

Occupations

In January 1886 John Dewey's school was opened and had its first session. Here Dewey had a place to test his theories and develop new ideas regarding curriculum. In the beginning, Dewey admits that superficially there was some similarity to the recapitulation theory (Dewey, 1981) but underneath Dewey wanted to develop a unity in the curriculum. Dewey would call this unifying concept *occupations*.

Dewey was very critical of the way Herbert Spence viewed the minds of the primitive people. Dewey argued that the primitive mind could not be gaged on a fixed hierarchical scale, instead we need to look at the relation to the dominant activities required by the kind of world in which they live. In *Interpretation of the Savage Mind*, Dewey (1902) states that "the occupations determine the chief modes of satisfaction, the standards of success and failure. Hence they furnish the working classifications and definitions of value." Dewey's curriculum followed the stages of the human race similar to recapitulation except Dewey focused on the evolution of the basic social activities. Dewey believed that if a curriculum was built around fundamental social occupations then it would bring together the individual and social ends of curriculum (Dewey, 1980). Dewey believed that with a connection to these occupations subjects like reading, writing and arithmetic could be effectively taught within the context of their use.

Dewey (1890) believed that if the curriculum was built around these occupations then the school could become a miniature community. The school would then become not only a place to go and learn lessons but also a place to live.

John Bosica

References

Dewey, J. (1980). *The school and society* (Vol. 151). SIU Press.

Dewey, J. (1981). The Theory of the Chicago Experiment, 1936, JA Boydston, The Later Works.

Dewey, J. (1902). Interpretation of savage mind. *Psychological Review*, 9(3), 217.