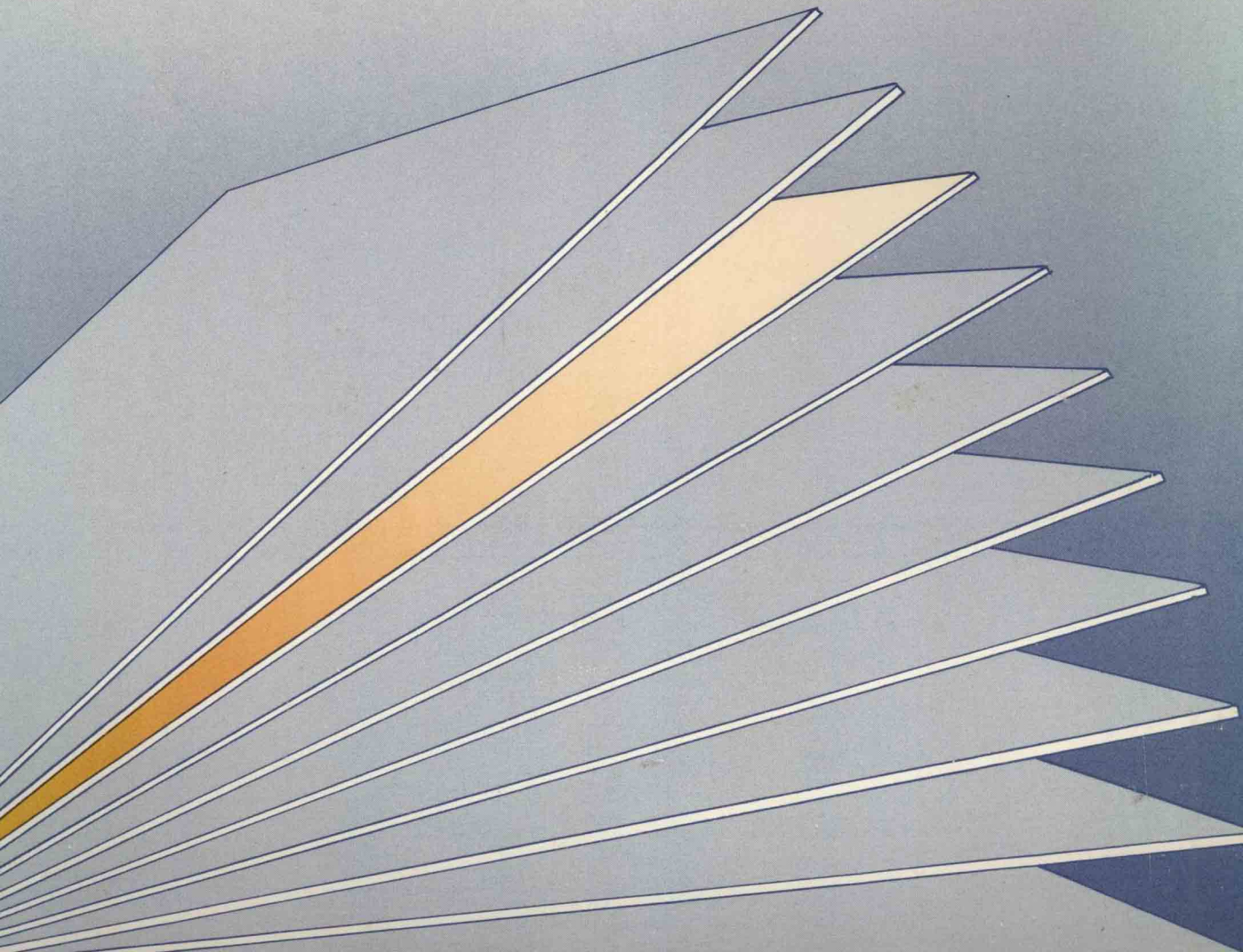


INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATION

REFORMERS AND THEIR CRITICS

F i f t h E d i t i o n

John Martin Rich



Innovations in Education

Reformers and Their Critics

Fifth Edition

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To Audrey



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Preface

Education today is in a state of ferment. We hear about the loss of confidence in public education, the enrollment growth in private schools, the excellence movement, widespread changes in education at the state level, the reform of teacher education, merit raises, and the impending technological revolution in education. In light of these and other significant developments, a number of reformers have offered ideas for extricating education from the morass in which it finds itself. These writers are distinguished by their ability to break with tradition and the conventional modes of perceiving educational problems and situations. They have advanced some bold and imaginative proposals for transforming education.

All too frequently the proposals of these reformers are either accepted so uncritically that their ideas become dogmas rather than possible ways of liberating thought and action, or else they are rejected out of hand. In this book, selections by reformers are followed by those of their critics to overcome this problem. In this way readers can gain a balance of viewpoints, weigh reformers' strengths and weaknesses, and use the material to help develop their own positions.

There is considerable interest today in promising innovations and alternatives in education. They exhibit possibilities for new curricular and instructional patterns as well as a break with traditional forms of school organization and financial support. Both the pros and cons of these innovations and alternatives are presented here.

Thus the book consists of two parts. Part I contains representative selections by today's leading educational reformers. Part II is composed of selections, both pro and con, on the latest and most prominent educational innovations. The innovations presented may include but are not restricted to those advocated by the specific reformers in Part I. Introductions precede the main parts, laying the background for the ideas that follow. Readers may find it useful to read over the discussion questions and activities before reading the selections.

The fifth edition features changes in both parts of the book. In Part I, some new reformers and critics are introduced, more representative or up-to-date selections by earlier reformers are provided whenever appropriate, and some reformers who once were prominent but have faded have been deleted. New innovations and alternatives in Part II include the excellence movement, financial reform, teacher education programs, merit pay, and sex education. Other features include new selections for some of the innovations and alternatives retained from the fourth edition; updated suggested readings, biographies, and appendix; and new introductions, discussion questions, and activities wherever needed. The numerous teaching methodologies currently in use have not been included but have been left for methods courses.

I wish to thank the following reviewers for their useful ideas: Robert Beck, University of Minnesota; Arthur Brown, Wayne State University; Richard L. Hopkins, University of Maryland; Jim Rooney, Pennsylvania State University; and Paul Schumann, Loyola Marymount University. I am grateful to Philip J. Schwartz for valuable computer searches and bibliographic assistance, to Deborah C. Clark for her very helpful and efficient secretarial assistance, and to Susanne F. Canavan of Allyn and Bacon for her confidence in the project. I have also been encouraged to undertake this edition by favorable informal feedback by the many who successfully used the book in their classes and by the reactions of my own students.

While preparing this edition I have been impressed by the great ferment in education. I hope the reader, too, will be caught up in the intellectual excitement of contrasting ideas and vigorous search for solutions to today's most pressing educational problems.

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Part I

Educational Reformers and Their Critics

Education today is under criticism. Many citizens believe that discipline in schools is far too lax; others believe that schools should return to the basics and fundamentals. Some students are concerned that schools and colleges do not adequately prepare them for the world of work; others find schools to be basically alienating institutions that deny them the freedom to learn as they choose. A number of reformers have joined this criticism with a more penetrating analysis of greater scope that seeks to locate the roots of the malaise. These reformers view many educational practices as anachronistic and dehumanizing and attempt to show how these conditions can be overcome and new ways of educating can be initiated.

Enrollments have declined in some school districts and funding has been shifted to other needed community services. Many agree that taxes are too high, with some communities even defeating school bond issues. Citizens are demanding that schools become more accountable and that both teachers and students demonstrate requisite competencies.

How should the dissatisfaction toward public education be handled? Reformers have addressed themselves to a wide range of problems and have offered a number of startling recommendations for reconceptualizing, restructuring, and revitalizing education. The essays in this anthology provide viewpoints that should inform, stimulate thought, and encourage readers to reason carefully in order to clarify their own thinking about the topics addressed. If, in fact, readers are able to accept neither the reformers' nor the critics' positions, then it is their task to explore beyond what is provided here. (The suggested readings and discussion questions and activities should help).

THE TASKS OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Generally one thinks the purpose of reform is to amend what is defective, vicious, corrupt, or depraved. It also aims to remove an abuse, a wrong, or errors, and to make changes for the better. Reform, which means to correct, rectify, amend, and remedy by making something right which is wrong, also implies changing something to eliminate imperfections or effect a new form of character, as in changing a policy within an institution.

The two characteristic types of reform are programmatic and systemic. *Programmatic reform* refers to curricula and programs that are used in or influence organized instruction; it also is associated with innovation. An *innovation* is any new idea, method, or device that, in contrast to change, is deliberately introduced for some purpose. One could be an innovator but not a reformer, but every programmatic reformer is an innovator and much more, since he or she goes beyond merely introducing one or more innovations by developing an organized plan for change that may embody various innovations organized to achieve new goals. Thus both the scope and intent of programmatic reform differs from innovation.

Systemic reform pertains to authority relationships and the distribution and allocation of power and resources that control the educational system as a whole. It is often carried out beyond the school, drawing upon social and political forces with which reformers need to be aligned; it calls for a redistribution of power and resources. There has been considerable programmatic reform during this century but a dearth of systemic reform—which is generally understandable because of its threat to the educational power structure.

To perceive what is needed, reformers must be highly sensitive to abuses and imperfections and be dissatisfied and restless once they are uncovered; then they must develop a broad view and a bold vision of what is possible and seek to disseminate new ideas widely in hopes that the proposed reform will be implemented. While it is heartening to have strong organizational support, access to the media, and generous financial backing, few reformers can initially boast of such advantages. Some reformers may feel that their task has been completed once they write and speak to the widest possible audience. Others may go further by setting up learning experiments (Skinner), teaching in public or private schools (Holt), counseling students (Rogers), working with prospective teachers (Adler), raising funds to support reform programs (Jackson), teaching adults literacy skills (Freire), or setting up a free school (Neill).

THE CONTINUITY OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Today's educational reform is part of a process that began many years ago. Of course current reform has some distinctive features, but it is indebted to

a long and colorful history that can only be ignored at our peril. While today's reformers may wear flashy new shoes, they still stand on the shoulders of great thinkers of the past. Many of the earliest reformers' ideas were associated with a movement or an educational philosophy; therefore it may be helpful to see how each reformer relates to these broader patterns. Our survey will selectively focus on twentieth-century American educators but will relate them to European antecedents.

Sense Realism

Early European educational philosophy had an affect on twentieth-century American education by its opposition to formalism and abstraction in instruction, its deductive approach, its emphasis on rote learning, and its reliance upon the teacher's authority and the written word. In opposition to this prevailing system were Wolfgang Ratich (1571–1635), John Amos Comenius (1592–1670), and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827), who developed different principles of instruction sometimes known as *sense realism*.

Things should be studied before words because words and language itself are more abstract, according to the sense realism theory. For example, in a science demonstration, a thing or experiment would be shown first and then an explanation would follow. Everything was to be learned by an inductive process that Francis Bacon (1561–1626) had advocated. The young, said Comenius, should see real and useful things that can make an impression on the senses and the imagination. If the thing is not available, a representation should be used. Books should have pictures, diagrams, charts; and many pictures should be hung in the classroom. Too often students in traditional schools were required to learn by rote and therefore would not have necessarily understood the material committed to memory; thus rote learning was discouraged by sense realists.

Nature, said Pestalozzi, makes no sudden leaps but unfolds gradually. Consequently, every instructional act should be a small, scarcely perceptible addition to what the learner already knows. Material should become more complex only as the learner's intellectual abilities mature. Each step must be well mastered before the next step is taken. Objects are indispensable, Pestalozzi believed, and must precede pictures. The picture comes later and aids the child in making the transition to drawing, reading, and writing. The child does not just wait passively to receive objects of nature but takes an active role in analyzing and abstracting the qualities of the object. Instruction should proceed from the known to the unknown, from the concrete to the abstract, or from the particular to the general.

Twentieth-century progressives in Europe and America took up the principles of sense realism and combined them with their own ideas. Sense realism, however, was far more suited to elementary than to advanced instruction. It did not develop a sophisticated theory of how the mind works or explain the operations of higher cognitive processes. Nevertheless it was a salutary corrective and an important advance over the inflexible and authoritarian instructional practices of the period.

Romanticism

Sweeping across Western Europe and Russia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, *romanticism* became a broad movement that greatly influenced poetry, prose, painting, architecture, music, education, and the tenor of thought. It sought a simpler life, elevated feelings and emotions over intellect, empathized and identified with the poor and downtrodden, deified the child, expressed a love of animals and the beauties of nature, and contrasted these charms to the corruptions and cruelties of urban life. Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), the leading French romantic, was a highly influential figure in political and educational thought, whose ideas also influenced literary sensibility. Rousseau believed that man is born free yet everywhere he is in the chains of corrupt institutions. One approach to removing these chains was to educate the child close to nature by removing him from organized social life. Thus Emile, Rousseau's imaginary pupil, would grow up naturally by letting the laws of nature unfold and not having to perform tasks before readiness was evident. Rousseau attacked the notion of original sin and depravity by declaring that the child is born good. He recognized different stages of growth, explaining how the tutor would relate to Emile at each stage, and the different materials and activities that would be appropriate to introduce in light of the child's naturally unfolding inner development. The program would emphasize activities and experiences, deemphasize book learning, seek to avoid bad habits and instill good ones, and restrict desires so that they are in proportion to the ability to fulfill them. By late adolescence, Emile would have acquired the requisite abilities to return to the larger society, learn from it, but not be corrupted by it.

Child-Centered Progressivism

Progressivism was both a movement and a philosophy for educating the child that developed in America and Western Europe during the early part of this century. It was based on placing the child centerstage in the educational process, emphasizing the child's needs and interests, striving to develop "the whole child"—not just the child's mind but the emotional, moral, social, and physical characteristics as well. Such educators as Francis W. Parker (1837–1902) adapted curriculum to the needs of individual learners and emphasized more active learning and less dependence on textbooks. William Heard Kilpatrick (1871–1965) opposed a curriculum composed of disparate subjects and instead promoted the use of student projects. For child-centered progressives, the teacher was no longer a taskmaster or authority figure but one who helped guide meaningful learning activities. The subject matter curriculum, which represents the way scholars organize knowledge, is not consonant with the way the child learns; consequently, programs were based more on the student's needs and interests and on valuable experiences and activities.

The child-centered progressives were influenced by sense realism and romanticism. Learning activities were usually approached inductively and were

based upon concrete experiences before any generalizations were drawn. Progressive classrooms usually had many sensory objects—children’s drawings, photographs of historical figures, bulletin boards, science displays, with live animals in some instances. Progressives believed in firsthand experiences that included frequent field trips.

As for romanticism, child-centered progressives held that the child was born basically good and therefore there is no need to place many restrictions on the child’s self-expression. Although they did not educate the child away from society, they did believe in nature study and readiness for learning. Some progressives were more permissive with children than Rousseau advocated, and the teacher was more of an organizer of learning activities than a fount of knowledge. Pupil-teacher planning was promoted as not only a democratic procedure but one that would improve learning outcomes.

Child-centered progressivism was criticized by essentialists and other groups. *Essentialism* believes that the goals of education are to develop the mind and prepare people for citizenship responsibilities by having them study essential knowledge embodied in a subject curriculum that is taught by a knowledgeable teacher who expects students to respect authority and exhibit disciplined behavior. Essentialists charged progressives with neglecting basic knowledge, failing to discipline students properly, insufficiently developing their minds, and not preparing them adequately for citizenship responsibilities. Essentialism also rejected romanticism and the romantic view of the child.

Dewey’s Pragmatism

Although John Dewey (1859–1952) was also considered a progressive as well as a pragmatist, he was not child-centered and criticized this branch of the movement for alleged excesses. Dewey claimed that one cannot develop a philosophy merely by doing just the opposite of what one is against. In other words, since the traditional teacher was usually authoritarian, the child-centered educator became permissive and laissez-faire; in opposition to subject matter developed in advance and neatly laid out in compartments, were substituted the techniques of teacher-pupil planning and reliance on firsthand experience; and in opposition to external discipline free activity was used.

Dewey sought the relationship between organized bodies of knowledge and the emerging interests and curiosities of the children. He agreed with child-centered educators that one should begin with children’s interests, but differed from these educators by stating that one should connect these interests to what they ought to become interested in. The generic method of education, for Dewey, was the scientific method, which he believed could be applied to all areas of human inquiry by teaching problem solving. Reflective thinking or problem solving begins with an indeterminate situation where puzzlement arises, the problem is then defined, and an hypothesis is advanced to guide observation and the collection of data. The hypothesis is then elaborated and sometimes transformed to deal with the problem more expeditiously and effectively, and

finally the hypothesis is tested by overt and imaginative action and is either accepted or rejected. If accepted, an indeterminate situation has been made more determinate; whereas if rejected, a new hypothesis will need to be introduced, elaborated, and tested.

Dewey's pragmatism related to his reflective thinking process. Rather than *truth*, Dewey preferred the term, *warranted assertibility* to refer to the end result of having hypotheses successfully tested. Once one reaches the final stage of the reflective thinking process and accepts the original hypothesis as fulfilling the conditions of the situation, and once it has been subject to public verification, one is warranted in asserting the statement. *Pragmatism*, in other words, holds that ideas must be referred to their consequences for their truth and meaning. Ideas become instruments for solving problems, attaining goals, and anticipating future experiences.

For Dewey, life is development and development is growth. Because the characteristics of life are growth, education is one with growth. Additionally, since growth is relative to nothing but further growth, education is not subordinate to anything except more education. Education, Dewey says, is a continuous reorganization, reconstruction, and transformation or experience that adds to the meaning of experience and improves the ability to deal with subsequent experience.

Although Dewey achieved a wide following, his ideas were criticized by many different groups and divergent philosophies. Most prominent were those who rejected his pragmatism because it renounced absolute truths and values. Some held that there are some truths that remain true for all times and places, and these are the truths that should constitute the curriculum. And one cannot be considered an educated person until having wrestled with these ideas. Moreover, in contrast to Dewey's emphasis on the educative process, critics insisted on concentrating more on assuring specific learning outcomes that are measurable. More recently, a group of reformers, referred to as romantic naturalists (though they may have had some affinities with progressivism), rejected Dewey's conviction that schools can be sufficiently improved to become fully educative institutions.

Romantic Naturalists

The *romantic naturalists* of the late 1960s and early 1970s shared some beliefs with the early progressives. Like the progressives, they believed that the child rather than the subject matter should be the focal point—the child's needs, interests, and concerns. They also objected to practices that stifled initiative, creativity, and freedom to develop, and sought to make the classroom a place where children were free to move about, question, and explore their interests.

But whereas the progressives believed that enlightenment and human progress could be provided by extending the benefits of a more responsive public education to all youth, such romantic naturalists as John Holt, Herbert Kohl,

Jonathan Kozol, and the early writings of Neil Postman and Charles Wein-gartner generally held that school systems have become highly bureaucratic institutions that establish unwarranted constraints over youth, stifling their creativity and alienating them from schools. Some urged open classrooms and free schools; others offered different alternatives.

Paul Goodman, for instance, while seeing a need for compulsory education in the primary grades, opposed its extension to the high school. He recommends that the funds for compulsory secondary education be turned over to youth to establish their own learning communities and enable them to be free to experiment with their own life styles and seek their self-identity. The funds could also be used to promote apprenticeship programs. Ivan Illich goes further by recommending that compulsory schooling be abolished, the whole system be dismantled, and society be deschooled. He proposes instead informal learning arrangements in the larger society that would be based on natural interest and curiosity and entered into voluntarily. Thus the faith that Dewey and the progressives had in innovative organized schooling was, from Illich's viewpoint, seriously misguided.

Although the romantic naturalists have concentrated on how the student can overcome alienating learning conditions, they have made less of a contribution to curriculum theory. How the organizational and administrative structure can be transformed so that their ideas could be effectively implemented is seldom discussed. Thus they have rarely concentrated on the power structure and how it can be changed. Even Illich's deschooled society offers no assurance that the kinds of learning networks envisioned will be successful because the larger society itself remains essentially unchanged. Romantic naturalists also fall into Rousseau's trap in their belief in the basic goodness and natural curiosity of the child who, once freed from restrictions, will blossom naturally. But what is known about child development today suggests that far more structure and guidance are needed than the romantic naturalists would provide, if the child is to develop healthily and become an educated person.

Humanistic Education

Humanistic education was a movement of the 1970s that had more in common with early progressive education than did the views of the romantic naturalists. Humanistic education advocated the principles of treating the student as a person and integrating cognitive learning and affective experience.

Rational beings are people and must not be treated merely as means but also as ends in themselves. Thus the teacher would endeavor to gain an empathetic understanding of the students' feelings and values, and an understanding of how students perceive their schooling. Teachers should become more concerned with the personal development of each student than with acquiring bodies of knowledge. Teachers should seek to understand students as whole persons and avoid labeling them, since those who use labels apply a label to a behavior pattern and then posit the label as the cause of the behavior. More-

over labeling may legitimize mistreatment and set children apart from one another. Thus such labels as *slow learner*, *delinquent*, *troublemaker*, and others may prove self-defeating.

Humanistic educators agree that the affective side of education has been generally neglected by schools, more emphasis should be placed on it, and it should be more fully integrated with cognitive learning. The affective domain includes values, attitudes, feelings, and emotions. Many programs in values education have been instituted to enable students to develop greater awareness of their values and to think more critically and constructively about them so that their decisions will be better informed (see Part II on cognitive moral development and values clarification).

Numerous objections, however, have been raised against humanistic education. It is charged that such programs are likely to neglect the study of organized subject matter and the basics. There is concern by some parents that their children may be indoctrinated or inculcated with a set of values different from their own, and they insist that such matters should be the responsibility of the parents. Some educators claim that most teachers are not adequately prepared to handle affective education programs. Moreover, it is suggested that such programs are difficult to evaluate. Even some of the basic concepts in humanistic education are difficult to agree upon and are extremely complex. Nevertheless, despite these criticisms, the ideals of the early progressives of educating the "whole child" were carried forward effectively by some exceptional humanistic educators such as Carl Rogers.

Freudianism

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), Austrian neurologist and father of psychoanalysis, had a vast influence on modern thought with his theory of psycho-neurosis and his stress on the role of sexuality in human development. Freud believed that there are basic sex and aggressive drives and stated a hard determinism in which early childhood greatly influenced the structure of personality in adulthood. His psychoanalysis sought the roots of neuroses by unearthing from the unconscious repressed wishes and desires of childhood.

Freud's influence on education, though important, was indirect and diffuse. Psychoanalytic theory offered the notion of *sublimation*, which held that the gratification of instinctual impulses, usually of a sexual or aggressive nature, could be achieved by substituting socially accepted behavior for expression of the prohibited drives. Teachers were to recognize unconscious motivation and seek to sublimate the child's repressed desires into socially useful channels. Teachers must also understand their own unconscious in order to improve the way they relate to students.

One example of Freud's ideas in education was Margaret Naumberg's Children's School in New York City in 1915. She thought the child should be weaned from egocentrism but found the task of doing so much more complex than most educators had imagined. Conventional education, she believed, only dealt with