

The Sources
of
a Science of
Education

John Dewey

新闻学与传播学经典丛书·英文原版系列

The Sources of a Science
of Education
教育科学的资源

John Dewey 著
〔美〕约翰·杜威

中国传媒大学出版社

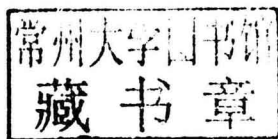
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出版说明

“新闻学与传播学经典丛书·英文原版系列”，选取了在新闻学与传播学历史上具有里程碑意义的大师经典名作。如传播学“四大奠基人”哈罗德·拉斯韦尔、保罗·拉扎斯菲尔德等及加布里埃尔·塔尔德、罗伯特·帕克、哈罗德·英尼斯、马歇尔·麦克卢汉、库尔特·卢因、卡尔·霍夫兰等这些学界耳熟能详的名家佳作。这些是传播学与新闻学的奠基之作，也是现代新闻学与传播学发展的基础。许多名作都多次再版，影响深远，历久不衰，成为新闻学与传播学的经典。此套丛书采用英文原版出版，使读者读到原汁原味的著作。

随着中国高等教育教学改革的推进，广大师生已不满足于仅仅阅读国外图书的翻译版，他们迫切希望能读到原汁原味的原版图书，希望能采用国外英文原版图书进行教学，从而保证所讲授的知识体系的完整性、系统性、科学性和文字描绘的准确性。此套丛书的出版便是满足了这种需求。亦可使学生在专业技术方面尽快掌握本学科相应的外语词汇和了解先进国家的学术发展的方向。

本系列丛书在原汁原味地引进英文原版图书的同时，将目录译为中文，作为对原版的一种导读，供读者阅读时参考。本系列丛书有些因为出版年代比较久远，也囿于当时印刷水平的限制，有些地方可能与现在的标准不太一致，在不影响读者阅读的前提下，我们未对其进行处理，以保证英文原版图书的原汁原味，

从事经典著作的出版，需要出版人付出不懈的努力，好在有全国新闻院系的专家教授们的大力扶持，为我们提供了备选书目并对英文目录进行了翻译，因此使我们得以在学术出版的道路上走得更远。我们自知本系列丛书也许会有很多缺陷，我们也将虚心接受读者提出的批评和建议。

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It should be a commonplace,
but unfortunately it is not,
that no education —
or anything else for that matter —
is progressive unless it is making progress.

John Dewey

THE SOURCES
OF A SCIENCE OF
EDUCATION

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Introduction

This volume was the inaugural lecture of the series sponsored by Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society, delivered at the Society's annual dinner meeting in 1929 and published later that same year. The tenth-anniversary lecture, *Experience and Education*, was delivered by John Dewey in 1938 and published in 1938. Both published lectures became education classics, and both have had great currency for education and society to this day.

The Sources of a Science of Education turned out to be remarkably prophetic with regard to the conduct and direction of educational research, and the necessary connection between research and practice. Here Dewey holds that the sources of a science of education must be determined by educational problems – with educational *practices* providing the data or subject matter which forms the *problems* for inquiry and solution. Psychology, sociology, economics and other social sciences may be drawn upon, but educational *practices* are “the

sole source of the ultimate *problems* to be investigated," while educational *practices* also are the test of the validity and value of the research findings and consequences.

Philosophy of education may be a source if it provides "working hypotheses of comprehensive application" – to which Dewey adds: "But if a philosophy starts to reason out its conclusions without definite and constant regard to the concrete experiences that define the problem for thought, it becomes speculative in a way that justifies contempt."

Dewey attacks the traditional dualism of making a sharp distinction between the *what* of learning and the *how* of learning, and the practice in teacher education of assigning the determination of the process of learning to psychology, and of the subject matter to social science – the inevitable outcome of which is to overlook the tastes and interests that control the motivation for future learning. Such collateral learning is the most powerful outcome of education, for it empowers the learner to go on learning.

Dewey warns of the limits of quantitative measurements for educational science because so much judgment in the teaching-learning

process is qualitative and must itself be qualitative. Exact quantitative measures do not help in the larger question of reconstruction of curriculum and methods, but only exaggerate the mechanical factors that exist in schools, observes Dewey. Many of the problems to be investigated in educational research involve myriad and disparate variables, and often involve comparisons of incommensurate populations.

The propensity to judge the success of the student and teacher by external examinations promotes the belief that the tests are scientific and thereby give unquestionable authenticity and authority as the guarantee of successful practice – “a guarantee that goes with the sale of goods rather than as a light to the eyes and a lamp to the feet,” contends Dewey.

Moreover, observes Dewey, there is the doctrine that educational objectives are determined by extant sociopolitical influences and are to be addressed through sources external to the educational function. “To go outside the educational function and to borrow objectives from an external source is to surrender the educational cause,” declares Dewey, as he goes on to state that: “Until educators get

the independence and courage to insist that educational aims are to be formed as well as executed within the educative process, they will not come to consciousness of their own function. Others will then have no great respect for educators because educators do not respect their own social place and work." Dewey makes it clear that he is not holding that educators should determine objectives, but rather that objectives are to be determined by the "educative process in its integrity and continuity." He then concludes: "For education is itself a process of discovering what values are worth while and are to be pursued as objectives."

With the trend toward nationalizing influences on the public schools and external high-stakes testing in the United States, universities and education policymakers have turned to psychology, sociology, economics and statistics as sources for defining the problems of education and the methodologies of inquiry, resulting in a situation like the proverbial tale of the blind men and the elephant. Faced with a conundrum of contradictory and conflicting findings, the disciplinary specialists can proclaim the urgent need for more research of

the same ilk or brand, or they may join the school blamers.

Or they can fix the blame on teachers – the ones who are vastly ignored in the process of identifying the problems to be investigated in the first place – for it is always easier to find fault than to find warranted solutions, or even to find what isn't there.

Factors that have impeded scientific inquiry for problem solving in education, according to Dewey, are imitative reproduction and the tendency to surrender to or join up with the strongest or most popular external force or trend, political and social. Of popular appeal are the gifts of the individual teacher, but those gifts tend to disappear with the individual.

Dewey is not putting down the teacher. "It seems to me," he maintains, "that the contributions that might come from *classroom* teachers are a comparatively neglected field: or to change the metaphor, an almost unworked mine." After all, the teacher cannot escape the problems of education, and it is the teacher who must define and activate the process of education through the classroom and school, and into society.

To ignore the teacher in the investigative

process, contends Dewey, "is almost fatal to the idea of a workable scientific content in education.... For these teachers are the ones in direct contact with pupils and hence the ones through whom scientific findings reach students."

After a long struggle to advance teaching as a profession through the course of the twentieth century, a struggle in which John Dewey played a significant role, teachers once again are being treated as employees.

For Dewey, education is an endless process or spiral which encompasses science within itself, continually opening up more problems to be addressed for solution and progress.

Daniel Tanner
Professor Emeritus
Rutgers University

September 22, 2013

The Sources of a Science of Education

[I]

EDUCATION AS A SCIENCE

THE title may suggest to some minds that it begs a prior question: *Is there a science of education?* And still more fundamentally, Can there be a science of education? Are the procedures and aims of education such that it is possible to reduce them to anything properly called a science? Similar questions exist in other fields. The issue is not unknown in history; it is raised in medicine and law. As far as education is concerned, I may confess at once that I have put the question in its apparently question-begging form in order to avoid discussion of questions that are important but that are also full of thorns and attended with controversial divisions.

It is enough for our purposes to note that the word "science" has a wide range.

There are those who would restrict the term to mathematics or to disciplines in which exact results can be determined by rigorous methods of demonstration. Such a conception limits even the claims of physics and chemistry to be sciences, for according to it the only scientific portion of these subjects is the strictly mathematical. The position of what are ordinarily termed the biological sciences is even more dubious, while social subjects and psychology would hardly rank as sciences at all, when measured by this definition. Clearly we must take the idea of science with some latitude. We must take it with sufficient looseness to include all the subjects that are usually regarded as sciences. The important thing is to discover those traits in virtue of which various fields are called scientific. When we raise the question in this way, we are led to put emphasis upon *methods* of dealing with subject-matter rather than to look for uniform objective traits in subject-matter. From this point of view, science signifies, I take it, the existence of systematic methods of inquiry, which, when they are brought to bear on a range of facts, enable us to understand them better and to control them