Modern & postmodern Philosophies & Education

EDUC 300 / CORE 310

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|  | Pragmatism | Existentialism | postmodernism |
| In a nutshell | Practical-ness (American) | Revolt against trad. Philos. | Reaction to modernism (reason) |
| Who? | Dewey, Wm James, | Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre | Derrida, Foucault |
| Main emphases or essential concepts | People can know what their senses experience. | Existence before essence.  Individualism. | Knowledge is constructed by humans. |
| View of truth  (What is real?) | The cave is all we have.  Truth is what works.  Truth is relative. | Truth as choice.  You are what you choose to be.  Sartre: Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. | Truth is dead. Impossible to determine.  Marxism.  Foucault: Logocentrism – language manipulation. Need to deconstruct language. |
| View of values | Beliefs are private.  Ethically good is what works.  Six of the Ten Commandments work for all. | All about individual choice. Knight: Frightful task of producing values out of nothing.  Sartre: condemned to be free. | Values are social constructs. Most values should be dismantled. |
| View of aesthetics | Concepts of beauty depend on how people feel about something. | Revolt against public standard. What is beautiful to me is beautiful, and who can contradict me? | Aesthetics are social constructs.  Don’t buy into what others say is beautiful. |
| View of the student | Students have experiences, solve problems, adapt to changing world. Felt needs. | Students are free agents and shouldn’t be forced to be cogs in the machine.  Unique individuality. | Produce their own knowledge. |
| View of the teacher | Teachers are more experienced fellow travelers | Facilitator. | Social activist. |
| View of the curriculum  (Best subjects? Why?) | Students at the center. Problem solving. Thematic units. Field trips. Project method. Process. | Student choice. Many options.  Literature and the arts.  Avoid uniformity. | A kaleidoscope. Constantly changing.  Art, literature. Social sciences. |
| Purpose of education | Learn process. Participate in the democracy of learning. Learn how to change society. | Foster creativity in the individual. Find ways to provide choices to students. Help them explore great ideas esp. in lit. & art. | Stretch students. Turn them into critical thinkers (skeptics?). |
| View of work | Do something to help society. | Be yourself. Just for yourself. | Enjoy life. Preferably also do something to shake up society. |
| Pros | Focus on learner/learning. Positive outlook on student and society. | More appealing to Xians than pragmatism. Why? | Language is important. |
| Cons | No absolutes. | No absolutes. Lots of atheists. | No absolutes. |
| Compatibility w/ Chr. worldview |  | Kierkegaard wanted to revitalize Xity. |  |
| Questions? |  |  |  |