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Review

Reviewed Work(s): Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education. by John Dewey

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## REVIEWS

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*Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education.* By JOHN DEWEY. New York: Macmillan, 1915. Pp. xiv+343.

All students of philosophy and sociology, as well as of education, welcome this comprehensive and fundamental statement of Professor Dewey's educational philosophy. It will undoubtedly take its place among the world's enduring classics in these three fields of thought. The educator, to whom it is primarily written, will find here a clarifying account of the principles and the practice which must of necessity characterize all sound educational development that is really an expression of democratic ideals. Such a conception of education cannot be stated in any narrow, isolated fashion, and not the least valuable aspect of its exposition, therefore, lies in the accompanying searching and critical examination of the evolution of philosophical thought and the correlated evolution of the ideals of social democracy.

The method of the work is to be found in a series of statements and expositions of various dualisms of thought and practice which have been at various times more or less dominant in both philosophy and education since the time of the Greeks. The historical analysis which accompanies each discussion presents a viewpoint that is absolutely essential to the adequate understanding of the problems of current educational theory and practice, and on the basis of which alone we can arrive at solutions consistent with our democratic ideals.

The first dualism is the general one between education and life. While a social necessity, education has tended in all times to become more or less isolated from the social order which evolved it, through an inadequate conception of the social function of instruction. This imperfect view of the nature of education has found expression at various times in the conceptions of education as *external direction*, as mere *inner growth*, as *preparation for a remote future*, as *unfolding*, or as *discipline*. These conceptions are criticized as being, in varying degrees, external, retrospective, conservative, and hence inadequate to interpret the educational process that should belong to a progressive democratic society. The worth of such a society depends upon the extent to which "the interests of the group are shared by all its members and the fulness and

freedom with which it interacts with other groups.” “Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing social disorder.” Professor Dewey’s conception of the end of education is developed directly from this viewpoint. It is a statement of the *process of education* at its best rather than external goal which, just because it is external, cannot be put into definite and helpful relation to the process of education with its various resources and difficulties. A real end of education must, if it is to have any practical value, interpret and guide its various expressions rather than be a remote and final goal. One of the most brilliant and stimulating discussions in this book is that in which the ideal as a working hypothesis is developed. Other conceptions of end are discussed and shown to have reality in so far as they admit of statement as interpretative principles rather than as goals.

It is impossible in a review to give even a synopsis of the discussions which follow. The dualisms, which have appeared in the thinking of the Western world and expressed in such contrasts as interest and discipline, play and work, labor and leisure, intellectual and practical studies, naturalism and humanism, individual and world, aesthetic and practical, represent genuine aspects of experience which, in a democracy, education must seek to bring together in an organic relationship. In fact, the realization of a democratic society is seen to be conditioned upon the incorporation of the values of these extremes in everyday social experience. For instance, the separation of the aesthetic and the practical should have a place only in aristocratic conceptions of society. Individual variation is not good in itself. Its highest significance is to be found in relation to a progressive society to which it furnishes the means of progress. In such a society vocational education should represent a union of bodily action and thought, of making a livelihood and the worthy enjoyment of leisure. Certain tendencies in present-day vocational education, if followed up, would tend to perpetuate the old aristocratic distinction between culture and life. Industrial life of today is so dependent upon science and thought that there is no justification for such a distinction. Now, as never before, is it possible for the vocational life to minister to the development of mind and character.

True philosophy is regarded as essentially a theory of education, since the stimulus to its development is to be found in essentially social problems, the solution of which is to be found in a proper type of education.

The problem of moral education is to secure the organic relation and interaction of knowledge and conduct. These scattered points suggest very inadequately the method and conclusions of *Democracy and Education*. The unique and distinctive quality of the thought is lost when one attempts to summarize it.

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Contributions to Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City:

1. *Completion-Test Language Scales*. By MARION REX TRAHNE. Pp. 118. \$1.50.
2. *Measurements of Some Achievements in Arithmetic*. By CLIFFORD WOODY. Pp. 63. \$1.00.
3. *Adjustment of School Organization to Various Population Groups*. By ROBERT ALEXANDER FYFE McDONALD. Pp. 145. \$1.50.
4. *The Relations of General Intelligence to Certain Mental and Physical Traits*. By CYRUS D. MEAD. Pp. 117. \$1.50.
5. *Ventilation in Relation to Mental Work*. By E. L. THORNDIKE, W. A. MCCALL, and J. C. CHAPMAN. Pp. 83. \$1.00.

Teachers College, Columbia University, is rendering an extremely valuable service to the cause of the scientific study of education in publishing as "Contributions to Education" the results of scientific research studies carried on under the direction of the faculty. Education as a special field of study lacks a set of working tools, and definite social objectives. Every piece of scientific research that results in a workable tool or in a definite social objective is timely, even though the product does not have all of the accuracy found in some of the older fields of scientific research.

The author's problem in *Completion-Test Language Scales* was to build a scale or scales that will accurately measure language ability in school children. He describes very clearly the means and methods used in formulating his scales. He assumes that achievement in filling-in the correct words in the completion-test sentences is distributed according to the normal curve frequency. He bases his study upon the fact that "one of the most constant things about a variable fact is the amount of its variability." He adopts as "the most convenient measure of the