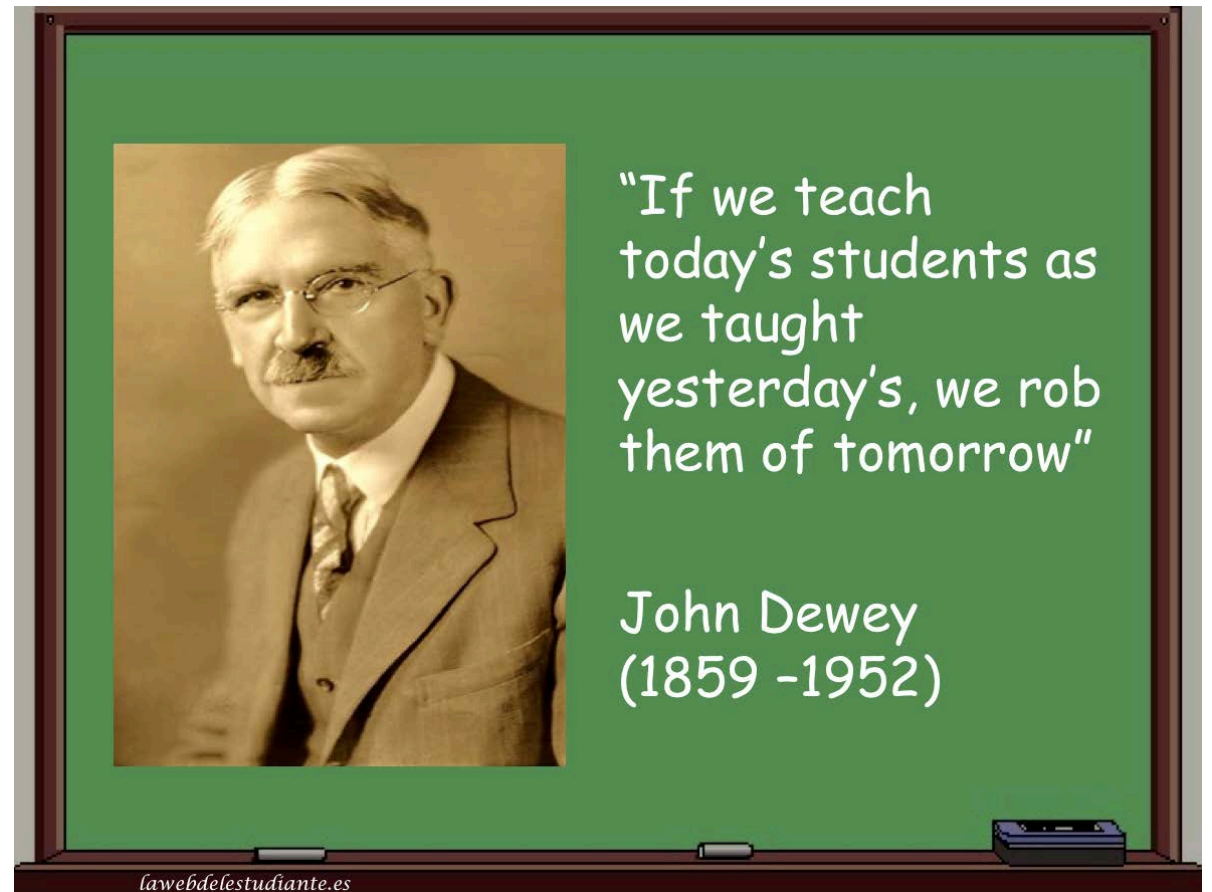


Who was John Dewey and what can he teach us 100 years later?

Brian Bird
GCC Math Faculty
Spring 2018



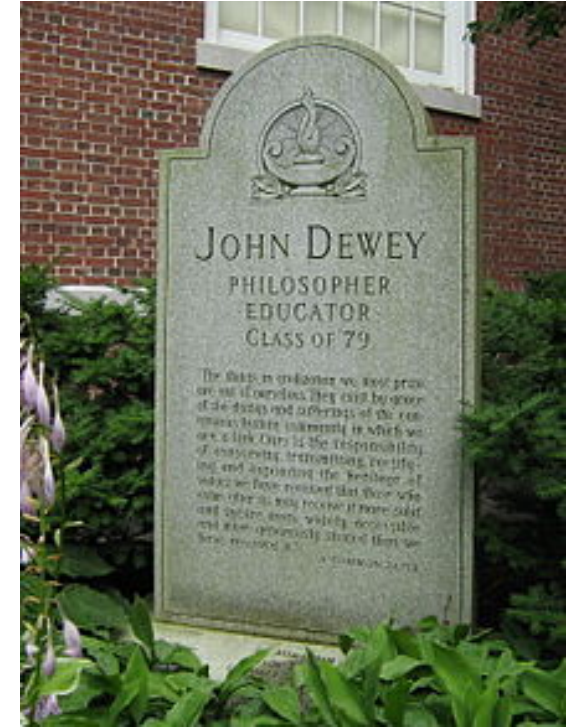
John Dewey Biographical

Born: 1859 in Vermont

Died: 1952 (age 92) in New York

Alma Matter: University of Vermont and Johns Hopkins University

Educator: 2 years high school and 1 year elementary school
University of Michigan, University of Chicago, and
Columbia University



Dewey's Big Thoughts

- Democracy, democracy, democracy
- Defined critical thinking as reflective thought
- Active Learning
- Experiential Learning
- Balance of teacher and student

Democracy

- Huge proponent of democracy
- Schools should be an “embryonic community”
- The school’s function is to prepare students to become citizens
- Students should learn skills to help them contribute to society

Critical Thinking

- Reflective thought
 - Suspend judgement
 - Maintain a healthy skepticism
 - Exercise an open mind
- Requires an active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief in light of the ground that supports it
- Intellectual and emotional components
- Connection to Carl Sagan and “The Fine Art of Baloney Detection” written in 1995

Active Learning

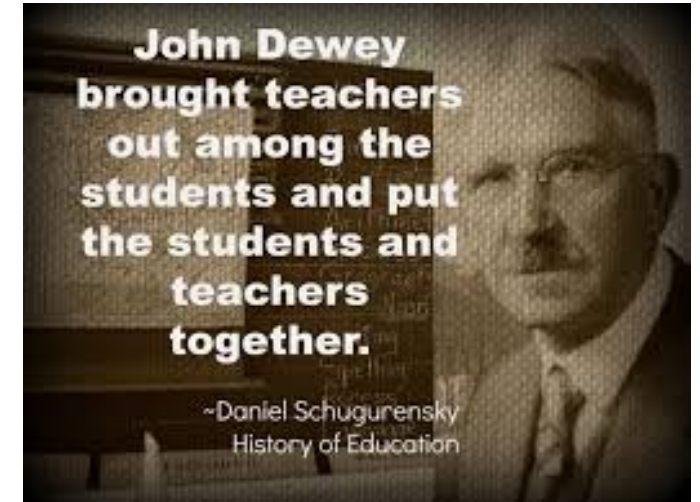
- Learning must be active (against rote learning)
- Students must be invested
- Connection to Piaget and Bruner
 - Discovery learning
 - Learn by doing
 - Learn by actively exploring the environment

Experiential Learning

- Students should be involved in real life tasks and challenges
- Activities should be relevant to students' lives
- Development of practical life skills
- Harbinger for “experiential education”, “problem-based learning” and “inquiry based learning”

Balance of Teacher and Student

- Schooling is unnecessarily long and restrictive
- Against authoritarianism
- Against behaviorist theory (too simplistic)
- Teachers are not just instructors, rather they are guides and facilitators
- A teacher's function is to provide opportunities for students to discover for themselves (ala Bruner)
- Need to link new with previous experiences and knowledge
 - Vygotsky's ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development)
 - Ausubel's Advance Organizer and Prior Knowledge



Summary

- One of the greatest education thinkers of all time
- “Big picture” learning theory that tied into democracy
- Predates and includes some of the best parts of the Cognitive Learning Theory of Vygotsky, Piaget, Bruner and Ausubel
- One of the earliest reformers and promoted learning strategies such as Discovery Learning, Experiential Learning, Problem Based Learning, and Inquiry Based Learning long before we coined those labels
- Published more than 700 articles in 140 journals, and approximately 40 books

Suggested Reading

[How We Think](#) by John Dewey

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