

The 100-Year Journey of Educational Psychology

Exploring Advancements, Suppression, and Conformity vs. Growth

**When you hear the term 'educational psychology,'
what comes to mind?**

Big Ideas

1. Advancements in Educational Psychology
2. Resistance and Suppression
3. Conformity vs Growth
4. Linking Then and Now

Advancements in Educational Psychology

- William James – Stream of consciousness, habit, psychology as “useful but incomplete.”
- G. Stanley Hall – Child study movement, first psychology PhD in the U.S.
- John Dewey – Learning by doing, education for democracy, holistic psychology.
- Edward Thorndike – Science + measurement, standardized testing, laws of learning.

“Psychology is a science, and teaching is an art” (James, 1899)

Advancements in Educational Psychology

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Advancements in Educational Psychology

Paulo Freire (1921 – 1997)

- Critique of “banking model” of education → students as passive recipients.
- Education should be dialogical and foster critical consciousness (conscientização).
- Teachers and students learn together in a process of co-creation.
- Goal of education = humanization, freedom, and social transformation.

“Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate integration into the logic of the present system or it becomes the practice of freedom.”

**Which of these thinkers feels most relevant today?
Whose ideas can you recognize in your own
schooling?**

Resistance and Suppression

- Religious & philosophical opposition: Education as moral formation, not science
- Resistance to testing: Rice's spelling research rejected (1897)
- Schools valued obedience, diligence, silence over outcomes

“The attempt to evaluate the teaching of spelling by testing pupils was silly, dangerous, reprehensible” (Ayres, 1912)

Conformity vs. Growth

Conformity Model (19th century):

- Commissioner Harris: Students must be “regular, punctual, silent, industrious.”
- Purpose: build obedience and duty.

Growth Model (Dewey & others):

- Education = democracy in action.
- Focus on experience, problem-solving, individual needs.
- Teacher as facilitator, not enforcer.

Linking Then and Now

Suppression then = resistance to evidence-based reforms now:

- corporal punishment still debated,
- bilingual education resisted,
- grade retention continues despite research evidence.

Conformity echoes today in:

- standardized testing,
- rigid curricula,
- rote memorization.

Growth vision lives on in:

- student-centered learning,
- project-based classrooms,
- inclusive education,
- broader views of intelligence (Gardner, Sternberg).

**If you could design education policy today, would
you prioritize science and measurement, growth
and creativity, or tradition and conformity?
Something else?**