



A Brief History of Progressive Education with Dr. Jason Edwards

Lesson I: Progressive Education and Progressive Movement

Outline:

Progressivism as a Modern, (i.e. Scientific as well as Romantic), ideal of innovating the future through disregarding the past, while regarding the present as a *tabula rasa*

- “‘Next, then,’ I said, ‘make an image of our nature in its education and want of education, likening it to a condition of the following kind. See human beings as though they were in an underground cave-like dwelling with its entrance, a long one, open to the light across the whole width of the cave. They are in it from childhood with their legs and necks in bonds so that they are fixed, seeing only in front of them, unable because of the bond to turn their heads all the way around.’ ” (Plato’s Republic)
- “Every experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves towards and into.” (John Dewey’s Experience and Education)
- “The key to understanding progressive education is to understand that it is part of a larger progressive movement.” (Dr. Jason Edwards)

An Overview of the Key Social Transformations in the Development of Progressive Education

- Historical Context of the Progressive Movement (1890’s to 1918):
 - Nationalization (A movement towards the centralization of government and the standardization of the school system)
 - Democratization (A movement towards increasing participation in the governing process, including less hierarchy in government as well as in knowledge; specialization and management via expertise)
 - Industrialization (A movement towards revolutionizing the idea of “work”; mass production)
 - Mass Immigration (Over 18 million people immigrated into the U.S. from around 1890 to 1920; new populations, ethnicities, and religious practices)
 - Mass Urbanization (The mass development of cities; “what do we do with all of these children if they are no longer on the farm?”)
 - Rise of Science (The development of new scientific theories - ex. Darwinism, and the innovations in applied science as well as the widespread use of new technologies - ex. Automobile, airplane, telephone, electricity; people are looking to science for the answers to life’s problems)
- Amendments to the Constitution



- 16th (income tax)
- 17th (direct election of senators)
- 18th (prohibition)
- 19th (women's suffrage)