



A Brief History of Progressive Education with Dr. Jason Edwards

Lesson 8: The Social Progressives

Outline:

“Education is a shaping process as much as the manufacture of steel rails.”

Franklin Bobbitt

“...through schools of the world we shall disseminate a new conception of government - one that will embrace all of the collective activities of men; one that will postulate the need for scientific control and operation of economic activities in the interests of all people.”

Harold Rugg

“Social Efficiency Model”

- David Snedden
 - He believed that academic knowledge should be rejected in school instruction, and instead, school instruction should justify itself based on usefulness
 - He believed society should work as a team, led by the “above average” individuals, the scientific experts.
 - He believed that education was essentially vocational.
 - He was in charge of educational sociology at Teacher’s College, Columbia University.
- Franklin Bobbitt
 - He was the professor of educational administration at the University of Chicago.
 - His primary goal was to make society, and specifically, the school, more “efficient”.
 - He was an advocate of mental testing for tracking.
 - He established curriculum as a discipline and educational field.
 - One of his main ideas was to make “objectives” (achievable goals) something necessary and paramount in schools - this idea of establishing “objectives” would essentially dispose of academics due to its supposed lack of pragmatic value.
 - He believed education to be a healthy instrument of social control.
- W.W. Charters
 - His main idea was “activity analysis” (the breakdown of tasks into lists of quantifiable objectives).
 - He was a huge supporter of mental testing.
 - He was a huge supporter of education as vocational training.



“Social Reformers”

- Harold Rugg
 - He believed that the child needed to guide their own education.
 - He was a civil engineer and also worked at Teacher’s College, Columbia University.
 - He helped to develop mental testing.
 - He believed that the U.S. political and economic system is flawed.
 - He developed “social studies” to guide children in how to fix and improve the U.S.
- George Counts
 - He was the editor of “Social Frontier,” a progressive journal disseminating ideas about the supposed failure of capitalism in the U.S.
 - He had two famous speeches:
 - “Dare Progressive Education Be Progressive”
 - “Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order”; (he called for teachers to assume the role of leaders in their reconstruction of American society)
 - He believed all teaching was essentially indoctrination and therefore teaching should be used as a tool to indoctrinate children into a more socially democratic interpretation of culture and economics.