Contemporary theories of Education

EDUC 300 / CORE 310

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|  | Progressivism | Humanism | perennialism | Essentialism |
| In a nutshell | Student centered | Student centered | Return to the absolutes | Back to the basics, 3 R’s |
| Who? | Dewey, Freud, Rousseau | Maslow, Holt, Glasser | Adler, Bloom | Hirsch |
| Against | Traditional education | Mindless, inhumane schools | Progressivism | Progressivism |
| Influenced by | Pragmatism | Progressivism |  | Idealism, realism |
| Main emphases or essential concepts | Natural, exploratory  Process oriented, democratic  Problem solving | Humanize, self-actualize the student. | Focus on great works that have stood the test of time.  Importance of mind, reason. |  |
| View of truth  (What is real?) |  |  | Knowledge is universally consistent. |  |
| View of values |  |  | Timeless truths |  |
| View of aesthetics |  |  |  |  |
| View of the student | Naturally inquisitive  Active learner, not passive | Unique individual. | People are rational animals. | Learning is hard work – student needs discipline |
| View of the teacher | Advisor, guide, fellow traveler. Not authoritarian | Not authoritarian. Enable students to pursue interests. | Introduce students to the great works. | The locus of classroom authority & discipline, demands respect |
| View of the curriculum  (Best subjects? Why?) | Resource materials for students’ natural curiosity. Should not be arbitrarily divided into subjects. | Open classroom, “free” school. Desks in clusters. Activity areas with resource materials. | Great works that have stood the test of time. Textbooks are bad.  Avoid vocation training. | Five New Basics |
| Purpose of education | Awaken natural curiosity, prepare to better society. Education is life. | Create learning environment free from intense competition, harsh discipline, and fear of failure. | Preparation for life. | Transmitting tested facts and truths (basic knowledge) |
| View of work | Make society better |  |  |  |
| Pros | Children are unique, curious |  |  | Less intellectual than Perennialism |
| Cons |  |  | Too aristocratic for most Americans |  |
| Compatibility with Christian worldview |  |  |  | Christian fundamentalism aligned with essentialism against secular humanism |

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|  | Reconstruc-tionism | Futurism | Critical Pedagogy | Behaviorism |
| In a nutshell | Fix the world’s problems | Face forward not backward | Remove systems of oppression |  |
| Who? | Counts | Toffler | McLaren | Skinner, Comte, Pavlov |
| Against |  | Past theories and approaches | All oppressive systems | Traditional education’s harshness |
| Influenced by | Great Depression, world problems | Extension and modification of reconstructionism | Marxism, postmodernism, liberation theology | Psychology, realism, positivism |
| Main emphases or essential concepts | Change the world for the better |  | Forget about ancient theories.  Knight: includes multiculturalism, feminism, globalism | Scientific methodology: laws of behavior |
| View of truth  (What is real?) |  |  | Knowledge is not objective but constructed by humans | We’re being conditioned anyway, so let’s study and refine the conditioning |
| View of values |  |  | Marxist critique of capitalism | Accountability movement |
| View of aesthetics |  |  |  |  |
| View of the student |  |  |  | A highly developed, conditioned animal. No special dignity or freedom. |
| View of the teacher | The power to change the world! |  |  | Learn and harness the laws of behavior. |
| View of the curriculum  (Best subjects? Why?) | Expose problem areas of human culture.  Teachers shouldn’t mask their convictions. | Critically examine current order. Don’t be obsolete. Give lots of choices. Forget about changing the world – it’s changing without us – get students prepared! | Social construction of knowledge. Curriculum is cultural politics – it prepares students to be dominators or subjects. | Break up subjects into small steps – reward each step. Training. Performance based standards. |
| Purpose of education | Create a new social order. Touches every citizen. |  | Create a public sphere of citizens (rising up to take power) | Create learning environments that lead to desired behaviors. |
| View of work | Changing the world for the better. |  | Enslaved to the man. |  |
| Pros |  |  |  |  |
| Cons | Assumes issues and solutions are obvious to all. |  |  |  |
| Compatibility with Christian worldview |  |  |  |  |

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|  | Deschooling | Homeschooling | Postmodernism (chap. 5) |
| In a nutshell | Repeal compulsory educ. | More family control of education | Reaction to modernism (reason) |
| Who? | Illich | Holt | Derrida, Foucault |
| Influenced by |  | 1 view: progressivism, critical pedagogy  1 view: perennialism, essentialism |  |
| Main emphases or essential concepts | The good life is hampered by compulsory schooling (monopoly, rigid, expensive) | Usually about freedom (to do more of one of the above –isms than the schools can do)  Sometimes it’s about special needs or interests not met by the schools. | Knowledge is constructed by humans. |
| View of truth  (What is real?) |  |  | Truth is dead. Impossible to determine.  Marxism.  Foucault: Logocentrism – language manipulation. Need to deconstruct language. |
| View of values | The good life |  | Values are social constructs. Most values should be dismantled. |
| View of aesthetics |  |  | Aesthetics are social constructs.  Don’t buy into what others say is beautiful. |
| View of the student |  | 1 view: needs more discipline, focus.  1 view: needs more choice, freedom. | Produce their own knowledge. |
| View of the teacher | Available if needed in “educational network” | Usually the mom during the day, & dad helps out with evening h.w. & weekend “field trips” | Social activist. |
| View of the curriculum  (Best subjects? Why?) | Skill exchanges. Take a course or get a tutorial on just what you need for your own goals. | Family decides on which perspectives to cultivate in the learning process. Some families buy curriculum from one publisher. | A kaleidoscope. Constantly changing.  Art, literature. Social sciences. |
| Purpose of education | Provide resources to all who want to learn at any age | 1 view: you can be anything you want  1 view: learn the absolutes | Stretch students. Turn them into critical thinkers (skeptics?). |
| View of work |  |  | Enjoy life. Preferably also do something to shake up society. |
| Pros |  |  |  |
| Cons |  |  |  |
| Compatibility with Christian worldview |  |  |  |