as well as in his or her speciality, and, in respect to the latter, conform student performance to them. Classroom performance, guided by one who knows, multiplies knowledge of standards.

The long journey toward knowledge of standards, begins with 'minimum' standards for teachers. When they know standards, the answer to the question whether or not there should be minimum standards for students is obvious.

Conforming preferences and conduct to standards is not 'undemocratic.' It is not to 'sacrifice' the preferences of the many to the few who 'set' the standards. Why not? Because standards exist. They are not 'set' by someone's preferences. It follows that 'subjugation' of the preferences of students to standards is not undemocratic. It becomes undemocratic when the teacher knows no standards. Why, then, should the many students subject their preferences to the preferences of the teaching few?



John Locke and Education Today

By Gay E. Bruhn

Introduction

The Third Wave (Toffler, 1980), No Limits to Learning: Bridging the Human Gap (Botkin, Elmandjra, & Malitza, 1979), and Global Stakes: The Future of High Technology in America (Botkin, Dimancescu, Stata, & McClellan, 1984) all tell us that as a nation, a society, and a world we should be involved in major change efforts to save our world. In all these futurist works, education is singled out as a major factor in this process.



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JOHN LOCKE (1632-1704)

Two major national reports, The 15th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools (1983) and A Nation at Risk (1983), indicate an overall dissatisfaction with the American educational system and its ability to prepare individuals for their future. Our educational system provides the foundation upon which our society can build and change. As an institution, it stands on the threshold of change and, as educators and citizens, we stand there with it wondering what steps to take next. Though it is not possible to take ideas from the past and apply them to an ill defined future, it might be helpful to consider some of John Locke's ideas toward the purposes and standards of education, as we prepare for change.

John Locke (1632-1704) is known as the father of English empiricism, a political philosopher, and founder of philosophical liberalism (Russell, 1972). Locke was educated in the English public schools, including Oxford, where he felt the scholastic type instruction was "...invented for wrangling and ostentation rather than to discover truth" (Jones, 1952). In his Thoughts Concerning Education, Locke recommended private education through a tutor rather than public school education. Though Locke lectured at Oxford and served as a tutor for some aristocratic English boys, his degree was in medicine and he served in minor diplomatic posts. He was not considered by himself or others to be a professional educator (Rusk & Scotland, 1979). His major works were published between the years 1689 and 1693 and written while he was in exile in Holland due to his political affiliations. Copleston (1964) describes John Locke as a man of moderation who believed that the material of our knowledge is supplied by sense perception and introspection. He disliked authoritarianism and felt all opinions should be brought before the tribunal of reason. He reflected upon and analyzed common experience. John Locke was the first to devote his main work to an inquiry into human understanding. As one interprets John Locke's ideas to determine what they might say to us today, one should consider that he did not support public education and he was primarily a politician rather than a public educator. Though he lived in a changing world, it's pace was much slower and it's society much more structured. However, some of Locke's basic ideas regarding the purpose and standards of education do appear to still make sense today.

...that of all the men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education. It is that which makes the great difference in mankind

The Purpose of Education

Locke believed that individuals are born with no innate ideas, and that the mind is a 'white paper' upon which ideas are written through experience. Locke, in Some Thoughts Concerning Education (1693/1964), indicated the importance of education by stating "...that of all the men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education. It is that which makes the great difference in

mankind" (1693/1964). In addition, he felt that "errors in education should be less indulged than any" (Ulich, 1979). When Locke speaks of the education of man, he means just that. Though he saw no reason not to educate women, he wrote specifically about the education of the gentleman. From these brief quotes, and throughout his works, it is obvious that Locke believed, as do the futurist authors, that education is critical to development of the person and consequently his society. What then, should be its purpose?

Toffler (1980) would suggest to us that more and more education will occur outside the formal classroom and will be related to work tasks. This will begin at a young age and continue throughout adulthood. Botkin, et al., (1979), would suggest that learning must be innovative and its task to enhance the individual's ability to find, absorb, and create new contexts. Individuals will need to

He emphasized practical reasoning skills as the major purpose of education.

be able to enrich, communicate, and compare these new contexts. An educational system, then, should provide a mechanism for gaining these abilities. Locke, in his time, believed in education as critical to the development of man, and he emphasized practical reasoning skills as the major purpose of education.

In his Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690/1959), Locke defines knowledge as "...the perception of the connection of and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our ideas." Later in the text, he states that the greatest part of our knowledge depends upon deductions and intermediate ideas. There is a need to determine, examine, and compare, then, the grounds of their probability. Locke defines reason as "...the faculty which finds out the means and rightly applies them to discover certainty in the one, and probability in the other" (1690/1959). Reason is the process whereby the connection of all the ideas or proofs to one another is discovered. When no connection is perceived, men's judgements, according to Locke, are but the effects of chance and hazard, or a mind floating without choice and/or direction. It follows, then, that Locke is emphasizing reasoning as a process through which knowledge is obtained.

When Locke speaks of the specific education to be provided the young gentlemen, he describes subjects to be taught, but emphasizes not the memorization of facts, but the application of this reasoning process. For example, Locke states, "To conclude this part, which concerns a young gentleman's studies, his tutor should remember, that his business is not so much to teach him all that is knowable, but to raise in him a love and esteem of knowledge; and to put him in the right way of knowing and improving himself, when he has a mind to it" (1693/1964). In Of the Conduct of the Understanding, Locke makes a similar statement as follows: "The business whereof in respect of knowledge is not, as I think, to perfect a learner in all or any one of the sciences, but to give his mind that freedom, that disposition and those habits that may enable him to attain any part of knowledge he shall apply himself to or stand in

need of in the future course of his life" (1706/1966). From these examples, it appears that Locke would no doubt consider the purpose of education to be the development of the right way of knowing. Since reasoning is critical to obtaining knowledge through the connection and ordering of the ideas obtained through direct experience, then reasoning could be considered essential to the right way of knowing. The ability to reason, then, becomes a major outcome of education and thus one of its prime purposes.

Locke goes one step further and emphasizes that this reasoning should be focused upon practical things. In both Thoughts Concerning Education and Of the Conduct of the Understanding, Locke emphasizes the importance of practicality and usefulness of knowledge. For example, he states that "Truths are not the better nor the worse for their obviousness or difficulty, but their value is to be measured by their usefulness and tendency" (1706/1966). He suggests that

The ability to reason, then, becomes a major outcome of education and thus one of its prime purposes.

individuals are not obligated to know everything, but those that have particular callings ought to understand them and be able to think and reason about what is their daily employment (1706/1966). He suggests that "...in all parts of education, that most time and application is to be bestowed on that which is like to be of the greatest consequence and frequent use, in the ordinary course and occurrences of that life the young man is designed for" (1693/1964). He concludes that "...the time and pains attached to serious improvements should be employed about things of most use and consequence..." (1693/1964). Through education, Locke suggests that the person should comprehend the usefulness of what is taught, and the fact that he can do something he could not do before, and that this something gives him an advantage over those who cannot do it. According to Locke, education should provide experiences that lead to the ability to obtain knowledge that is practical and enables the learner to better deal with his/her world.

In addition to providing experiences that lead to reasoning and knowledge that is practical, Locke would suggest that education provide the learner with practice. In Of the Conduct of the Understanding (1706/1966) Locke stated, "As it is in the body, so it is in the mind; practice makes it what it is, and most even of those excellences which are looked on as natural endowments will be found, when examined into more narrowly, to be the product of exercise and to be raised to that pitch only by repeated actions". However, practice, by Locke's definition is certainly not rote memorization. He explains that "Nobody is made anything by hearing of rules or laying them up in his memory; practice must settle the habit of doing without reflecting on the rule" (1706/1966). "If their memories retain well, one may say they have the materials of knowledge, but, like those for building, they are of no advantage if there be no other use made of them but to let them lie

heaped up together" (1706/1966). And finally, "Few men are from their youth accustomed to strict reasoning and to trace dependence of any truth in a long train of consequences to its remote principles and to observe its connection; and he that by frequent practice has not been used to this employment of his understanding, it is no more wonder that he should not, when he is grown into years, be on a sudden able to grave or design, dance on the ropes, or write a good hand who has never practiced either of them" (1706/1966). Locke goes on to describe the man who as he dispatches the ordinary business of his calling, by rote as he learned it, does not succeed and blames his lack of success on anything rather than his own lack of thought or skill. This person, then, never recognizes his own deficiencies and never seeks out ways to improve his own mind. Consequently, he lives all his life without any notion of reasoning in a continued connection of a long train of consequences from sure foundations and may be frequently unable to make right judgements on the points in question. Locke then asks the question, "What then can be expected from men that neither see the want of any such kind of reasoning as this nor, if they do, know they how to set about it or could perform it?" (1706/1966). Locke suggests that reasoning skills, like any other skills, are developed through practice. It is these reasoning skills, he suggests be practiced as the primary purpose of the educational process.

In conclusion, Locke believes that knowledge is the primary outcome of the educational process. However, it is not the mere repetition or memorization of facts that concerned him. Knowledge is to be obtained through the process of

It appears that what the educational system ought to be doing, according to Locke, is developing a process of reasoning to obtain knowledge through the practice of skills and processes that will be used by the individual in his/her world. To John Locke, the ability to reason about useful, frequently encountered experiences would be the mark of an educated man.

reasoning. This reasoning skill ought to be developed through practice. Therefore, it appears that what the educational system ought to be doing, according to Locke, is developing a process of reasoning to obtain knowledge through the practice of skills and processes that will be used by the individual in his/her world. To John Locke, the ability to reason about useful, frequently encountered experiences would be the mark of an educated man.

Standards

There is a trend today, to specify the minimal standards for everyone involved in education. For each educational level the minimum skills should be specified and to advance to the next level of education, the individual would have to show mastery of these skills. Both the futurist works cited in this paper (Toffler, 1980; Botkin et al., 1979) would suggest to us that minimal standards should be de-emphasized. The

schools should not be separate from life, learning is a lifelong process, and depends upon the needs of the individual. John Locke does not specifically address the issue of standards for education. He suggests that education should apply to life, not occur within the confines of a school, and be individualized.

Locke felt that there was more to education than books. In addition, he felt that a scholastic type education was meant more for 'wrangling' than to discover truth. In SOME Thoughts Concerning Education, he states "...it is impossible he (the schoolmaster) should have 50 or 100 scholars under his eye any longer than they are in school together; nor can it be expected, that he should instruct them successfully in any thing but their books" (1693/1964). In the same work, he talks at length about the influence of other boys upon the individual and the probability that a great part of what was learned would be bad habits from one another. By favoring the tutor as the method of education, Locke is beginning to define the concept of individualized education.

However, favoring the tutor who gives undivided attention to one individual, does not necessarily negate the concept of minimal standards. Locke stated "...all that we can do or should aim at is to make the best of what nature has given, to prevent the vices and faults to which such a constitution is most inclined and to give it all the advantages it is capable of. Everyone's natural genius should be carried as far as it could" (1693/1964). It is here that he begins to specify the design of educational experiences to match the individual's abilities not upon some previously selected standard. He states this more clearly when he says "...but to attempt the putting another upon him, will be but labor in vain..." (1693/1964). Not only is he specifying an education based upon the individual's needs, but he also addresses the concept of readiness to learn. "As a consequence of this, they should seldom be put about doing even those things you have got an inclination in them to, but when they have a mind and disposition

It would appear from these examples that the thought of each student of a certain age having to meet certain prespecified objectives in order to advance to a new area or level of learning would be objected to by John Locke.

to it" (1693/1964). In addition he states "...none of the things they are to learn should ever be made a burden to them or imposed upon them as a task" (1693/1964). And finally, "...it must be by such reasons as their age and understanding are capable of" (1693/1964).

It would appear from these examples that the thought of each student of a certain age having to meet certain prespecified objectives in order to advance to a new area or level of learning would be objected to by John Locke. First of all, this type of system would probably not lend itself to the interests and readiness of the individual. Second, it does not, on the surface, appear to lend itself to the encouragement of the individual to advance to the limits of his/her capability.

It certainly appears as though minimal standards would be looked upon as tasks to be completed put upon the student by another. However, one must ask if these apparent differences in Locke's concepts of individualized education and readiness to learn with minimal standards have to do with the concept of minimal standards or with the implementation of the concept by current educators?

It appears that Locke would not advise us to design education based upon minimal standards for everyone. This does seem to contradict, then, Locke's suggestion that education prepare individuals for their role in life, that education be useful and apply to the societal role the individual was designed to undertake. From the examples given in the Purpose section of this paper, Locke does appear to suggest throughout his writings that individuals know at an early age what they are destined to be. He does specify subjects to be studied and in his way defines the reasoning process as a purpose or overall goal of education. Again, the question, "Is it the idea of minimal standards that is objectionable or contrary to the ideas of individualized learning or is it merely a methodological problem?" I would suggest that perhaps Locke is saying that there is an overall goal for education, but the degree to which that goal is reached depends upon the individual's abilities, interests, and quite possibly his/her former experiences. Therefore, Locke would not agree to minimal standards for everyone, but quite possibly would agree to standards for the individual. He would charge the teacher with developing the individual to his/her highest good potential and he defines this as the ability to reason about the things that concern one's way of life.

Implications

If we define our current world as some current authors like Toffler and Naisbitt do, then it is one of change where the ability to learn and educate oneself becomes a critical skill and a lifelong process. Locke's description of education as practical and preparation for a specified role in society is probably not applicable as he meant it. In his time there were static roles, usually dictated by birth, that one could define and prepare to live. One would assume, by Locke's definition, that education had an ending, but should this be the case in today's changing world? I suggest that Locke's notion of practicality is not valid today, unless one redefines practicality as the ability to think critically and constantly obtain and adapt knowledge to new situations. It may be that Locke addresses this issue with his contention that the purpose of education is the ability to reason about things of concern in one's life.

Is the concept of minimal standards for everyone inadequate or is more than minimal thought and global implementation for everyone?

Locke refers to the formation of habits, which does seem to contradict his concept of reasoning. However, Locke is referring to good

habits of reasoning, so one's acts are hopefully based upon more than a set of memorized rules. In a world that is changing as rapidly as ours, with a deluge of information readily accessible to us, it would appear that the ability to form connections between ideas and evaluate them, would be necessary to good actions. If education provides the skills and knowledges required to reason about things in our lives, then it would appear that this achievement would be of maximum use today. The 'facts' are just changing too rapidly for rule memorizing, by itself, to lead to right actions.

In conclusion, Locke would ask educators to provide students with experiences that lead to an ability to reason. Locke would not support the idea of minimal standards as they are implemented for everyone today. An educational system that requires certain tasks be accomplished before proceeding to the next level would be contrary to Locke's ideas of individualization and readiness to learn. However, a system that created individual standards, carefully thought out to match the individual's potential, interests, and readiness to learn would be supported by John Locke.

This review of John Locke's work, leaves us with some interesting questions. First, "What should be considered practical during this period in history?" Second, "How should one determine maximum good potential, and is this ever reached?" "Is learning, then, to be a lifelong process as the futurists would tell us it is?" And, finally, "Is the concept of minimal standards for everyone inadequate or is more than minimal thought and global implementation for everyone?" Reading John Locke's work in light of today's educational system and today's world, has provided some ideas regarding the purposes and standards for education. More importantly, it has brought up questions that can only be answered through the application of good reasoning skills to the information available.

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FUTURE ISSUES OF THRESHOLDS IN EDUCATION

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Rousseau's Education for Democracy

By David K. Holt

It is easy to relate the ideas of Jean Jacques Rousseau with democracy. Certainly, in his description of the ideal social state in The Social Contract, and his methodology of teaching an imaginary boy in Emile, Rousseau shows an extreme concern for the autonomy of the individual. But because of the manner of his writing, Rousseau can be misunderstood. This is because he often uses phrases for emotional effect even if they sometimes contradict some of his major premises. When Rousseau states, that poor men don't need an education he seems to contradict his idea that all men should possess moral freedom which is dependent upon a good education (Rousseau, 1956).

In The Social Contract, (his primary work in political philosophy), he is primarily concerned with describing two major concepts. The first concept is the natural autonomy of the individual, and the second is the notion of the General will. J.M. Porter states that: Rousseau is the first political thinker whose political philosophy, in large measure, was composed by examining political reality through the prism of autonomy (Porter, 1983).

Unlike Thomas Hobbes, Rousseau believes that the state of nature (or the state of man's existence prior to the formation of societies) was not a state of maliciousness. Man was born equal and with natural freedom. He was solitary and independent but with a capacity to be morally good because he possessed the instinct of benevolence. Primitive man as exemplified by groups such as the American Indians were admired by Rousseau because they were closer to natural man living in the state of nature. They contrasted dramatically with the upper classes of the eighteenth century because, according to Rousseau, they lived simple lives, satisfied with the necessities of life without being obsessed with wanting more possessions. His open disgust of the wealthy of his time was based on the belief that they lived unnatural lives, and that the institutions of society perpetuated this corruption of natural man. Rousseau believed that civilization and education have committed two major blunders: (1) ignoring man's primal nature; and (2) cultivating an unsound culture that is not based on the native propensities of the human being (Sahakian & Sahakian, 1974).

Although The Social Contract is basically pessimistic in regard to modern political societies, Rousseau believes that one can maintain oneself as a free moral agent in a democratic society that is run in accordance with the General will.



JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU (1712-1778)

The General will is best thought of as a normative term for what actions would be best for all of society. Rousseau is so concerned with autonomy that he believes it is unnatural for one to give up any of it to form a society. Every citizen must be involved with the process of making civil laws that will be in accordance with the General will. This can be accomplished only if these laws are first accepted by each citizen as being fair and good for the general population. Therefore, no citizen is giving up his natural freedom, when he follows a law that citizens themselves believe in. One is only following one's own belief system and conscience. If mankind is educated for citizenship he will gain a moral freedom that man in the state of nature does not possess. This is because a formal education designed to create independent curious thinkers will enable man to make good moral decisions with regard to others. Although modern society is often unnatural, it ultimately offers, in a democracy, a situation where man can truly be superior to natural man in that he can possess moral freedom.

Rousseau believes that public education is necessary for future citizens to understand their own natural freedom and the concept of the General will. In his, "Considerations on the Government of Poland and on its Proposed Reformation," he describes some of his considerations for an education for democracy. Public education

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should be free or of minimal expense for all boys whether rich or poor. There should be scholarships for poor boys. There should be no separate educational facilities for the rich and the poor. No priests or foreigners should be allowed to teach, and those citizens who are teachers must be of high moral character. Finally, teachers must teach young boys negatively until they are developmentally ready to learn through nature study in preadolescence and through history and religion in adolescence (Rousseau, 1953). The purpose of public education was for Rousseau to create good citizens who would be able to understand the concept of the General will. He states:

The doctrine of the General will has significance for the philosophy of education because a certain type of education is specified for any state in which the General will reigns supreme (Sahakian & Sahakian, 1974).

This education for democracy will seek to make every citizen a free moral agent who loves his country, and pursues the simple life. An important point is that Rousseau believes in the exercise of moral freedom; thus citizens should be active and involved with their government. In regard to representational democracy, Rousseau would emphasize the importance of citizens not only voting for representatives, but also voting on bond issues and propositions that enable them to directly create legislation. He states, "In

For Rousseau the best government was the one where the most governed.

principle, participation in the expression and confirmation of moral liberty is full autonomy" (Porter, 1983). A good citizen cannot just leave government up to elected representatives because the General will can be easily replaced by the corporate will of these representatives. For Rousseau the best government was the one where the most governed. He states:

In order for a will to be general, it is not always necessary for it to be unanimous, but it is necessary that all votes be counted. Any formal exclusion destroys that generality (Rousseau, 1956).

The problem exists that the General will is not always the will of all because people sometimes substitute their personal will over the General will. To understand the General will it is necessary to use one's imagination to put oneself in another's place and to make moral decisions that would serve society even if those decisions were not in one's personal interest. For example, a white male candidate for a job may believe that the affirmative action law is a just law in spite of being denied a position because he was an equal candidate with a minority member. Thus, although one is losing a job, one is acknowledging the justness of one's own law, or acknowledging the General will.

Rousseau's *Emile*, contains the specific methodology for an education for a democracy. He believes, like John Locke, that corporal punish-

ment would not assist education and that generally education should be an enjoyable experience with the tutor maintaining a cooperative relationship with the parents (Locke, 1884). Rousseau divides his method of instruction into five developmentally sequenced parts. The first part is called infancy (birth to two), where crying changes into the use of words. During this first part the mother must manage the child with a carefully watched amount of attention. She must allow the child to explore and yet consider the awkwardness and limitations of infants in order to protect them from self destructive situations. From the age of two through twelve the child is in the second part, called the savage part, where the child must be given a negative education. The boy must be allowed to build his physical strength and develop his natural curiosity. He should be allowed to play because he is not intellectually ready, and he is not yet ready to understand himself and others as moral agents. In the third part called, the boyhood part (ages 12-15), the boy is intellectually ready to learn and since he has not reached puberty he is not distracted by sexual changes. He should learn about nature and read novels like *Robinson Crusoe*, that reveal the role of man in part four (ages 15-20). During this part the boy is ready to deal with moral issues which are best acquired through the study of history and religion. The final part is adulthood and is a summary of the first four parts (Rousseau, 1956).

Most critics of Rousseau acknowledge the weaknesses of both his educational methods and his political ideas, but many also acknowledge an original and often inspiring writer. For example, Rousseau's negative education has as its goals many of the same concerns of the progressive education movement. He wished to allow children to stand on their own and develop their motivation to learn, but certainly more structure and instructional material is needed to prepare children for increasingly difficult academic work. Formal instruction at this level (age 2-12), can be given that will not destroy motivation, and will not interfere with making moral decisions later.

..."Let us lay it down as an incontestable principle that the first impulses of nature are always right" (Rousseau, 1956).

Rousseau's notion of a natural education is also a problematic one, because there is general agreement that nurturing plays a far greater role in learning than any genetic instinct. Rousseau states, "Let us lay it down as an incontestable principle that the first impulses of nature are always right" (Rousseau, 1956). One does not know how to interpret this; either he is referring to a genetic instinct, or to a notion of the simple and noble ideas one gets when one follows a self directed study of nature. This is true regardless of whether Rousseau believes in the theory of Recollection.

In critiquing Rousseau one must not forget his contradictory treatment of women. Whereas men were taught to be thinking moral agents before they were taught a trade, women were born into the

trade of motherhood and housekeeping. The women were to be listeners and not the thinkers.

Despite his contradictory statements Rousseau's writings are particularly valuable for our society. He emphasizes the importance of maintaining individual rights within a social structure. His concept of the General will is particularly useful in understanding social responsibility, which is one of the major purposes of public education. The important thing to consider when reading Rousseau is to see what good or ill would come to our society if his ideas were to be put into effect.

Rousseau's notion of all men as individual moral agents creates a problem for most readers in that man is born free (and naturally loves his freedom) and at the same time wants to gain moral freedom by first giving up some of his physical freedom. There is the problem of emphasizing individual freedom and also emphasizing the rights of society, or rather the limitations of the individual's freedom within a society. This is resolved in the sense that citizens who are educated for democracy (and the General will) will seek moral freedom over physical freedom. Thus, the public schools of the United States must seek to teach future citizens to understand not only the concepts of democracy as an ideological political system, but to be civically and morally responsible to each other. Rousseau believes that the public schools should stimulate the student to become a researcher of nature; to be an independent thinker capable of making good moral decisions. The author believes that Rousseau would be in favor of a comprehensive curriculum for the schools that would educate the heart as well as the head. A back to basics approach to curriculum planning would not be adequate for the educating of moral citizens. Children must be able to explore ideas that interest them whatever course of study one can identify with those interests. Perhaps Thomas Jefferson's first inaugural address

echoes a similar social sentiment of Rousseau's. Let us, then, fellow citizens, unite with one heart and one mind. Let us restore to social intercourse that harmony and affection without which liberty and even life itself, are but dreary things (Lee, 1964).

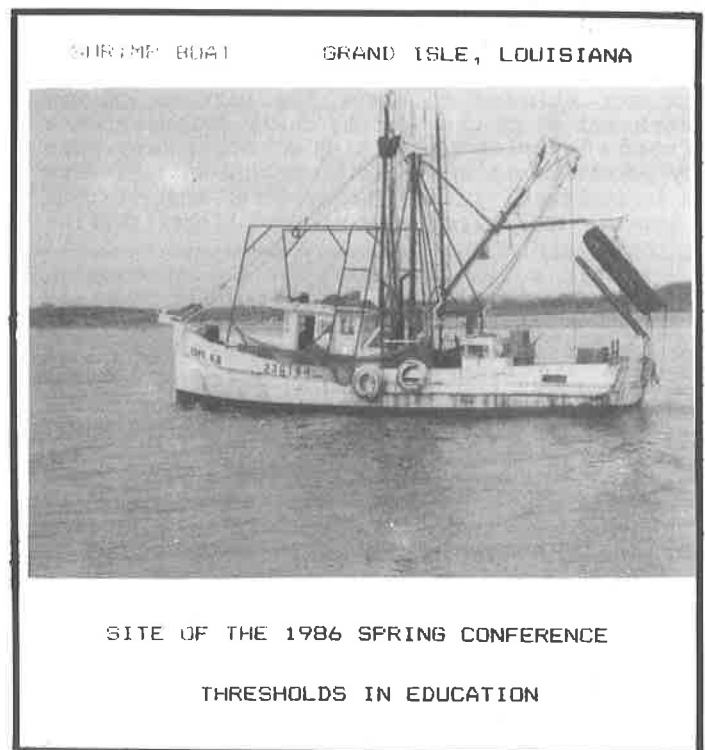
Rousseau, like Jefferson, believes that public education should create a just society, where citizens can unite, at least ideally, with one heart and one mind, ever mindful of the General will.

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All for Others -- Nothing for Self -- Johan Heinrich Pestalozzi -- Father of American Pedagogy

By Theresa Wilkie

As we struggle to reform American education, Pestalozzi's life and work merit our attention. His philosophy of education, psychological principles and practical teaching methods examined fundamental aspects of education, which continue to challenge modern educators. Through his attempts to analyze and systematize the science of education, he postulated such timeless questions as: What is the purpose of education? What should be taught and how? What is the role of education in society? The purpose of this article is to present Pestalozzi's answers to these questions in the context of his age, evaluate their significance today, and determine how future educational thought can benefit from his insights.

In the early eighteenth century, Switzerland's constitution was in theory a democratic one, as all citizens could vote; but for two centuries it had become impossible to become a citizen. Citizenship was passed from father to son only in a restricted number of families. The form of government, was therefore an oligarchy, a type of political aristocracy which directly controlled the commercial and cultural wealth of the society through self-interest. Below the aristocracy of these ruling families were the middle-class citizens, each of whom was required to be a member of a guild. Most of the citizens lived in the city and tried to preserve a centralized city-state.

The majority of the inhabitants lived in poverty in country districts. They were unable to improve their conditions because: they were excluded from participation in public life; they were not allowed to enter the service of the government or of the church; their children were refused admission to the high schools; they were only permitted to engage in producing small crafts and agricultural goods. Furthermore, most efforts to improve themselves only yielded higher profits for their landlords.

Within a few decades, the Enlightenment, Pietism, and cotton manufacturing focused attention on the country life. Periodicals, like the *Spectator*, found it fashionable to champion the natural against the artificial; meditation and the simple life against worldly success and excess; personal religious experiences against the official church; and individual respect against despotic rule. By 1762, the wealth of the nation was seen in its soil while



JOHANN HEINRICH PESTALOZZI (1746-1827)

Rousseau's *Emile* led the 'Back to Nature' crusade (Silber, 1973).

Amidst this social upheaval, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi was born on January 12, 1746. His father's ancestors gave the family its right to citizenship, though they had not exercised it for several generations. His grandfather was a pastor in a village outside of Zurich. His father was a surgeon. His mother's people were from the country. Also physicians, they were comfortable, but without any political rights.

Pestalozzi's father died when he was five, leaving them with some social standing but no finances to maintain it. His mother, and their loyal servant Babeli (Barbara Schmid), somehow managed to raise him. Pestalozzi and others have written detailed accounts of the blessings, drawbacks and effects his childhood had upon his career. The blessings included his concepts of: the goodness of man, the importance of love and self-sacrifice, and the ability of the poor to improve their lot. The drawbacks primarily concerned his totally restricted, female surroundings. He was naive, sensitive and impractical. Deprived of the company of other children, and experiencing male influence only during summer visits to his grandfather, Pestalozzi's

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experiences were not properly balanced.

Pestalozzi tells us his visits to his grandfather's parish in Hongg first made him realize the different conditions and points-of-view between city and country life. He questioned whether prosperous city people were any better than their shabby country counterparts. Deciding

...an individual and subsequently society, could be influenced--altered, regenerated, even perfected through education.

the disparity did not have to exist, Pestalozzi decided to find the ways and means to improve life for the poor (Gutek, 1978). He devoted his life to practicing his belief that an individual and subsequently society, could be influenced--altered, regenerated, even perfected through education.

The channels into which he directed his energies varied during the course of his life, yet Pestalozzi faced external obstacles and internal deficiencies with his dauntless sense of mission. He wrote: "I had absolutely nothing in my favor except one deep-rooted purpose, one irrevocable motto: I will, --one belief which no experience could shatter: I can--and an indefinable feeling within me: I must" (Heafford, 1967).

Pestalozzi's first project, The Neuhof Experiment, viewed the ultimate end of education as fitness for life. He attempted to combine a basic general education including: reading, writing, arithmetic and religion, with some vocational education. Girls learned spinning, gardening and cooking; boys learned weaving and simple agricultural chores. He thought this agricultural experience would help poor children grow into their stations in society and at the same time become responsible members of it.

The Neuhof experiment began in 1774 and ended in 1780 due to financial difficulties. Despite its failure, Pestalozzi credits this experience with his lifelong belief that successful education depends on providing a child with security and on giving him genuine affection (Heafford, 1967).

From 1780 to 1798, Pestalozzi turned to writing as a means of earning his living and reflecting upon his ideals. His first work, The Evening Hour of a Hermit, published in 1780, expressed his thoughts on the nature of God, man and the universe. Here, Pestalozzi claims, each person must examine himself and find inner peace to recognize his purpose in life. If a single man could attain the inner peace necessary to comprehend the world around him, then helping many men find/gain an understanding of themselves, God and nature could reform society. Pestalozzi's increasing concern with human and social problems were apparent in his subsequent writings such as: Leonard and Gertrude, Christoph and Else, The Swan Song, and Investigations into the Course of Nature in the Development of the Human Race. The three recurring themes of these works are: (1) only through education can the ills of society be cured; (2) education itself must internally examine and reform itself; (3) popular education

is a prerequisite to political reform.

Stans, a school for homeless, orphaned children was established by the Swiss government under Pestalozzi's direction in 1798. The community at Stans housed eighty children of all ages and backgrounds and Pestalozzi. He described his experience there:

From morning to evening I was virtually alone in their midst. Everything which benefited their bodies and souls came from my hand. Every piece of help, every form of succour in need which they received came directly from me. My hand lay in theirs, my eyes rested on theirs. They were outside the world, outside Stans, they were with me and I with them. Their soup was my soup, their drink, my drink. I had nothing, no servants, no friends, no helpers with me, I had only them. If they were healthy, I stood in their midst, if they were ill I was at their side. In the evening I was the last to go to bed, in the morning I was the first to get up (Heafford, 1967).

The Stans project lasted only a year, until the Swiss government replaced it with a military hospital. From this experience, Pestalozzi noted the process of learning could be interesting, enjoyable, and of value in itself when freed from rigidity and inhumanity. Thus, his philosophy of education expanded to include another goal of education, the humane treatment of children.

Pestalozzi's next projects, at Burgdorf and Yverdon, put into practice the aims of education and the goals for teachers which he conceived. People from all over Europe flocked to these institutes to become his assistants, to popularize education, to learn to teach and observe children. Under Pestalozzi's guidance they set new goals while seeking to discover at what age and under what conditions children naturally learn best. They sought to develop a curriculum whose purpose was to educate the whole child: his head, by thinking; his heart, by believing; and his hand, by activity (Barlow, 1977).

...we too, live in a time of social upheaval and reform.

America today is very different from Pestalozzi's Switzerland. Yet, we too, live in a time of social upheaval and reform. Politicians can't be trusted. We are on the other end of the industrial revolution, moving from a manufacturing to an information processing society. Middle class workers, laid-off from obsolete industries have become our new poor. They need to be retrained and reeducated to become participating members of our society. New industries have created new occupations. The weakened family unit with growing numbers of children born out-of-wedlock, single parent families resulting from separation or divorce and both parents working, have created latch-key children. These, new orphans, are for all intents and purposes raising themselves. The pace of life has quickened: instant breakfast, instant service, instant replay, accompanied by mental stress, physical and

The Children's House – Maria Montessori and the Poor Children of Rome

By Richard W. Smelter

In 1906, when Edoardo Talamo asked Dr. Maria Montessori to put aside the quiet confines of the University of Rome in order to test her educational theories by opening a school for young children in one of the worst slum areas in Italy, she accepted a challenge which would have shaken many of lesser fibre. Dr. Montessori, however, was used to challenges.

Born in Chiaravalle, Italy, in 1870, only nine years after the unification of that country, Maria Montessori grew to adulthood in a society marked by social turmoil and political unrest. The lower classes of the Kingdom of Italy were among the most wretched in Europe; poverty-stricken and plagued by illiteracy, they existed in the shadows of a culture in which only the middle and upper classes could vote. Driven to the industrialized cities to seek employment, they lived packed tightly in the dimly-lit slums we have come to associate with the rampant industrial revolution of the late nineteenth century. Crowded in hovels (seven or eight souls to a room was not uncommon), they fell victim to disease, malnutrition and famine. The factories paid them barely enough to keep alive, medical attention was virtually non-existent in many areas, and the few social welfare agencies did little more than provide weak soup. In the streets, the poor were harassed by the police, in secret cellar meetings they were harangued by the socialists and communists, or the anarchistic followers of Bakunin (see Note #1). Idealists like Benedetto Croce advocated a New Idealism and urged society to reject the modern mechanization. The followers of Herbert Spencer, the best known of the Social Darwinists, argued that the poor were the natural and acceptable consequence of mankind on the march to greatness. In Italy, this march would lead all the way from the Abyssinian campaign of 1896 to Mussolini.

Caught up in a world in which men were the arbiters, Maria Montessori nonetheless enrolled at the University of Rome as a medical student, becoming the first woman in Italy to be awarded the degree of Doctor of Medicine. In 1897, she was appointed to the University's Psychiatric



MARIA MONTESSORI (1870-1952)

Clinic and began working with children in the local insane asylum. Combining her ideas with those of Jean Itard and Eduard Seguin, she concluded that mental deficiency was an educational rather than a medical problem, that the sensory deprivation of human beings at an early age could lead to a form of intellectual dullness which, at the time, was equated with insanity. With this single conclusion, she left the world of medicine behind her and entered the realm of education.

In 1898, Guido Baccelli, Minister of Education, was impressed by a lecture Montessori delivered to the Associazione Pedagogica Italiana and persuaded her to give a series of seminars to the teachers of the schools of Rome. This led to her appointment as head of the new Orthophrenic School, a position she held until 1900. The children in this institution were classed as having various dysfunctions which would preclude their ability to handle the activities of the regular public schools. Dr. Montessori not only taught these children to read and write, but quickly pitted her pupils against those from the

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'normal' schools in formal examinations. When her charges performed as well as their public school peers, her reputation as an educator was established.

Montessori returned to university life in 1901 in order to study experimental psychology under Giuseppe Sergi and was appointed Professor of Pedagogical Anthropology in 1904. It was during this period of study and introspection (1904 to 1906) that her theories on education were refined and solidified.

Primary among her theories was the then radical notion that children are all not ready to learn at the same time. The child's attention, memory, mental endurance, intellectual interest and curiosity "are not only unlike those of the child next to him in school, but will be tomorrow different from what they are today (Fisher, 1964). Education, therefore, "must be made to fit the child and the child not forced to fit a preconceived idea of what education ought to be or do (Fisher, 1964). To attempt to teach children of the poor in the same manner one would teach the children of the middle or upper classes, Montessori surmised, was doomed to failure. The typical school room of the day was characterized by formalism and discipline, featuring a strict curriculum adhered to without regard to the attention span of the youngsters. This was bad enough for children who came from privileged homes, where toys and time for attention abounded; at least the little ones could look forward to going home at the end of a day filled with tedious lectures. The children of the poor had no such respite. In their homes, marked by poverty and want, they all too often fell victim to child abuse, bestowed at the hands of parents driven to

...the schools should provide what the homes could not—a haven filled with the excitement of discovery and a joy of learning at a pace which best suited the child.

desperate frustration. That these unfortunate children roamed the streets during the day, truant from school, succumbing to thievery and vandalism, posed little wonder. Obviously, Montessori thought, the schools should provide what the homes could not—a haven filled with the excitement of discovery and a joy of learning at a pace which best suited the child. In addition, and at every opportunity, the children of the slums should be taught that there is a world which exists beyond the back alleys.

Her experimental school for social life would be a rural setting, where children and their predominantly young teachers would live in a self-contained community, self-governing and to a considerable extent self-supporting. Raising their own foodstuffs and perhaps running a guest house or store, they would learn about the work of the world at first hand (Montessori, 1973).

Maria "called on adult society to discover and recognize how truly fundamental the earliest years of childhood are; how the child during those years lays the foundation for his or her life and being"

(Montessori, 1973). Education, in other words, should be practical, horizon-broadening and child-centered. The great works of literature must wait until the child learns to cope with his environment and help himself.

When Talamo's offer came in 1906, therefore, it could not have been presented with better timing; Dr. Montessori had had enough with expounding on her philosophy again and again and longed to put her ideas to the test. Talamo knew that San Lorenzo, the worst tenement district in Rome, would be the ideal battleground on which to pit Montessori's ideas against the corrupting influences which preyed upon the young and helpless. To Maria, his offer was as if a gauntlet had been thrown down in challenge.

She hoped that "Through the redeeming and protective labours of pedagogy, the lowest human manifestations of degeneration and disease will disappear" (Montessori, 1913).

San Lorenzo was a nightmare. Murders were common occurrences, prostitution was rife, and the names of children helped fill the police ledgers. Youngsters from the ages of three to six filled the streets—too young for the public schools; the alleys were preferable to the single-room dwellings. Ragged and dirty, they either played amidst the garbage and raw sewage or yielded to delinquency at an early age. Had Dr. Montessori bitten off more than she could chew?

Montessori chose the name "Casa dei Bambini" for her school—"The Children's House." She hoped that "Through the redeeming and protective labours of pedagogy, the lowest human manifestations of degeneration and disease will disappear" (Montessori, 1913).

The Children's House is the environment which is offered to the child that he may be given the opportunity of developing his activities. This kind of school is not of a fixed type, but may vary according to the financial resources at disposal and to the opportunities afforded by the environment (Montessori, 1914).

She also likened the child's desire for learning to the adult's quest for religious truth.

To deny, a priori, the religious sentiment in man, and to deprive humanity of the education of this sentiment, is to commit a pedagogical error similar to denying, a priori, to the child, the love of learning for learning's sake (Montessori, 1914).

Allowing each child to flourish in an environment conducive to his or her own needs and learning pace would lead that child closer to God, and thus reduce vice in society. "Through the conquest of liberty of thought and conscience, we are making our way toward a great religious triumph" (Montessori, 1914). In brief, Montessori's goal was the transformation of society through compensatory education.

Within the sanctuary of the Casa dei Bambini, Dr. Montessori devised a series of educational games to use in instructing her refugees from the streets. The twenty-six manipulatives she

employed to facilitate these games (what she termed her 'didactic apparatus') consisted of now-familiar items such as wooden blocks, geometric insets, cylinders and so on. Stationary furniture was done away with and the children were permitted to move their specially-designed scaled-down chairs to whatever location in the classroom they wished. Vocabulary enrichment was emphasized, as well as listening skills. As the youngsters were physically located all about the room, Dr. Montessori moved to them. In this manner, each child received individualized attention of a type unheard of in the Italian public schools of the day. This individualized attention would create within the student, Montessori felt, a desire to learn more and a conviction that he was not powerless. In this, Dr. Montessori followed in the footsteps of Locke, who held that the total of man is based on his experience. Although there is a certain freedom inherent in her philosophy, there were still rules to be followed in the Casa dei Bambini.

Young people must have enough freedom to allow them to act on individual initiative. But in order that individual action should be free and useful at the same time it must be restricted within certain limits and rules that give necessary guidance (Montessori, 1973).

Based on her experiences in San Lorenzo, Dr. Montessori proposed an entire revamping of the educational system, and this would lead to the revitalization of society.

This world, marvelous in its power, needs a 'new man.' It is therefore the life of man and his values that must be considered. If the formation of man becomes the basis of education, then the coordination of all schools from infancy to maturity, from nursery to university, arises as a first necessity, for man is a unity, an individuality that passes through independent phases of development. Each preceding phase prepares the one that follows, forms its base, nurtures the energies that urge toward the succeeding period of life (Montessori, 1973).

As she totally expected, the children of the Casa dei Bambini flourished under her tutelage. Sharing her success with educators in other lands, 'Montessori' schools sprang up almost overnight throughout Europe and the United States. In many instances, these schools were attended not only by children of the poor, but by those of the middle and upper classes as well. The impact of Dr. Montessori's ideas are with us still today and Montessori schools are an integral part of the pre-school experiences of many American children. A cursory examination of the educational tenets she embraced will show us why this is so.

- Emphasis on pre-school education. Dr. Montessori believed that the individual human being should be exposed to the educational setting as early in life as possible. In keeping with the ideas of Dewey and Froebel (founder of the kindergarten), education was viewed by her as being an evolutionary growth process. No individual stage in this developmental progression was to be neglected. We can see the general acceptance

of these ideas in the popularization of the private preschools of today and in the state's attempt to identify potential learning problems early in the life of the child, as exemplified by the parent-infant programs offered by special education cooperatives.

- Emphasis on individualized education. While large-group instruction is certainly alive and well, there is a general acceptance of the theory that the divergent learning styles of children, coupled with the well-documented fact that all children are not ready to learn at the same point in time as their peers, is best addressed by individualized instruction, especially in the formative years. That social deprivation equates with stimuli deprivation and thus to poor educational performance also admits of little doubt. This has led to the many compensatory educational programs of today, especially in inner-city areas.
- Emphasis on educational games at an early age. Today, educational games available to classroom teachers appear to multiply at a geometric rate every year. These 'manipulatives' are so commonplace, that we are shocked when we discover some remote early childhood class which has insufficient funds to purchase plastic puzzles or puppets. In actuality, the use of our modern computers in the classroom setting may be seen best as simply another manipulative device. Manipulatives encourage self-reliance, and provide the type of 'independent practice' deemed so important by contemporary educational writers, such as Madeline Hunter.

This list, quite obviously, could go on and on. We have come to regard Maria Montessori's ideas as so self-evident, in fact, that we must avoid the temptation to dismiss them as simple common sense. They were utterly revolutionary to the educational world of the early 1900's. That her innovations failed to transform the society of her beloved Italy, as that struggling new nation marched doggedly toward policies of territorial acquisition, political extremism and war, was due in no measure to their failure as sound educational principles; better-educated adults may make morally superior decisions, but this is not necessarily true.

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse often ride down the philosophers of the day, but the victories of the Casa dei Bambini will outshine the invasion of Ethiopia for all time.

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Note 1. The assassination of Italy's King Humbert I is generally accredited to Italian supporters of this Russian radical's philosophy.



Heidegger and American Public Education

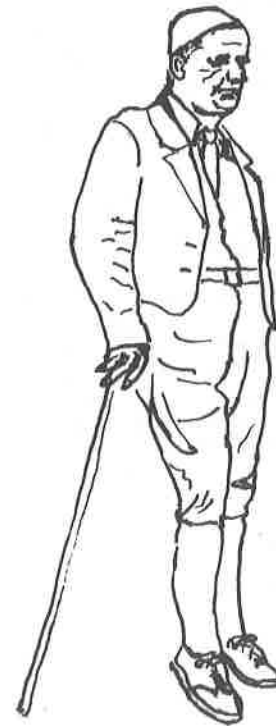
By William H. Bruening

I. Goals and Purposes

The Chronicle of Higher Education has just recently published the text of "Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education." Recommendation Nine suggests that two years of liberal education be required for all bachelor's degrees. There is no doubt that this recommendation as well as the report as a whole will generate discussion, criticism, counter-recommendation, and so on. But the conversation will not even begin to be as profound as the position espoused by Martin Heidegger. For Heidegger proposed not a change in the curriculum to include a liberal arts component; he proposed that all of Western thought needs to be reassessed and deconstructed. Western thought (and thus American thought) has been influenced by technology to such an extent that thinking does not take place in Western thought. Seventeenth century Europe with its notion that nature was a machine and man's essence was not in the world but out of this world is perhaps a typical example of what Heidegger thinks is wrong with Western thought. To put the matter most succinctly there is only one goal or purpose for public democratic education in the United States--to teach the kind of thinking that does not represent the thrust of Western thought. What is this thinking that he recommends?

Perhaps we can say what it is not.

Its...peculiarity consists in the fact that whenever we plan, research, and organize, we always reckon with conditions that are given. We take them into account with the calculated



MARTIN HEIDEGGER (1889-

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intention of their serving specific purposes. Thus we can count on definite results. This calculation is the mark of all thinking that plans and investigates. Such thinking remains calculation even if it neither works nor uses an adding machine or numbers. Calculative thinking computes. It computes ever new, ever more promising and at the same time more economical possibilities (Heidegger, 1966).

The goal of education should be to teach meditative thinking and, of course, to learn meditative thinking.

The opposite of calculative thinking is called meditative thinking. The goal of education should be to teach meditative thinking and, of course, to learn meditative thinking. As an example of such thinking Heidegger offers the following:

A cabinetmaker's apprentice, someone who is learning to build cabinets and the like, will serve as an example. His learning is not mere practice, to gain facility in the use of tools. Nor does he merely gather knowledge about the customary forms of the things he is to build. If he is to become a true cabinetmaker, he makes himself answer and respond above all to the different kinds of wood and to their shapes slumbering within wood--to wood as it enters into man's dwelling with all the hidden riches of its nature. In fact, this relatedness to wood is what maintains the whole craft. Without that relatedness, the craft will never be anything but empty busywork, any occupation with it will be determined exclusively by business concerns. Every handicraft, all human dealings are constantly in that danger (Heidegger, 1968).

This apprentice needs to be taught by a special kind of teacher--a teacher who lets the apprentice learn how to think--and this thinking does not mean to accumulate useful information.

None of the traditional disciplines teach thinking--and few, if any, teachers even know what meditative thinking is, much less can we say that they teach thinking. Our culture has run away from thinking. If public democratic education is to have any goal at all, it must be that of teaching meditative thinking. But how do we decide on this goal? The Heideggerian answer is that we must listen closely--listen to Being and be its shepherd. And the decision about this goal of teaching and listening is made by those who think meditatively and shepherd Being.

Who are these thinkers? Are there any? Heidegger is not clear on these questions. He disclaims his own position as such a thinker although he might be on the way to such thinking.

More often than not questions about goals and purposes of education presuppose an intellectual

and historical context. For American education this means the history of public education as well as the intellectual traditions inherited from Europe from the time of the Greeks. Many concepts have become sedimented in these traditions. Our questions about goals and purposes of education cannot be answered unless and until we address those traditions and their rationales. Much of that tradition rests upon calculative thinking. To that extent Heidegger rejects that tradition and proposes that education be directed toward

Heidegger would reject all of this discussion about minimum standards and the measurement of skills acquired.

meditative thinking. It is obvious that his answer to the question about goals and purposes is unorthodox and not easy to understand.

II. Minimum Standards

American education, especially in the last few years, has been concerned with setting standards for learning and developing reasonably accurate means to measure progress toward an achievement of these standards. Tests of minimum competency are surely an example of this concern. Discussions have focused on specifying those standards and developing tools to measure the specified skills. Heidegger would reject all of this discussion about minimum standards and the measurement of skills acquired. And his rejection would be based on principle rather than on any disagreement with any specific standard or measuring device. Heidegger would reject all of this because the discussion of standards occurs in the context of the Western intellectual tradition and he urges us to reexamine that tradition and deconstruct it. Such a deconstruction will point to a rediscovery of meditative thinking--to the shapes hidden in wood for a cabinetmaker--to meeting a tree face-to-face. For Heidegger *Dasein* (his term for human being) dwells poetically.

Questions about minimum standards occur in the context of calculative thinking. They are scientific questions. Heidegger has no answer for such questions because he never asks such questions. For him a person who asks such questions exists in the 'they-self'--a person who is inauthentic, a person who cannot hear Being speak.

Any question about who decides what minimum standards should be adopted presupposes that questions about such standards make sense. Since Heidegger rejects questions about standards he surely rejects the question about decision makers.

III. Values in School

Value-education in public schools has been an issue that has generated much discussion among professional educators and the general public. Heidegger does not address this issue directly--he does not assess the pros and cons of value clarification or of moral development ala Kohlberg. Yet Heidegger does suggest values that are important for education to instill and important for all of us to have. Examples of these values would be listening, authenticity, shepherding, silence,

and dwelling poetically. These have been mentioned before; but these values would be neither implicitly nor explicitly promoted in the curricula, written material, etc., because there may be no curricula and written material in the usual sense of these terms. Heidegger's example

It is beyond the purpose of this short paper to assess Heidegger's thought either in general or as it relates to education. There seems to be little room for a modification of Heidegger's views so that our intellectual tradition is safe from deconstruction. Most educators would simply

Heidegger challenges us to reconsider such fundamental concepts as truth, time, death, the world, being, nothingness, dread, freedom, and many other concepts.

Perhaps we do dwell poetically. Perhaps we have lost ourselves in calculative thinking. Perhaps we are homeless and do not know it.

of a cabinetmaker's apprentice surely indicates that values are important to him, but he completely rejects the context in which such value questions are asked.

Heidegger challenges us to reconsider such fundamental concepts as truth, time, death, the world, being, nothingness, dread, freedom, and many other concepts. Questions of value need to be rethought--or perhaps thought for the first time.

reject Heidegger's view, not because he is mistaken but because they are unable to rethink the tradition in which they exist. Perhaps they are right. Perhaps the paradigms in the tradition cannot be rethought.

Yet when we think of the technological advances that have occurred in that tradition and the near compulsion to quantify and measure (even in the questions asked in this volume) one wonders if perhaps something is amiss. Perhaps we do dwell poetically. Perhaps we have lost ourselves in calculative thinking. Perhaps we are homeless and do not know it. What seems obvious is that Heidegger's view would require that we deconstruct American public education and the democratic society in which it occurs. There is little prospect that such a deconstruction will occur. If it did occur, education would surely look very different. We would surely have an entirely different set of questions to ask.

IV. Some Critical Remarks

Our view of Heidegger is that he would reject the very questions that this volume asks. This rejection is based on his deconstruction of the Western intellectual tradition. Heidegger has nothing to say about American public education nor does he have anything to say about the challenges of a democratic society. His concerns are far more fundamental. His response to this volume's questions might be phrased thusly: If we deconstruct the Western intellectual tradition, do we not by definition deconstruct the various social institutions that arise out of and depend on that tradition? His own answer seems to be, "Of course, we do."

Heidegger's view is so profound and so disturbing. Its profundity consists in the fact that he asks monumental (yet very simple) questions and gives such non-specific answers (and often he gives no answers at all). Its disturbing nature consists in the fact that he challenges nearly everything that most of us take for granted.

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Bertrand Russell : Legacy for Life Long Learning

By Mickey R. Hellyer

Bertrand Russell was a most unusual man. Born in 1872 near London, England, he spent most of his ninety-eight years committed to scientific and philosophical inquiry. Indeed, his numerous contributions to mathematics and philosophy has lead one biographer (Park, 1963) to observe that his "achievements have caused some to call Russell the greatest logician since Aristotle." Russell's active attention to political and social issues has prompted another admirer (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1973) to write: "Russell... (was)...famous for his eloquent championship of individual liberty, which made his position in the intellectual life of his time comparable with that of Voltaire in the eighteenth century or with that of J.S. Mill in the nineteenth century.

Russell's approach to education is closely connected with his views on political and social matters. In fact, contemporaries considered his educational doctrines rather unconventional, leading many educators to either dismiss or ignore them as being too radical and unrealistic. In light of recent contributions by such investigators as Joel Spring, Michael Katz, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, Raymond Callahan, Colin Greer, Clarence Karier, Paul Violas, Michael Apple, Pierre Bourdieu, Basil Bernstein, and David Tyack among others, Russell's perceptions and thoughts may have been neither.

Russell began writing on educational matters as early as 1917. In *Why Men Fight*, he called for educational reforms which would serve international peace rather than nationalistic ends. This reaction to World War I, with its resulting widespread destruction and loss of human life, would be a central theme in Russell's remarks regarding education for the next fifty years.

Russell wrote only two books devoted exclusively to education, although his prolific pen found time to produce assorted articles and essays on educational matters (see Note 1). But his interest in the field was not confined merely to literary discourse. He and his second wife, Dora, opened a private elementary school at Beacon Hill in 1927. This project was motivated by Russell's belief that English formal education was frightfully boring for both students and teachers. The fact that the Russells had two school-aged children of their own was undoubtedly a strong incentive for the undertaking.



BERTRAND RUSSELL (1872-1970)

The theoretical basis of the 'experimental' school began with Russell's rejection of much contained in the educational tenets of Locke and Rousseau. Both, in Russell's view, had promoted necessary school reforms for their times, but they had failed to provide in their theories considerations which included education for the masses. The two had advocated education for aristocrats only. Furthermore, only males were to be included. Russell meant to involve everyone in the formal education process--rich and poor, male and female. He also rejected Locke's and Rousseau's tutorial method of instruction mainly because it tended to disregard what he considered to be an essential aspect of the learning experience--close social contact. Russell did incorporate one of Rousseau's assumptions (as he interpreted him) into his educational scheme, the idea that children were neither good nor bad and that their ultimate nature was directly dependent upon positive attributes within the social and educational milieu (Russell, 1926).

The Russells consolidated the ideas of two contemporary educational theorists and practitioners--Margaret McMillan and Maria Montessori--into the activities at the Beacon Hill

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School. From Montessori they took the idea that the learning environment should be as pleasant and comfortable as possible and they strongly agreed with McMillan's contention that "the impulse of education should come from the pupil..." (Russell, 1926).

Russell left the school in 1934. Dora continued to operate it until 1942. Although Russell considered the Beacon Hill experiment to be a failure (due in no small part to the unjustifiable attacks by the community that acts of sexual deviation went on there), others have rated it as a 'moderate success' owing to an advanced curriculum and methods which did not differ from "those employed in other progressive schools of the day" (Park, 1963).

...Russell argued that before one could arrive at a general purpose, one had to conceptualize what kind of person and community was desirable and could be attained realistically through the educational process.

Regarding the questions which this issue of Thresholds is attempting to address, one should find in Russell's observations and comments, as they relate to them, elements which induce fresh analysis and re-evaluation of the nature of the educational process in toto. Speaking to matters related to the purpose of education, Russell argued that before one could arrive at a general purpose, one had to conceptualize what kind of person and community was desirable and could be attained realistically through the educational process. In this regard, Russell continually wrote unkindly of traditional, formal education. He attacked educators and the institutions in which they taught as cornerstones of the status quo. At one point (Russell, 1932), he ardently observed that "education (especially) in the modern world tends to be a reactionary force, supporting the government when it is conservative and opposing it when it is progressive." Challenging the assumption that true democratic education existed anywhere (although the potential for it varied from country to country), Russell argued that "those who rule (ruling class) have always felt (and continue to feel) that the state is their personal concern and the schools are maintained to continue the mentality that the holders of power should continue to hold power" (Russell, 1932). Later, in the same volume, he attacked educators whose major priority was to instill in their students "certain habits of social conformity" with a "harshness that took no account of human needs" (Russell, 1932). Russell often lamented the fact that teachers did little to "foster the inward growth of the mind and the spirit" (Russell, 1916). This phenomenon, argued Russell, had a disabling effect on individual growth and societal development. The result was not productive education but rather education to promote good form. In Russell's view, good form simply meant certain behaviors that "tended to minimize friction between equals and delicately impress inferiors if one does not possess it" (Russell, 1916). Moreover, those who continued to promote good form became so convinced of their own

righteousness that ultimately they came to believe that "correct manners are more desirable than intellect, artistic creativity or vital energy or any other source of progress" (Russell, 1916). Furthermore, elevating the importance of good form became an effective political weapon for preserving "the privileges of the rich and powerful in a snobbish democracy" (Russell, 1916). The hegemonic nature of this position, concluded Russell, was the driving force which determined in the main "which subjects are taught, the knowledge offered and the knowledge withheld and which mental habits the students are expected to acquire" (Russell, 1916).

Russell saw other dangers in formal education as it was experienced by citizens of advanced industrial societies. They, noted Russell (1932), became "wrapped in self-complacency," assuming that they "know about other nations all the things...(citizens of other nations) do not know about themselves." Again Russell (1932) places much of the responsibility for this attitude on teachers who he contends are in the business of 'myth-making,' convincing students that their "most important social loyalty as citizens is to the state," and that their "duty to the state is to act as the government may direct." To insure this level of consciousness, students are taught "false history, false politics and false economics" (Russell, 1926).

Russell draws heavily on what and how history is taught to emphasize the myth-making nature of education. In Principles of Social Reconstruction (1916) he writes:

History is usually taught to magnify one's country. Children learn that their country is always right and almost always victorious, that it produces all the great men (and women), and that it is in all respects superior to all other countries. Since these beliefs are flattering, they are easily absorbed and hardly ever dislodged from the instinct by later knowledge. In terms of promoting national pride, children are taught by distortion, suppression, and suggestion.

...students are continually "informed of the misdeeds of foreign states, but not the misdeeds of their own state."

In addition, Russell charges that students are continually "informed of the misdeeds of foreign states, but not the misdeeds of their own state." Furthermore, "they are taught that all wars in which their state has engaged are wars of defense, while the wars of foreign states are wars of aggression. Their country does not conquer, it spreads civilization, the light of the gospel, a lofty moral tone and other things which are equally noble" (Russell, 1932).

What would Russell suggest as a workable alternative to the purpose of traditional education? He felt strongly about education's role in promoting and producing desirable and universal qualities in humankind. In Education and the Good

Life (1926), he constantly refers to one such quality—the 'scientific spirit,' or the 'consistent demand and wish to find out the truth,' which in turn necessitates a "preliminary uncertainty, with the awareness that even our best founded beliefs probably stand in need of some correction." Instilling uncertainty in students was the essential purpose of education, argued Russell, in that the presence of uncertainty guarded against the major danger found in most modern education—the process of "reaching true conclusions on

Teachers ought to plant the seeds in students that will arouse their natural curiosity throughout their lifetime, a curiosity "which will allow people to escape their own ignorance and misery."

insufficient data" (Russell, 1932). Russell's purpose for education is clear. Teachers ought to plant the seeds in students that will arouse their natural curiosity throughout their lifetime, a curiosity "which will allow people to escape their own ignorance and misery" (Russell, 1926). By developing skills in the art of proper questioning, the student could acquire the tools to "combat propagandists who are perpetually blazing falsehoods to us," wrote Russell (1926).

Thus, in Russell's view, by passively accepting the teacher's wisdom as to the correctness or incorrectness of an answer, the student "acquires the habit of not thinking independently and thus helps to maintain the power of the church, the government, the party caucuses, and other organizations by which plain men and women are misled into supporting old systems which are harmful to nations and themselves" (Russell, 1916). Students, argued Russell, must learn to demand evidence "for whatever is to be believed and follow the evidence regardless of the direction in which it leads" (Russell, 1932). In other words, young people "should always be encouraged to regard literally every question as open and to be able to overthrow any opinion as a result of argument" (Russell, 1926).

To achieve this end, Russell proposed a strategy that could further activate the nerves of many already anxious teachers. "Our aim," he suggested, "is to reduce external discipline to a minimum" and to "require an internal self-discipline which is more easily acquired in the early years of life than at any other time" (Russell, 1926). Moreover, "the child must be revered, and the belief in his/her innate ability to think, reason and inquire must become a universal attitude among educators" (Russell, 1916). Russell believed that the ultimate product would be the preservation of human kind since people would be "cultivated with a vivid sense as to a citizenship of the world" (Russell, 1932). It is noteworthy that the inculcation of the 'scientific spirit' has important implications for life-long learning, a concept which Russell adamantly supported.

What of minimal standards then? Drawing on his firm commitment to individual curiosity and inquiry, Russell once wrote (1926), presumably with tongue-in-cheek, "everything which can be put

into a handbook, should not be taught in the classroom." Obviously, this is Russell's way of emphasizing his belief that the essential teacher responsibility is not to insure that the student acquires a minimal or predetermined set of 'facts.' Rather, teachers should be ever aware that they are leaders and facilitators aiming to develop in their students the minimal skills in the art and science of critical analysis. Thus, cultivating proficiencies which continually foster in students the inclination to review and question

...cultivating proficiencies which continually foster in students the inclination to review and question represents Russell's view of what should constitute the notion of minimal standards, the nurturing of the 'scientific spirit.'

represents Russell's view of what should constitute the notion of minimal standards, the nurturing of the 'scientific spirit.'

Fortunately, Russell supplements this somewhat abstract scheme with other, more concrete suggestions. He vigorously advocates the dissemination of knowledge which has practical utility. "particularly in the early years of schooling, and for the purpose of survival in society," Russell writes, "the student should develop the ability to read, write...(his or her)...own name, and decipher" (Russell, 1932). By promoting this seemingly limited set of requirements, Russell means to guard against what he calls 'over-education.' As a problem, this is important "because a clever person who has been over-educated loses spontaneity, self-confidence and health, and thereby becomes a far less useful member of the community than he (or she) might have been." Moreover, the tendency to want to over-educate students leads to another problem, according to Russell, in that "as the existing mass of knowledge grows greater, it becomes increasingly laborious to know all that is relevant, both in the more complicated practical questions and in scientific discovery." Thus, teachers must concern themselves with instruction in the '3 Rs' since the evils of over-education cannot be avoided merely by saying: "Let boys and girls run wild and not be bothered with too much learning" (Russell, 1932).

Russell repeatedly reminds us that "most knowledge, if unrelated to subsequent professional work, is likely to be soon forgotten" (Russell, 1932). To support his contention, Russell proposes that we examine professional people of forty in the subjects that they studied at the university or for that matter while they were in high school. "I am afraid," he cajoles, "it would be found that in most cases, little knowledge remained. On the other hand," he continues, "if they had studied something which enabled them to see their profession or occupation in relation to the life of the community, and to understand its social aspects, it is likely that their subsequent experience would have supplied illustrations to what they had learned and would therefore have caused the knowledge to remain in their minds" (Russell, 1932). Hence, Russell advises us that there should be "a drastic

elimination of instruction that serves no useful purpose, that is things should not be learned because they have always been learned" (Russell, 1932).

Russell's scheme, of course, has a definite purpose. His abstract and concrete conceptualization of minimal standards would guarantee his ultimate goal--the progressive evolution of mankind. Russell sees in his methods the components that would tend "to provide opportunities for growth and to remove hampering influences, to give culture to the individual and to develop his (or her) capacity to the utmost, and to give a consciousness in relation to the community rather than a consciousness of individualism" (Russell, 1932). These, he contends, are the necessary ingredients for good citizenship.

Russell argues that traditional attempts to establish minimal standards has resulted in using education as a means for acquiring superiority over others and "has become effected through and through with ruthlessness and glorification of

...what the world needs is not competition, but organization and co-operation.

social inequality" (Russell, 1916). The fact that competition has been installed "as an institutional fact," is, says Russell, even less significant than the absurdity that it has become "an ideal to be held before the young--what the world needs is not competition, but organization and co-operation" (Russell, 1932).

The traditional tendency to institute minimal standards which generate competition has had far-reaching implications, according to Russell. He writes that "in spite of continually improving techniques in production, we are growing poor. In spite of being aware of the horrors of war, we continue to cultivate in the young those sentiments which make it inevitable. In spite of science, we react against the habit of considering problems rationally. In spite of increasing command over nature, most men (and women) feel more hopeless and unimportant than they have felt since the Middle Ages. The source of these difficulties does not lie in the external world, nor in the cognitive part of our nature, since we know more than men have ever known before. It lies in our passions, our emotional habits, in the sentiments instilled in the youth, and the phobia created in infancy" (Russell, 1932). Even earlier, Russell had commented that "if existing knowledge were used and tested methods applied, we could in a generation, produce a population almost wholly free of disease, malevolence, and stupidity" (Russell, 1926). It is rather ironic and somewhat disturbing that these observations were made over fifty years ago.

Thus, minimal standards, as Russell has developed them, must be conceived in such a way that a certain type of human being is produced. This type of human being would "have the emotional equipment to make short work of the social system with its wars, its oppression, its economic injustices, and its superstitious moral code"

(Russell, 1932).

The ultimate decision to implement a new educational approach lies both with teachers and those who train them. Their consciousness must be raised in such a way, argues Russell, that it becomes obvious to all who are involved in educating that:

Teaching involves falsehood; ethical falsehoods since it is a representation that the inequality of the rich and the poor is not an injustice; economic falsehood since it suggests that the present economic system is the best possible; historical falsehood since the previous conflicts of rich and poor are narrated from the standpoint of the rich. When the teachers are little better than proletarians themselves, they need slavish souls if they are to believe what they have to teach, and lack of courage if they are to teach it without believing it (Russell, 1932).

Apparently drawing from his own experiences at

Russell's approach may well be a strategy for self-directed, life-long learning.

Beacon Hill, Russell further maintains that "it is (even) possible to give adequate instruction, and to produce highly educated human beings without imposing any obligation to be present at lessons...this requires among adults a genuine and spontaneous interest in intellectual pursuits. It requires small classes. It requires sympathy and tact and skill in the teacher" (Russell, 1932).

Russell's approach may well be a strategy for self-directed, life-long learning. Many adult educators throughout the world have, in varying degrees, proposed a similar system--a system which would emphasize education for social change, promote a world community of men and women, and increase the odds that, in this atomic age, the human race as we know it will survive upon the planet. Many of Russell's suggestions may appear unrealistic, indeed idealistic. However, lest we forget, not in the far too distant past the idea that women should be granted the right to vote, that blacks would be allowed to attend the University of Alabama, that working people should be guaranteed paid holidays and societal subsidized pensions, and that educational opportunities beyond high school would be available to all, was looked upon as unrealistic and idealist. Times change, so does reality.

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- Note 1. For an extensive list of Russell's writings on education, see Park, pp. 173-187.
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European Educational Theorists : Implications of Their Ideas for American Education -- A Summary

By Byron F. Radebaugh

As indicated in the editorial, the editor asked the contributors to address three basic questions. This concluding essay summarizes the answers given to them.

According to your understanding of the thought of--(European Theorist):

Question #1: What should be the major purposes and goals for public democratic education in the United States at this time in history? How do we decide? Who decides?

Answer: According to Van Steenburgh, Plato would give top priority to self-development in accordance with standards imposed by the knowledgeable and eventually validated by the student's own recognition of progress toward excellence. Also, top priority should be given to developing a system of rewards for excellence.

According to Bruhn, Locke recommended private education through a tutor rather than public school education. He thought the primary purpose of the educational process is the practice of reasoning skills. The ability to reason about useful, frequently encountered experiences is the mark of an educated man.

According to Holt, Rousseau thought the major purpose of education was to create good citizens who can understand the concept of the General will. He thought every citizen should be a free moral agent who loves his country and pursues the simple life. He thought we should all try to understand democracy as an ideological political system and be civically and morally responsible to each other.

According to Wilkie, Pestalozzi thought the major purpose of education was to fit one for life; to cure the ills of society; to bring about political reform; to develop the whole child; to develop his head by thinking, his heart by believing, and his hand by activity; to alleviate the lot of the poor.

According to Smelter, Montessori thought the major purpose of education was to provide a haven filled with the excitement of discovery and a joy of learning at a pace which best suited the child. It should be practical, horizon-broadening and child-centered. It should help the child cope with the environment and help himself; to transform society through compensatory education.

According to Bruening, Heidegger believed the major purpose of education was to teach the kind of thinking that does not represent the thrust of Western thought; to teach meditative thinking.

According to Hellyer, Russell believed the major purpose of education was to serve international peace; to serve social purposes; to develop the 'scientific spirit' or the wish to find out the truth; to instill uncertainty in students; to arouse the natural curiosity in students throughout their lifetime, a curiosity which will allow people to escape their own ignorance and misery.

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Question #2: Should public schools have minimum standards? If so, what should they be? Who decides?

Answer: Plato would say, "Yes." Teachers must exhibit the standards defining excellence in teaching, as well as in his/her speciality, and in respect to the latter, conform student performance to them. Who decides? The knowledgeable.

This question was not addressed by Locke. He probably would not agree to minimal standards. He suggests that education should apply to life and be individualized for everyone, but quite possibly he would agree to standards for the individual. He would charge the teacher/tutor with developing the individual to his/her highest good potential defined as the ability to reason about the things that concern one's way of life. Who decides? The tutor.

Rousseau would say, "Yes." We must stimulate students to become researchers of Nature; to be independent thinkers capable of making good moral decisions. We should educate the heart as well as the head. Back to basics is not adequate. Public education should create a just society, where citizens can unite, at least ideally, with one heart and one mind, ever mindful of the General will. Children must be able to explore ideas that interest them whatever course of study one can identify with those interests. Who decides? We must participate in deciding, keeping in mind the General will.

Pestalozzi does not discuss minimum standards. He views learning as a lifelong endeavor, in which the learner must internalize whatever he needs to fully realize his potential in life. Education should be interesting, enjoyable, and of value in itself. The humane treatment of children is important. Children should be an active partner in the learning process and a factor in determining what he needs to learn.

Montessori believes that standards should be related to each child. We must allow each child to flourish in an environment conducive to his/her own needs and learning pace. This will lead the child closer to God and thus reduce vice in society. Who decides? Adults.

Heidegger has no answer for questions about standards because he never asks such questions. He thinks the question does not make sense.

Russell would say, "Yes." Mastering the art and science of critical analysis is the minimum standard. We should cultivate proficiencies which continually foster in students the inclination to review and question. We must nurture the 'scientific spirit.'

Question #3: Whose values are or should be promoted in the public schools either explicitly or implicitly through curricula, written materials, structure, etc.? Are these values conducive to meeting the challenges of a democratic society in a global context?

Answer: Plato would say, "Those of the knowledgeable..." Democracy in education... substitutes the opinions of the many for knowledge by the few.

Locke would say that the values of the "Gentleman" should be promoted in private education through a tutor. The ability to think critically and constantly obtain and adapt

knowledge to new situations is conducive to meeting the challenges of a democratic society in a global context.

Rousseau believed in the value of the General will: those moral decisions that would serve society even if those decisions were not in one's personal interest. The values suggesting that the individual is a free moral agent, should be an active participant in government, show social responsibility, and be an independent thinker capable of making good moral decisions are relevant to democracy today.

It is not clear how Pestalozzi would answer this question(s).

Montessori believed that the life of man and his values should be promoted in the public schools. The world needs a 'new man.' The emphasis on pre-school education, individualized instruction, and educational games (including the computer) seems particularly applicable in our democratic society today.

Heidegger does not address this question directly. Listening, authenticity, shepherding, silence, dwelling poetically would be examples of values Heidegger would consider important. These values would not be promoted by the curricula. Heidegger thinks we should be asking an entirely different set of questions.

Russell believed that the values of demanding evidence for belief, revering children, thinking, reasoning, inquiring, and becoming a world citizen are important. What the world needs is not competition, but organization and cooperation. He also believed that education should include everyone; rich and poor; male and female.

Concluding Remarks

I think that the insights provided by the European educational theorists described in this issue of Thresholds have the potential of informing the public debate as we in the United States attempt to think through anew the definition of education, its purposes, its standards of excellence, the role of lifelong learning, teachers and teaching, community involvement, its role in changing or transforming society, and the organizational and leadership dimensions of the system.



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The Board of Directors, Thresholds in Education Foundation, wishes to recognize the many contributions made by its founder, Dr. Leonard L. Pourchot, recently retired Professor of Education at Northern Illinois University. His dedicated leadership as first Chairman of the Board of Directors of Thresholds in Education Foundation, creative planning as editor of several issues of *Thresholds*, and his tireless attention to the details of publishing a professional educational journal, has permitted *Thresholds* to reach and celebrate its tenth anniversary. We thank him for this effort, and wish him well in his retirement.

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