**Reflection on Historical CPP Languages and What We Should Keep**

When I think about interpretivist-experiential and critical approaches to teaching, it’s clear they’re both rooted in strong historical foundations that have shaped how we view learning today. Each of these approaches offers something powerful and lasting, and even though they come from different angles, they both remind us why education can be so impactful.

**Interpretivist-Experiential Approach**

The interpretivist-experiential approach goes back to ideas championed by John Dewey. Dewey believed learning should be deeply personal and connected to students’ real lives. In The Child and the Curriculum, he argued that students learn best when they can link new ideas to their own experiences. This was a big shift from more traditional, rigid teaching styles, where students were often expected to memorize facts without any connection to their world. Dewey wanted learning to be active, hands-on, and directly relevant.

What We Should Keep: There’s so much to hold onto here! When students can connect what they’re learning in school to things they care about or encounter in daily life, they naturally become more invested. This approach reminds us to design lessons that are practical, relatable, and give students a chance to learn by doing. Whether it’s through project-based activities or real-world problem-solving, keeping this focus on relevance makes learning feel real and useful.

**Critical Approach**

The critical approach, championed by thinkers like Paulo Freire, is all about empowering students to think beyond their textbooks and consider their place in the world. In Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Freire argued against the traditional “banking” model of education, where teachers just deposit information into students. Instead, he wanted classrooms to be spaces where students and teachers learn from each other, questioning and discussing real-life issues. George Counts echoed this in his work, Dare Progressive Education Be Progressive?, pushing for education to be a means of social change. He believed that schools should encourage students to look critically at society and consider ways to improve it.

What We Should Keep: From the critical approach, I think the most valuable takeaway is the emphasis on social awareness and critical thinking. Today, more than ever, students need to be equipped to question information, think deeply about societal issues, and understand their own role in making a difference. When we teach students to see learning as more than just “passing tests” and help them realize that education can empower them to contribute to society, we’re setting them up to be thoughtful, engaged citizens.

**Why These Approaches Still Matter**

Both interpretivist-experiential and critical approaches give us a vision of education that’s about more than just getting through the curriculum. The interpretivist-experiential approach reminds us to make learning meaningful by connecting it to students’ lives, while the critical approach pushes us to use education to encourage social responsibility. When combined, these approaches help create a learning environment where students feel that what they’re learning is both relevant and impactful, giving them the tools to understand and engage with the world thoughtfully. Holding onto these values ensures that education isn’t just about academic success—it’s about helping students grow as individuals and as members of their communities.